THE CULTURE OF HYACINTHS.

BY JAMES DEATH, (FAIRVILLE, N. B.)

"Everybody is insane on some point," said the philosopher, or the proverbialist, light scaly ones, size and color are no or one of those unpleasantly physchological people whose lives are devoted to telling others the faults of trail humanity. My own pet hydrophobia lies in the direction of growing hyacinths:-it is a common "fad" in England; it extends, too, to the gentle sex, almost every lady there succumbs to it. The cult does not seem to have many apostles here, so partly with a view of inoculating your readers, partly to reply in extenso to several who have questioned me upon the cultivation, management and defects of Dutch bulbs, and partly to suggest the establishment of a winter flower exhibition, I take up the pen.

I may commence with the premise that amongst your readers some, - if not many -will be found who have neither heard of nor seen "the Queen of Winter Flowers," few will be acquainted with the varieties, them by burying the pots in coal ashes and fewer still possess definite knowledge of the methods of raising, the propagation of new varieties and the tout ensemble appertaining to the history and culture of these plants, which nowadays are to be found in every well to do household in England and France, in whose honor exhibitions and shows (not exactly World's Fairs) are held, and whose export from Holland forms a large item in the commerce of the industrious Dutchman. It has been perhaps rather attempted to grow-Hyacinths, in the country in which I was temmay be grown to perfection, but their culwith difficulty, for reasons which I show

weed have been developed the scores of cultivated and named varieties and the thousands of varieties allowed to pass into oblivion as not possessing sufficient attractiveness for decorative purposes. The wild fat extractive process (digesting the flower in purified and melted fat for several weeks, subsequently extracting the oil of Hyacinth from the fat by washing the pomade with alcohol): the ordinary water distillation process so largely used in the manufacture of Attar of Roses in the Levant destroys the delicate and subtle odor of the Hyacinth. One frequently hears of "the odors of Araby," and the senses may involuntarily conjure up the exquisite perfume of the Hyacinth; those, however, who have travelled in the East, are aware that the much vaunted fragrance of the Orient is confined to the Harems and Bazaars, the perfumes of Araby commonly met with in the streets and villages would in this unpoetic occidental world be fragrant and flagrant as well in the noses of the Inspector of nuisances and the Board of Health.

The conditions of culture most favorable to the hyacinth are long rooting in the dark, a moderate moisture, a cool temperature, a porous rich earth, and plenty of light at flowering. In hot climates the bulbs will not bloom, they are essentially a cold climate flower. I attempted to grow some in India, most of them rotted, those which did grow produced long graceful leaves, they never showed blossoms, this was in the Deccan, but at Simla on the slopes of the Himalayas, where snow is present from November until March, the flowering is good: in Australia (Victoria) I failed to produce anything but a weak weedy sort of flower much resembling the Blue-bell, in this instance the bulbs were six months older than ordinary due to the southern winter commencing in June. Into Egypt I also imported them, but they never got beyond the Custom House at Alexandria; that institution, unlike Cæsar's wife, was not at that time by any means above suspicion, to this day I hold to the faith that as a new and luxurious description of European Onion, my hyacinths served to satiate the curiosity and appetite of some Egyptian Bey or Pasha. In Holland the country of dykes and dams Hyacinths grow to perfection : in the vicinity of Haarleem there is a patch of rich loam whereon the major part of the world's supply is raised. England, Belgium, Germany and France have competed with the Dutchman-so also they have in those square faced friends known as Hollands Gin-and in both instances they have failed to produce a first class article; the soft moist climate of south western Ireland seems to grow these Dutch raised bulbs better than the drier English climate. Experience in Canada will however mostly interest the reader and short as has been my residence in this country, I am ablepartly from my own results and partly from the successes as also the lamentations of the experiment is worthy of trial: the cross continued in many tamilies for generations, others—to write with some degree of con- cutting must be made on a dry day, and and for generations to come, they will in fidence on this head. The chief drawback to their growth in Canada is the system of house warming: the excessively dry, warm Canadian house with its stoves and furnaces is not so well suited to their perfect development as is the cold open fire place of the English home: the professional florist employs a damp oppressive graduated warmth, the householder too often uses a dry bracing heat; the one adopts an island atmos-

phere, the other that of a sandy desert.

