

fail to strike every one is the love for plants which must animate the people to have enabled them to furnish from Russian stores such an immense quantity of magnificent tropical plants, and to produce such admirable specimens of horticultural skill in various species of known difficulty of cultivation. It was plain from the first, although the names of the exhibitors were not placed until after the juries had finished their labours, that the multitude of palms and large tropical plants could never have been supplied by foreign exhibitors. They were mainly supplied by neighbouring gentlemen; and what is still more remarkable, on visiting the different gentlemen's residences in the neighbourhood, to which the members of Congress were invited, the hot-houses of each and all were found to be of an extent, and supplied with an amount of material, far surpassing in quantity anything of which they had the slightest idea, or which would be found in similar places in England, and especially overflowing with large and well-grown specimens of palms and other tropical arboreal vegetation.

Considering the climate, or, indeed, not considering the climate at all, the cultivation of the roses in the exhibition was beyond all praise. They were not one whit behind—if they could be better we should almost say that they were before—the wonderfully fine display of roses exhibited by our first growers at South Kensington a few weeks ago. Of Russian exhibits, a collection of a couple of hundred hardy flowers, many of them Russian or Siberian wild flowers, and most of them well known in the old herbaceous gardens; also a collection of alpine and polar plants in flower, a collection of twenty-four species of iris, and again of a collection of hardy orchidaceous plants, chiefly from Siberia, were especially noteworthy. These were all from the Botanic Garden.

The foreign exhibits were easy of recognition, consisting chiefly either of splendid orchids or fine foliaged plants, among which were many of the aroid character, on which the public taste seems latterly to have been running, or of tree ferns, fine azaleas, &c. Besides these, a few absolute novelties, chiefly supplied by Mr. Linden, added a special interest to the collection. Altogether, the union of Russian and Western stores made an exhibition wonderful in extent and admirable in detail, which will long dwell in the memory of every one who saw it.

The exhibitor laureate of this Exhibition was Mr. Linden. He not only carried off more prizes than any one else, but also gained the Emperor's special prize, given to the foreign exhibitor who should have most contributed to the beauty and embellishment of the exhibition. A similar prize, given by the Empress to the Russian exhibitors, was awarded to M. Lorgus, who, besides an immense quantity of fine plants, had largely contributed to the success of the show by his

roses. Of Englishmen, Mr. Warner and Mr. Veitch were both medallists; the former had sent a collection of fine orchids in flower—a collection which was considered the cream of the Exhibition. We feel sure that if the Russian public had been polled in the first days of the Exhibition, the Emperor's prize would have gone to him. In the latter days the flowers were beginning to fade, and we greatly fear that he will lose some of his most valuable plants. With the juries, however, M. Verschaffelt, of Ghent, ran Mr. Linden closest for the Emperor's medal, he having contributed a great number of plants especially adapted for the embellishment of the show. His azaleas added more brightness and colour to the Exhibition than the whole of the rest of it put together.

The success of the Exhibition and Congress is mainly due to the exertions of Dr. Regel, and the President of the Russian Horticultural Society—Admiral Greig (Scotsman by descent). They appear to have been supported gallantly and in the right spirit by those who had the power to help, namely, by the Emperor and his higher officers. In their eyes this meeting has obviously a wider significance than a great flower show, and another aim than the promotion of horticulture. It is the civilization and advancement of the Russian people which they have at heart, and to promote which they use this as one of many means.

Whatever may have been the moving impulse, the Congress and Exhibition has received the most gratifying proofs of the Emperor's interest and protection. The more eminent members of the Congress have been personally presented to him; the whole Congress entertained at an Imperial banquet in his country palace, driven over his grounds, and entertained at other palaces, which they were also invited to visit.

The same spirit has animated every Russian with whom they came in contact—an anxiety to please, to study the comfort and happiness of their guests, to make sure that they see everything of interest, has been universal. We are glad that it will not be our turn for a while to have the International Exhibition in London, for we feel sure that so long as the remembrance of this remains it will be difficult to prevent it being a comparative failure.—(Farmer) Scottish.

### The Coleus.

Few groups of plants have so rapidly emerged from comparative obscurity into prominence and notoriety as that of the Coleus. Twenty years ago, almost the only representative was the well known Coleus fruticosus—the "Nettle-leaved Geranium" of our grandmother's windows, a plant admirably adapted for the position it has from time immemorial been called to fill, that of a cottage window adornment. It cannot lay claim to any merit for beauty either in leaf or flower; it has, however, an iron constitu-

tion, and is always green and healthy-looking, but nothing more.

The first of the family with ornamental or coloured leaves introduced to us was Coleus Blumei. This has produced two sports—Pectinata, a little more cut in the leaf; and Telfordii or Aurea, a bright-coloured yellow, but weakly-constituted variety. Then appeared Coleus Verschaffeltii, a plant which, from the very day of its introduction, has gone on steadily advancing in favour. In ribbon flower borders it stands unrivalled in producing effect of colour, such glorious masses of glowing crimson purple. As a specimen pot plant it is also greatly appreciated for either summer or winter use. From this several sports have been secured, first, C. Murmorata, having the leaves slightly marbled with green, not very persistent, however; C. Aureo-marginata, having the leaves slightly edged with pale yellow, tolerably distinct, and rather pleasing; and quite lately another, named Beauty of St. John's Wood, which, however, I have not yet seen.

The next was Coleus Gibsoni, a robust-growing sort, somewhat resembling in appearance our old window favourite, with the addition of a little purple on its leaves. Coleus Veitchii is one of the latest, a sort of intermediate between Verschaffeltii and Gibsoni, pleasing when grown as a pot-plant, but too tender for bedding purposes. Coleus nigricans, a dark leaved sort, of straggling habit, is almost worthless.

Such, then, was our stock of Coleuses until last season, when the hybrids appeared. The advance was so great and so little expected, that the country was, as it were, taken by storm with them; and on their being sold, they were very speedily to be found in every garden in the country.

In the Horticultural Society's collection of 1868, the most unique, in my opinion, is C. Bausei; it is, however, as a pot plant under glass that it tells to most advantage. There its dark plum-colour comes out the clearest and brightest, and the green beading of its very regularly toothed leaves is just enough to set it off and make it charming. In the open ground, judging from the past season, it becomes rather dingy and ineffective in colour. C. Saundersii is the next best for pot culture; while for bedding out, the best I believe to be C. Ruckeri, which becomes almost quite black, and C. Scottii, which is very dark, intermixed with green streaks. The others, of which much was hoped, as C. Berkeleyi and Marshallii, are rather too dingy in their hue to suit for bedding-out purposes. None of the whole batch are, I believe, equal to our old favourite Verschaffeltii for bedding; there is a warmth and a depth of colour about this, to which the others cannot lay claim.

What are we, however, to expect from the many lovely gems, and the second batch of seedlings raised at Chiswick, and now being distributed by several of our leading nursery-