

G. Gibson and Co. and Messrs Gunn and Sons, of Oton, were contributors to the exhibition, notable in the collection of the latter being some campanula pyramidalis of an exquisitely blue tint, and others of pure white. "Lady Hollinson," a pure yellow gaillardia, showed up prominently on the stand of Messrs Artindale and Son, and Mrs Melville, of Meole Bay, sent some herbaceous phloxes, which attracted much attention. Beautiful carnations were staged by Messrs Cutbush, of London.

In another tent was a superb display of perpetual carnations by Messrs Young and Co., of Cheltenham, among the best of them being "Mrs H. Burnett," pink; and a fine mauve, "Mrs G. Williams."

One tent was given up entirely to sweet peas, where many of the best-known growers exhibited all the kinds worth growing. The general effect was magnificent in the extreme.

#### The Fruit Classes.

In the midst of a riot of richest hues of countless flowers, in a large marquee near the main entrance gates of the Quarry, the grapes and other fruit were exhibited. The delicacy of the bloom of these tempting fruits drew from all who saw them spontaneous expressions of wonder and delight. Here in perfection were exhibited apple and pear, peach and plum, gooseberries and raspberries, the luscious strawberry, the dainty nectarine, and then the magnificent grapes—the acme of the horticulturist's art, shown to advantage by skilful staging.

#### The Vegetables.

To many the vegetable section of the show is, perhaps, of subsidiary interest, but to the keen horticulturist, it is a display of considerable value, as it enables him to see the possibilities of his art. Here in this section the amateur learns much from the professional gardener's exhibits and from the very fine displays made by the nurserymen. The season for vegetables has been distinctly good, and in the opinion of good judges the collection of vegetables was the best that has ever been exhibited at Shrewsbury, the handsome prizes offered by the society having attracted large entries. The champion prize of £10 for a collection of vegetables (12 distinct kinds), was won by the Hon. Vicary Gibbs of Elstree (Hants.).

#### The Cottagers' Exhibit.

The cottagers' section was a complete little show in itself, and proved very interesting. The society through this section has done much to promote cottage gardening, for the ambition to win at Shrewsbury has created a healthy rivalry that stimulates the cottager to obtain the best that his means will afford, and the result is that many of the exhibits would not be far behind in point of merit from those shown in the other sections of the show.

Messrs. W. W. Naunton and H. W. Admitt have filled the offices of hon. secretaries for many years, with marked success. ("Shrewsbury News.")

### HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITIONS AND THE PUBLIC.

Those who have seen horticultural displays in the Old Land must have been struck with the enthusiasm of the general public for such, and when we seek to compare the very meagre attendance at our shows in the Dominion we are compelled to the conclusion there is something lacking either in our methods or in our patrons, or both. We may be told at the outset that it is useless comparing attendances at English exhibitions, where they have the population, with our Dominion, where such is lacking. Quite true, and yet how comes it that in the Dominion the agricultural shows draw enormous crowds? Now, it must be admitted at once, that the attendance of the general public at the Auckland shows is very small, and as such exhibitions depend largely on public patronage, no headway can be made unless the public can be attracted in ever increasing numbers. The Auckland Horticultural Society has carried on its various shows for years under many difficulties and many discouragements, which would have deterred many from going forward. One difficulty has been, and still continues to be, a paucity of members, and consequent lack of needful funds; but the greatest difficulty has been in securing a proper hall in which a good exhibition could be successfully carried through. There are some who are looking forward to the completion of

the new Town Hall to provide a fitting place, while others think the proposed building to be erected by the Agricultural Association for their winter show may be the very thing so long wanted; but, granted that either of these may be suitable, there remains the question of how to attract the public. We have said before now, and again repeat it, our horticulturists are far too modest regarding their exhibitions. There is, for instance, nothing done to attract country people; no arrangement whatever for reduced fares—and while it must be admitted such exhibitions depend in the main on the support of townspeople, yet, by attracting the country folks to town, they interest the townsfolk in the subject, and so by this co-operation of town and country a much larger attendance could be secured. Many of our country people never see a

will be seen that no less than 80,000 persons attended the great fete in one day held last August.

VERONICA.

### Sweet Pea Chat.

THE ENGLISH "NATIONAL" SHOW.

#### Heliotrope.

The old-fashioned Heliotrope or "Cherry Pie," as it is commonly known, is one of the most deliciously fragrant flowers in cultivation. The flowers are produced with the utmost profusion. It is a suitable plant for growing in pots or in a greenhouse, and is hardy in the North Island out of doors. It can be grown from seed quite easily if sown under glass, but is generally propagated from cuttings at almost any season if good growing shoots can be obtained. They will start readily in sand or in a mixture

It is not for me to give a report of the splendid display which was brought together by the National Sweet Pea Society at the Royal Horticultural Hall, this is a duty which falls to other pens than mine; but I must make some allusion to it in a general way. As a whole the exhibition was decidedly smaller than that of last season, for many growers were forced to cancel their entries, or a portion of them, at the last moment owing to the weather. It is a matter of opinion whether the promoters should deplore the smallness or the reverse. Naturally enough, all desire to see the greatest possible number of enthusiasts represented, but there is no gainsaying the fact that the additional space rendered available for the flowers shown enabled them to be far better seen, criticised and admired. Last year it was almost impossible to say decidedly what was the real quality of three-parts of the bunches staged, whereas this year one was able clearly to see the entire sets.

