

HOUSE AND BEDDING PLANTS.

it possible for the seed or plant to be sold cheap, hence the beginner should always commence with these, and as experience warrants gradually add those plants requiring more careful handling.

Some people wonder why it is that they have such poor luck, and why it is that plants never do well for them ; you often hear them condemn the florist as a down-right humbug ; but do not be too hard on the poor florist. I am one myself, and how hard it is to be blamed for that which we are in no way accountable. While we must admit that there are unprincipled men in the profession, ninety-nine times out of a hundred the florist will not overdraw his descriptions or wilfully mislead you in his instructions. Did you ever stop to think what the plants have been subjected to in the change from our greenhouses to your dry rooms? In our greenhouses the temperature is always even, and the atmosphere moist ; we give the whole of our time and attention to the plants under our care, and use every means known to art and skill to assist nature in developing its glorious beauties.

A large number of failures are due either to the want of proper attention in watering or through being kept in a room that is too close and warm. Nearly all plants do better if kept in a cool room, no matter how cool so long that it does not freeze ; and just here let me suggest to you that it will not pay you to attempt to raise house plants, either from seeds or by cuttings while they can be had at so small a cost. Buy them just as they are ready to bloom, then you will have all the benefit without the trouble and at so small a cost that your windows will always be a source of pleasure to yourself and an admiration to your friends.

DECORATIVE PLANTS.

In house plants there is nothing that lends elegance to its surroundings or more completely adds the finishing touches to a drawing room or parlor than the Palm. The ease with which they are kept has attracted increased attention every year, until now we handle thousands annually. Where people have not succeeded we find that it is invariably from the want of not giving their palm sufficient water ;—we must remember that palms are a moisture loving plant, and we must try by artificial means to reproduce nature or at least to supply nature's requirements. While as I say that palms are a moisture loving plant, we find that there is no house plant that will give more satisfaction or last so long as a *Kentia* a *Latania*, a *Phoenix* or a *Coco Palm*. With a few exceptions Ferns do not give satisfaction as house plants, but there is nothing more suitable for a drawing room or a dinner table than a fern pan. This as an earthen pot about 3 inches deep, filled with a variety of hardy ferns ; they are usually fitted into a cover of some design to suit the customers' taste. It must not be imagined that this is going to last a whole season, for it will not, but you must look at it in the light that it does not cost any more than a vase of cut flowers would for one single occasion, and it will last for several weeks, and can be refilled at a very nominal cost. The rubber plant is one that can be recommended to thrive and do well where all others fail—a splendid house plant for winter and one of the best we have for lawn decoration in summer. There are a number of *Dracaenas* that make admirable house plants ; their rich markings add a tropical elegance and variety to their surroundings.