The Bulbs are placed on the market in September, the latter part of October or early November is the best time for planting them-Clear-skinned, hard, heavy, bulbs give stronger flowers than do the criterion, some varieties run small. A good soil is the rich black earth found about St. John, mixed with about onethird of sand to render it light, porous and pliable, ordinary garden earth is improved by previous manuring: Wooden boxes six to eight inches deep, containing several bulbs at least 3 inches from each other produce far stronger and better plants than do earthen pots, they also give more ples sing results, the drainage must be good, stagnant water is injurious. Remove all the little off shoots and loose skin, plant the bulbs with the apex uncovered by earth, water them and remove to a dark cool place, not exceeding 50 ° F. in temperature. In the dark cellar they are allowed to remain for four or five weeks of the lottery part of the transaction, there until well rooted: Many florists "plunge" is a serene and soothing satisfaction in (not wood ashes) tan or moss; casing the vear. pot and bulb some four or six inches

above the surface; when well rooted the plants are removed to a halt light for a fortnight, subsequently to full sunlight. necessitates a constant succession of blooms, remove the bulbs from the dark cellar or plunging frame at various intervals, "forcing" the earliest required flowers | snowdrops show to advantage when planted at a temperature of 60° to not exceeding | in patches beneath the grass of a lawn. A my custom during these last ten or twelve | 70 ° F.; in this manner, by selecting early years to have imported and grown - or and late varieties, with early and late the surface of the grass, they reproduce planting, a succession of blooms are ob- themselves year after year, they can be tained lasting from December until May. | mown over, no further attention is necesporarily located. In this country the bulbs | The Dutch growers recommend early planting of the bulbs for late flowering, tivation, to obtain this result, is attended keeping them covered in the dark cold cellar, and forcing late, rather than plant- know, my double snowdrops turned out a ing the dry bulb late: better rooting is The Wild Hyacinth is a native of Asia, certainly obtained by early planting: if found in profusion near Bagdad; from this the flower when in bloom is kept in a subdued or colored light and at a temperature | favor, but like the crinolines they will in all not exceeding 40° the bloom of many probability come in again. The beauty of varieties will frequently last for four weeks. Heat and strong sunlight develop brilliancy of color, but individually each tends flower similar to its cultivated congener to produce early withering. Hyacinths are "sow not, neither do they spin, yet Solopossesses a delicate and subtle odor, which | not injured by a slight trost, during the can be obtained as toilet perfume by the intense frost of March 7th., of last year, "one of these." my own, then in tull bloom, were frozen | Window gardening and cottage gardenthe leaves hung down, but they recovered their normal appearance in twelve hours, during this season and as there the front plot of every humble home late as Sunday April 3rd., my present col- is tended with care; the cottager who lection was trozen stiff. In the New Eng- allows his front garden to run wild is reland States some of the hardier varieties are grown out of doors, for this purpose of life with the man of £300 to £500 inthe bulbs are planted deeply in Novem-

> mon, they consist chiefly of "Excessive in this province today, but within that the bells wide apart, the whole plant ap- numerous specific causes, foremost amongst pears lanky: caused by very dry rooms, these may be placed-fashions in flowersclose to the bulb, presenting a dwarfish by ladies (there was no such thing as a of light or too cool a temperature at inci- world, as well as by observant travellers bulbs have had a hard season to contend with, rooting has been defective, and I know instances where window gardening water, although the flowers never attain to the perfection of earth raised bulbs; their local exhibitions for the best dish of garden appearance and neatness-qualities inherent in woman's nature-commend it as should be used, and changed only when it smells offensively; the glasses must be kept in the dark until the roots are at least 31/2 inches long, then proceed as with pot flowers. Double hyacinths are not suited for water growth. Gas light is perhaps the greatest enemy to hyacinth culture, so many have been destroyed by the sulphurare seldom grown. If the plants are removed to another room or placed on the floor the deleterious effects of gas are mininised. In over heated rooms the cold draughts on the floor can be utilized to prevent torcing.