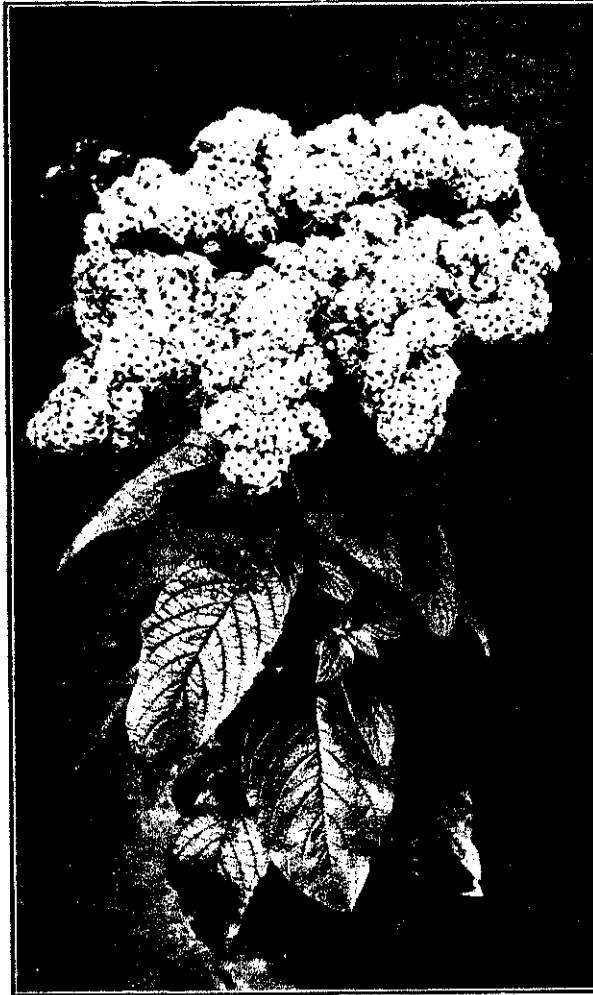
As a rule, then, it is safe to say that the quality, as well in regard to substance as to colour, was excellent; but to me it is equally indisputable that there was more than a suspicion of coarseness in some of the prize-winning stands. This is a matter for regret. One can forgive the man who does not make pretence that he is an expert in Sweet Peas giving the floppy flowers premier awards; but at the "National" none but an expert would be thought of as an adjudicator, and it is therefore most regrettable to see the prizes given to bunches that were on the coarse side. The exhibitors who staged them will not, naturally, admit anything of the sort, but will claim that all their blooms were the acme of refinement; but they will not convince me that they are in the right any more than they will many other people who closely examined and appraised the quality of the blossoms shown.

We do not by any manner of means want to make the Sweet Pea an ugly flower; but to feed the plants to such a degree that the flowers lose their correct form and flop about in a most ungainly way is going directly on the wrong road, and will not do the flower the smallest amount of good either for home use or for exhibition.

Now a few words in respect of the novelties, to all of which attention will from time to time be drawn as space and opportunity offer. It can scarcely be said that there was anything of conspicuous merit which had not previously been seen. The silver medal for the finest novelty of the year went, as was fairly generally thought would be the case, to Stirling Stent. Although this has not the perfect Spencer form, it is undoubtedly a splendid flower, for it has size, substance and good shape to commend it, while the richness of the orange scarlet will make it a great favourite. The trouble with all varieties of this shade up to the present is that they burn badly, and clean, unblemished blooms can only be ensured by careful shading; but it is said that Stirling Stent has a rooted objection to burning, and that it will only do so under the utmost provocation. Let us hope that such will prove to be the fact under general cultivation. We owe this variety to Mr Agate.

When Mr R. Bolton first staged Charles Foster, no one was to be found who could at once accurately describe the colour, but the usual term is pastel pink, and the best advice I can give anyone who does not know what particular shade that may be is to grow the variety and see for themselves. It is magnificent, and none will regret giving it a trial. It is a bloom of strikingly attractive aspect, and is quite distinct from any other on the market.

Mr W. J. Unwin's Eric Harvey should have a fine future before it, for the flowers are of splendid size, shape and substance, and the deep rose and white colour will, in my opinion, ensure it a prompt welcome. Mrs W. J. Unwin was one of the elect last season, and it is widely acknowledged to be the most charming of all the flakes; it is exquisitely refined, and had even more admirers this year than it did last, and it will have still others.—Spencer, in "The Garden."



HELIOTROPE "LORD ROBERTS."

real horticultural display, and we are sure many would avail themselves if opportunities were offered them. Again, there is always the desire for novelty to be taken into consideration, and an exhibition held within a hull year after year gets rather monotonous to the people whose attendance is desired; and, so far as we know, there is nothing better than to hold an exhibition within a large park, housing the exhibits in tents of different sizes to accommodate the various classes of exhibits. At such an exhibition demonstrations could be given by experts on budding roses, grafting fruit trees, fertilising flowers and vegetables, etc., and in order to secure the crowds a cricket match or polo, or both, and, possibly, horse-jumping competitions, with the attendance of a first-class band, would be a necessity. An exhibition such as we have indicated might not be possible or desirable every year, but it might be a welcome change every third or fifth year, and the subject is worthy of the earnest consideration of our Horticultural Society. In another column we publish a report of the great show held at Shrewsbury, from which it

of sand and soil, placing them under a frame. They may be treated as small shrubs or planted against a wall. The prevailing colour is mauve, and there is also a white variety. All of them are well worth growing.

#### Iceland Poppies.

Very considerable improvements have been secured by careful and judicious selection in this very dainty class of poppies. Iceland poppies should not be confounded with annual varieties. The class under notice are perennials, and if sown early in spring they will flower the same season. They are quite hardy and most useful for table and other decorations. The new "Excelsior" strain contains a fine blending of all the new colours and shades now available through careful selection. The flowers of the Iceland poppy are exceedingly graceful, and the delicate combinations of colours should secure for them a place in the garden.