

# Flowers of the World.

## The Great International Show.

### The King and Queen Present — New Zealand Awards.

THE greatest Flower Show ever held in the world was opened at Chelsea, London, on May 22nd, the site covering no less than 27 acres, including the Ranleigh Gardens and Terraces, which were temporarily closed to the public. The huge tents alone covered 10 acres. Special tents, measuring 140ft x 85ft, were allotted to the Dutch, French and Belgian exhibits. In another tent there were fine exhibits from Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Orchids, ferns, and a large number of greenhouse plants were entered from America. The principal tent covered a space of three and a-half acres—the largest plant tent ever erected. Ample gangways were designed to give standing accommodation to 6,000 people. In this tent were housed the principal groups of roses, azaleas, rhododendrons, ferns, stove and greenhouse flowers.

Notwithstanding the high charges made during the first two days (£3 and £4) for admission, the show was attended by several thousands from every part of Great Britain and the Continent. The King and Queen visited the show early in the morning. The "Daily Mail" in its report, says: "Anyone who visited the show, especially in those delightful morning hours when the royal party sauntered in frank enjoyment about the gorgeous avenues and corridors and pavilions and open gardens, may well have felt that he had returned to the age of 'the golden prime' and 'the spacious days of good Haroun Al Raschid,' as painted by Tennyson. No one, certainly no gardener, has ever dreamed of anything like it, in specific rarity, in costliness, in general magnificence, in scenic arrangement.

"But even the ample splendour did not impress those who made the tour of the fairland more than the generous and thoughtful comments of the royal

visitors. The King, especially, asked if there were no way of keeping permanent the out-of-door fairland, the six acres laid out in rock and water gardens; and his impromptu suggestion has already been translated into a definite proposal. It was a happy coincidence that the Queen ejaculated as she came into full view of this feat of landscape gardening, 'What a pity it cannot be kept.'

#### Unrehearsed Excursions.

"Again, in visiting the Canadian pavilion, of which almost the whole was given up to great bowls of preserved fruit, the King was the first to point out the economic importance of such fruit preservation if scientifically achieved. When standing before Sir George Holford's bank of orchids—each flower a poem, the whole a thing to dwarf the hanging gardens of Babylon, as one of the world's seven Wonders—the Queen's first thought was of the number of people who would crowd to see it, and the hope that they would not be too crowded to see it as it should be seen.

"The royal party spent the better part of two hours in exploring the wonders; and the whole itinerary was of peculiar interest and charm. It would take many columns to describe even the special flowers to which attention was directed by the guides or the personal interest of the King and Queen.

"Awaiting the royal party was itself a picturesque occasion. Sir George Holford blushed with pleasure when the Duke of Portland came up and informed him that he had won the King's Cup for the best exhibit in the show. The duke listened to boast with pride in the extraordinary series of successes by his gardener. One of his few defeats was at the hands of the King. 'We were just defeated,' he said, 'by a better climate and a bunch of grapes'; and his gardener

afterwards explained to the Queen with a judicial and modest air that certainly the Windsor grapes were 'much stronger.' It was at a neighbouring stand that the King called up one of the conductors to show him, as he said, with a laugh, a model of a Paris breakfast. The model was a bunch of tiny radishes."

#### Impromptu Fruit Meals.

At half-past eleven a babel of foreign tongues ceased. A complete corps of foreign ambassadors had assembled, and the first event of the day was the presentation to the King and Queen of a number of distinguished horticulturists. With very little delay the tour proceeded through the foreign sections. In the French tent M. Philip Vilmorin, the

greatest hybridiser in the world, was presented; and with as much courage as common sense, instead of showing rarities pointed out how much could be done with such simple flowers as the stock and nasturtium. Both here and in the Belgian exhibit market-garden produce took a prominent place. At the entrance to the Dutch exhibit, which is a garden of colossal and most comely lilac bowls, the Queen was presented with a bouquet of a new lilac of the faintest mauve tint. Even when the journey had proceeded so far all the adjectives had been exhausted: "Wunderschön," "splendide," "magnificent," and the rest; and the successive avenues of greater glories were too much to absorb.

Perhaps the most picturesque scene was during a halt in a pergola walk belonging to Mr. Leopold de Rothschild. The pergola plants were cherries and grapes and figs. An impromptu, it seemed an *al fresco*, "fruit lunch" was held, in which the King and Queen joined. Everyone declared that anything more delightful than the cherries it would be impossible to imagine. A curious variety of fig, as brilliantly green as a tree frog, was accepted by the Queen, and safely carried away by Princess Mary. The meal was repeated, though in more peripatetic manner, before the exhibit of Laxton's strawberries, where the better part of the company feasted on "King George, an improved variety of Royal Sovereign."

#### King George Gloxinia.

Among other flowers that especially interested the Royal party were:—

A King George gloxinia, which Mr. Sutton pointed out to the King.

A Norfolk Island pine, with white tips, a gorgeous purple statice, shown by Cypher, of Cheltenham.

A baby Tausendschön rose, a weeping standard, of Outbush's.

A purple carnation, Mikado, of Engelmann's.

A rich dark-red Odontiodo orchid of Sander's, about the colour of which the King asked several questions.

That prodigy of quaint growth, the Puga Chilensis, supposed to flower once in 100 years, but, as the King explained, really much oftener.

The three principal cups were awarded to Sir George Holford, Messrs Veitch, and Mr Mount. Sir George's orchids, which were judged the best exhibit in the show, certainly surpassed everything in splendour and costliness, and they were all home-grown. The improvement of the orchid is doubtless the crowning marvel of flower culture.



THE KING'S CUP.

For the most meritorious contribution to the Exhibition. Won by Sir George Holford, K.C.V.O., C.I.E.



HIS MAJESTY, WITH PRINCESS CHRISTIAN, CROSSING A BRIDGE IN THE JAPANESE GARDEN AT THE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER SHOW. Topkapi, photo.