On the method of population I have had several enquiries: the Dutch growers encourage the multiplication of offshoots by injuring the bulb; the latter is usually stabbed, or cut crosswise from the base half way upwards; this or some similar operation is made in July and always on a dry day when life is dormant (the period of vital rest) after replanting in October numerous offshoots sprout up these are allowed to grow, and increase in size. The tollowing autumn these are again replanted this time in richly manured earth to further develop their size, the growth is repeated in the third and tourth years (the flower itself at an early stage of bloom is cut off so as not to weaken the bulb by seeding) and ever welcome word of condolence and until in the third, fourth, or fifth year a enquiry manifests itself, my family lorded shoots ever practised on onions? in this the very bond of union amongst the women, province where onions are so largely grown, the relations of mistress and nurse have the injured bulb dried in sunshine; on a all probability continue so to do-and my rainy or foggy day, excessive bleeding and tolks and yours have fought in the same of the flowers in heavy bloom—on this latrot would set in. The different varieties | regiment and on the same battlefield'—this | ter point I have grave doubts. All of the of hyacinth which now number several hundred which include all shade of color | tween the men: these memories of the disfrom white and lemon yellow to blue-black tant past form the social idol which later are obtained by sowing the seed: of the thousand new and useless varieties thus ob- sentiment in hundreds of parishes which tained from a single stalk one only may no village radical, no extraneous stump be worth cultivating, this of course is slowly orator, no Birmingham Demosthenes can increased by offshoot cultivation, a new variety possessing some special feature posed of will not purchase entrance into the held its first exhibition on March 22nd. of variety possessing some special feature posed of will not purchase entrance into the readily sell to connoiseurs for \$5 per bulb. social circles of fraternal feeling and rever-Hyacinth planted in earth can be regrown ential regard existing between the great and cissi, crocuses, tulips, cinerarias, (the

next season, it when the bloom commences to wither the seed lobe is pulled off the stalk thus preventing the seed from ripening. Water grown plants are almost useless for re-cultivation. White hyacinths grow to perfection in Canada, with some varieties the odor is so pungently fragrant that one cannot sleep in a bedroom containing two of them. Yellow hyacinths grew well last season and yellow varieties usually exhibit poor growth.

For bridal bouquets etc., the early Roman Hyacinths or better still the small trusses met with on offshoots and double crowned bulbs are very effective and are now largely used. The pure white variety Baron Van Thuyl throws many offshoots. Early flowering pure white varieties are Grand Vainqueur and La Neige, the latter though somewhat expensive is the earliest of all hyacinths,-from the directions given, future brides despairing of orange blossoms, can prepare beforehand for the great event.

The fascination of hyacinth growing is not merely due to the beauty of the flower, a test of skill is involved, no plant shows in so marked a manner the difference between good and bad growth and quite independent knowing that your friend and rival Mrs. So and So has come to grief over her bulbs this

Not many of your readers have heard of crocus glasses—they are not very common in Europe. The crocus can be grown over water, the brilliant purple, violet and white striped varieties have largely superceded the The florists, whose trade in cut flowers old tashioned yellows. The bulb set in little dwarf ornamental vases make interesting and inexpensive presents to childrenperhaps the glassware importers will take the hint for next season. Crocuses and dozen bulbs are placed together in a clump in various places about six inches beneath sary excepting to remove some every fourth year owing to their enormous self multiplication. Of snowdrops I say little; this season, from whatsoever cause I do not dismal failure-let us change a painful

