

the science of to-day is able to produce.

As well distinguish between the stars on a starry night. The courageous resolve lives for half-an-hour perhaps, but, after a couple of hours' rambling through one bewildering glory after another, both mind and eyes are incapable of criticism, so soaked are they in radiance.

Standing before a giant collection some of the blossoms only seemed to lack voice to announce themselves spirits. There were orchids like fairy bells, orchids with striped petals like smart little French ladies ready for a plunge into the sea, orchids like pansies, like strings of gems, like butterflies. Some seemed like pierrots, some like little yellow birds, some were harsh flame-coloured things like one might imagine anger, some of gossamer consistency like fairy laughter; others looked robust and fat, decided reds, yellow or greens, as if they might be the civic dignitaries of the flower world.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

GREAT DISPLAY OF ROSES, CARNATIONS AND SWEET PEAS.

(From Our Special Correspondent.)

LONDON, May 31.

The great International Exhibition came to the end of its brief but glorious span of life yesterday, more's the pity. Without doubt it was the greatest and grandest show of its kind that has ever been held. To do adequate justice to a tithe of the floral exhibits to be seen in the series of huge tents is beyond my pen, and anything like an adequate review of the show would occupy more columns than an ordinary daily paper has at disposal.

The exhibition proved a wonderful success, in spite of the high prices charged for admission for the first few days of its existence, and it is pleasant to learn that not only will those patriotic and enthusiastic horticulturists who contributed to the guarantee fund find their pockets untouched, but that the several charities connected with the horticultural world in the United Kingdom will reap substantial benefit.

Another pleasant feature of the show was the fact that it proved beyond doubt that the English horticulturists of to-day can hold their own with those of any nation on earth in almost every branch of this art, excepting only the purely

Japanese art of plant dwarfing. That there is nothing decadent about British horticulture was amply proved at the Chelsea Show. British horticulture, indeed, never stood in such a leading position as it does to-day, and though scarcely a nursery or garden establishment of any note in Europe was not represented, the British exhibits held their own in all directions. The exhibition was indeed a triumph for the Old Country in every way.

A Wonder of Wonders.

The orchid tent afforded a sight that will be indelibly fixed on the memory of all who saw it. Was there ever such a collection gathered under one roof before? I doubt it; and those who should know more about such things than I declare that the world has never seen such a sight before, and is not likely to see its like again for a generation.

The huge tent, nearly a hundred yards in length, contained thousands of plants of every conceivable form and colouring, and worth collectively probably half a million pounds. We heard glowing reports beforehand concerning the orchids to be shown, but such reports failed entirely to do justice to the magnificence and splendour of even the first peep into the interior of the orchid tent. It was a feast of colour almost too much, so to speak, for one meal. To examine the individual groups at all closely would have taken hours on hours, but the ordinary visitor found half an hour in the tent as much as he could stand. The eyes grew weary of the seemingly endless succession of gorgeously coloured floral freaks and wonders, and this, coupled with the effects of the warm, scent-laden atmosphere, produced in most people a very tired feeling in a short space of time. Still, it was worth travelling a long way to see such displays as those staged by Sir George Holford, Mr Leopold de Rothschild, Sir Jeremiah Coleman, and such famous firms as Sander and Sons, Cypher and Sons, Charlesworth's, and other noted orchid growers.

Sir George Holford's display of cattleyas and a multiplicity of varieties of dendrobiums, cymbidiums, and laeliocattleyas overhung with arching sprays of golden yellow oncidiums against a background of stately palms, was a sight alone worth a long journey. Sir Jeremiah Coleman's was, perhaps, an even more wonderful display, embracing as it did a particularly splendid collection of the comparatively new race of orchids known as odontiodas. One of these plants, an odontioda brailshewicke, alone carried over one hundred flowers.