Tulips were once a fashionable flower. they seem to have entirely gone out of the wild tulips of Palestine have been immortalized more than has that of any other flower tradition asserts that of them it was said "Behold the lilies of the field, they "mon in all his glory was not arrayed like | windows and gardens alone it is apparent | small though as it is, could not but fail to

vince-how different it is in England! garded as a lazy man; in a higher position come a jobbing gardener or spare man is called in to do heavy work, whilst the ber, and merely covered with straw &c., daughters of the household undertake the The principal defects of growth naturally light work of the garden Twenty-five form an interesting subject in a country years ago the same condition of things where faulty growth is so extremely com- existed in England as now appear to exist Growth," "Premature flowering" and period the wealthier classes have been Tardy flowering." Excessive Growth: stimulated to floral asthorlicsm by the The stalk is long and generally bent over, general advance of refinement, aided by very hot rooms, or forcing weak bulbs. the ritualistic movement intensitying the Premature Flowering: The flower blooms adornment of churches-the effects of that inside the leaves, which are stunted and section of the newspaper press patronized appearance; this very common defect is ladies' newspaper forty years ago unless the caused by insufficient rooting in the dark | Family Herald could be called one)-and with too early or too great a subsequent to some extent by the continuous advances growing or forcing temperature. Tardy in the brilliancy of the analine dyes creat-Flowering is due to insufficient air, want | ing a demand for contrasts from the floral pient flowering; the remedy is easy; if the penetrating into unexplored regions of the flowers have not withered give warmth globe and developing hitherto unknown and light. During this year late planted plants-orchids especially fall under this head. The peasantry too in their turn have also participated in the advancement of horticulture consequent upon the county has been spoiled by premature flowering. families and local gentry introducing "cot-Ladies prefer to grow hyacinths over tage garden associations," and patronizing, subscribing and presenting prizes at small produce, of flowers, etc., etc., grown by the mechanics and laborers. Not alone superior. Rain water, not lake water, the radical press but every Tory newspaper had a word of praise for Mr. Gladstone when-not as first minister of the crown to whom three hundred and twenty millions of people owe allegiance-but a squire of the little Flintshire village of Hawarden the Homeric scholar and statesman in language eloquent in its very simplicity discoursed on our natural waste of fruit and fruit ous tumes that in gas lighted houses they products and other unnecessary payments to the foreigners for articles which ought to be produced within our island shores; twelve years have passed since that address, vet at this date even the most ultra of conservatives adults that amongst the speeches of an orator whose eloquence rivals t'at of Cicero, Mr. Gladstone's well remembered "Jam Speech" delivered to an audience of simple rustics had touched the heart of emotional England. It is the spirit of interest and of welfare in the pleasures and small luxuries of their poorer neighbors which binds the regard of the lower to the upper classes in English country life; a bond of concord-indiscernible to the stranger is ever present; like what chemists describe as latent heat its existence is untelt, but let adversity, illness or disaster such as a son's disgracing his ancestral or his rustic home occur, then from squire to peasant. or from peasant's wife to squire's wife a sympathy not of a few days but with its oft repeated marketable bulb is formed. .Is this process it over yours for centuries! suggests the unof wounding a bulb to obtain numerous off- charitable democrat-precisely so, this is

is the basis of that ineradicable bond be-

comers also obey. Such is the basis of

"Canada for the Canadians."

"Canada for the Canadians." That is a good cry! You can build up good citizens, good ships and railways, and great commercial prosperity upon that cry.

Some people think if a thing only comes to them from a great distance it must be better than the same thing at home. Distance fosters illusions. The truth that a prophet hath no honor save in his own country still has application. Berlin, or London, or Paris, sounds so much grander than Montreal. So some people think! Not sensible people! Foolish people who think that big names make the thing better and lend dignity to their position.

Common sense will have ultimate triumph.

Common sense has achieved a signal victory in one particular. Ladies' Wraps were always expensive. They have alway been imported. The duty and the glamor of distance, and the imposing sound of big cities, gave them a high price and a great vogue.

Why not make Ladies' Wraps here in Canada?

That thought occurred to the proprietors of Melissa. They should, perhaps, have seized with it earlier, for their success with Men's Coats had been immediate and great. Would the loyal women of Canada not buy an article which was a necessity with them, made right at their doors, if that article was a good deal better than the article which came from a long distance?

It was an experiment, but from the moment the skilled artists which the manufacturers of Melissa employed got to work, and showed specimens of their craft, success was assured.

So then, ladies, in every city and town and village of the Dominion, you can buy wraps for yourselves and children, more tasteful, more truly artistic in finish, more stylish and fastidious in outline than any that have been imported.

There was a need for the Melissa in Ladies' Wraps. They had to put up with unsightly rubber garments, much to their discomfort, but they have now perfect fit, with infinite variety of shade and grace, and, not least, absolute protection from the rain, in garments which it will be a pride to wear, and at prices which put them within easy reach.

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mighty dollar is not almighty there. in the streets. Has any one ever seen stimulate Hyacinth Culture-one of the "buttonboles" sold by flower girls in King | minor luxuries of life-but may help to Square to the—for want of a better term black coat class of the community, yet on efforts must however stop there, so fully octhe steps of the Royal Exchange, the very | cupied is my time, both in day time and in the centre of London's commerce, a quadri- evening, that even if I possessed the neceslateral bordered by the Bank of England, sary local knowledge, I could not occupy Lloyd's world-wide shipping offices, the Mansion House, (the Lord Mayor's official interviewing, etc., concomitant on such a residence) and the most crowded and proposition. In concluding I should add dangerous crossing in the modern Babylon | that if the St. John Horticultural Associacan be seen daily as also at innumerable | tion had been actually in existence, instead other places, some dozen or so of flower of in its present initiatory stage, this offer girls sitting before baskets selling byacinths | would have been made to them, I am, from Holland, Christmas roses from Marseilles, lilies of the valley from Jersey, et hoc senus omne to stock brokers, bank of sufficient knowledge of local charities clerks, &c. Effeminate it may seem, yet names, places, etc., I make use of your these are the descendants of the men who withstood the terrible onslaught of the gallant troops of the conqueror of Europe at

A horticultural association for the beautification (pardon the term) of St. John is sur le tapis. A few public spirited men bave come forward with the intention of improving "open spaces" in the city. It is safe to predict that so meritorious an association will effect far more than it intends, its immediate object is to cover the nakedness of a limited available area, but indirectly its consequences will be far reaching and perhaps more beneficial; it can hardly fail to bring the, at present, scattered elements of horticultural display to a focus, its effects will insensibly extend from the public grounds to the private household, it will thereby generate—as other similar institutions have done-a spirit of emulation and friendly rivairy amongst neighbours to outvie each other in household adornment, the influence of the single gardener of the association cannot but make itself felt in the improvement and increment of domestic and window gardening, these domestic or amateur gardeners will in their turn encourage trade by creating a demand for ornamental iron window ledges, window conservatories, enamelled and embossed masonry and other at present little demanded articles of commerce, all of which are they not written in the Chronicles of the Books of the last two decades in Eng-

A winter exhibition is as yet unknown in St. John, a local exhibition of an unpretentious nature could in a year or so be made un fait accompli. Preachers however should practise what they preach and it happens to lay in my power to give an impetus to window gardening beyond mere writing. I possess the largest private collection of hyacinths in the province and probably in the entire Dominion; numbering 175 bulbs of 29 different varieties and of all colors, except yellows, (ommitted by my consignor,) these are planted in wooden boxes and earthen pots and during the next tortnight or three weeks will be in tull bloom. Several acquaintances have asked me to exhibit them in St. John-as a separate exhibition by themselves, they are too small, as a private collection they are too large-and to a busy man unwieldy; but as an addendum to some charitable exhibition, bazaar, etc., they are admirably suited. Should any such be held before the flowers have ceased to bloom, I should be happy to offer their use, provided that such charitable object was of a strictly nonsectarian character and second that the mudtrack courteously designated as the "road" between Fairville and St. John would not be too rough for the transportation bulbs are named, they have never been forced, on the contrary, they have been trozen on several occasions in January, February and even on Sunday, April 3rd., hence their lateness. At the time of going to press many are not in actual bloom. (By the London newspapers I observe that deutzias, treesias, amaryllis, hyacinths, nar-

humble, the rich and the poor. - The al- present fashionable flower) cyclamen and other early flowers, in this country the sea-The regard for flowers is not confined to son would be later.) Such an exhibition, bring funds to some deserving chari however, not personally acquianted with a single one of its members, hence in default

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