There were a number of particularly beautiful orchids in Sir Jeremiah's collection of odontiodas, but the Brailsheaw variety, "Vivid," a splendid and unusual scarlet variety, was perhaps the king of all. His display of odontoglossums, miltonias, laelias, and cattleyas

house fern worth growing, from huge tree ferns to tiny filmy ferns, so delicate in constitution that they had to be shown under bell-glasses. Of the latter no less than 30 distinct species and varieties were shown, whilst of the Stag's Horn fern, superb specimens of varieties of



Topical photo. SIR ARTHUR WALSH AND THE DUCHESS OF BEAUFORT AT THE INTERNATIONAL SHOW.

in almost endless variety was something to marvel at; but the judges gave Sir George Holford the King's Cup for the best exhibit in the show.

One wonderful plant shown by Mr Harry Dixon, was a specimen of the spider orchid (oncidium phymatolobium) which has four floriferous spikes carrying no less than 320 flowers. Among Messrs Mansell and Hatchers' grand collection were two particularly fine plants of vanda teres, each carrying seventeen spikes.

The biggest display of all was Messrs Sander's, which occupied a thousand square feet and contained almost every known species of orchid in cultivation staged in a masterly manner. The special feature of this truly remarkable exhibit was, perhaps, the bold and glorious display of miltonia vexillaria Empress Augusta, a conspicuous variety with large deep pink-coloured flowers.

Among the orchids were many more remarkable for weirdness than beauty, and others, again, showing flowers so minute that only the closest inspection gave one any idea of their true form and colouring. Two plants that roused much amused interest were masdallia xiphères, which has a sensitive lip which gives a jump soon after being touched; and the peculiar B. lobbii, with its ever moving lip. This is sometimes called the "lady orchid," for a reason fairly obvious. But of weird and wonderful forms in orchid growth there were hundreds of specimens. By common consent, indeed, the most wonderful sight of a most wonderful exhibition was the orchid tent.

Still, to most people it was a relief to leave this inimitable display of colour and form and take a turn

Among the Ferns.

In its way the display of ferns was almost as wonderful as the orchid exhibits, though, of course, lacking the diversity of colour which bewildered the eye in the latter department. In the matter of form, however, the ferns were marvellously varied, and their soft and delicate greenery came as a grateful and comforting optical refreshment after the "gorgeousness" of the orchid tent. One of the most notable collections was that of May and Sons, occupying 2500 superficial feet of space and embracing every green-

Davallia, Polypodiums, Blechnums, Adiantums, Osmundias, Nidus, Platyceriums, they staged scores. Equally fascinating was the wonderful collection of exotic ferns shown by Messrs Veitch, and the comprehensive exhibit of hardy ferns by Amos Perry, whilst no lover of shade loving plants could pass by the gold and silver ferns (Gymnogrammas), and the climbing ferns and coral ferns staged by Ellison's, of West Bromwich. Also, among the American exhibits was a noteworthy novelty shown by M. Mandt, of New Jersey, namely, Polypodium Maudslayi, which has handsome fronds from six to seven feet long.

Six Acres of Rock Garden.

The rock-gardens cover several acres, and one reflects that surely every flower that ever flourished in any rock-garden in the universe has its representative here. Water hurls itself in miniature cascades over ferns that bend to each deluge, then raise their leaves for another, or itripples eagerly over grey stones, or lazily over a sandy bed full of flowering treasures, or lying still, reflects the delicate lines of the lotus, of majestic white lilies, purple and yellow iris, or perhaps modest forget-me-not growing on its banks, or the colour of the bright fish flashing their beauty gaily. That the whole thing is made up for a few days, that all the poppies, tulips, lupins, orchids, azaleas, pansies, clematis, spirea, the hambros, lilies, ferns, will all disappear in a few days, seem to lesser mortals, as to the King and Queen, a tremendous pity, and there is—so marvellous the power of a royal whisper—already a movement afoot to try and arrange that they be made permanent.

Indisputably the greatest feature of this portion of the show was Messrs Wallace's exhibit, a masterly conception carried out in a masterly manner. It covered some 8000 square feet, situated in a natural valley between trees. Therein has been fashioned rock and water gardens, an old English terrace garden, gaily furnished herbaceous borders, wood hut and lily plantations, with waterfalls and the like. It was a great piece of work splendidly conceived and carried out. The number and variety of plants employed to furnish this ideal



Topical photo. RANK AND FASHION AT THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL FLOWER SHOW. Dorothy Viscountess Cantelupo on the left.