The Gardeners' Chronicle.

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1863.

MEETINGS FOR THE ENSUING WEEK.

TUESDAY, July 21 } Royal Horticultural (Floral and Fruit
THURSDAY, — 23 } Committees) at S. Kensington.
— 23—Alexandra Park (Floral Exhibition).

ADVICES by the last mail from the Mauritius bring the intelligence that the Prussian Naturalist who had been sent to MADAGASCAR, had died there during the unhealthy season, the evils of which are now intensified by the peculiar turn of affairs in that island.

A RECENT article in our talented contemporary *The Builder*, relates the result of a FLOWER SHOW FOR THE WORKING CLASSES established in Bloomsbury. The show is said to have been an improvement on any of its predecessors, and to have included, beyond the ordinary flowers of the month, some "exhibits" with a touch of poetry in them: for example, St. John's Bread or Locust tree, from a seed; a small Cherry tree from a stone; and "Window Balm from the workhouse."

Only imagine the feelings that dictated entries like these! The exhibitors of a Locust tree *from a seed*, and of a *small* Cherry tree *from a stone*, were we doubt not as much attached to their little plants, and as proud of their success as the greatest gardener in the land. We can quite appreciate the delight with which the hard brown dead looking Locust tree seed was watched, the eager curiosity with which it was seen to chip its shell, the charm of observing how its tiny worm-like root crept into the soil, and the triumph which attended the final expansion of the young stem and leaves. "*Io! Triumphe.* Life has been extracted from death! See what a beauty it has come! Did you ever look at such wonderful green? I wonder whether it will ever bring forth such bread as St. JOHN lived on."

Such were very possibly the ejaculations (barring the Latin) of the happy exhibitor, whose tender care was rewarded with a prize. To our minds such feelings are inexpressibly touching. They show more than anything how the best feelings of our nature still remain in the breasts of those whose lives are lives of toil and suffering.

Can nothing further be effected in promoting the humanising efforts of the excellent Rector of Bloomsbury? We hope so; we believe so; we shall be only too happy to give our small aid in advancing his admirable plans.

THE following interesting letter has been forwarded to us by Mr. DARWIN. We have not been able to ascertain precisely to what plant the larger bodies belong, but we believe them to be the pollen grains of some Thistle or Centaurea. They also bear a strong resemblance to the pollen grains of some Malvaceous plant, but they are far larger than those of Malva sylvestris, the only species which could supply pollen in sufficient quantities to tinge the rain with a yellowish tint. Fir pollen is often carried by wind, and deposited by rain on leaves, and we have seen Oak pollen forming yellow spots on leaves after a shower.

A very slight shower, lasting hardly more than a minute, fell here this morning (July 2) about 10 o'clock. My wife gathering some flowers immediately afterwards noticed that the drops of water appeared yellowish, and that the white Roses were all spotted and stained. I did not hear of this circumstance till the evening; I then looked at several Roses and Syringas and found them much stained in spots. Between the petals of the double white Roses there were still drops of the dirty water: and this when put under the microscope showed numerous brown spherical bodies, $\frac{1}{1000}$ of an inch in diameter, and covered with short, conical transparent spines. There were other smaller, smooth, colourless sacs about $\frac{1}{4000}$ of an inch in diameter. I preserved a minute drop of the water beneath thin glass, cementing the edges, and next morning looked rather more carefully at it. I then observed that the water swarmed with elongated, moving atoms, only just visible with a quarter-inch object glass. Whether these inhabited the rain-drops, when they fell, I cannot of course say; but I suspect so, for the petals, now that they are nearly dry, seem stained with absolutely impalpable matter of the colour of rust of iron. This matter has chiefly collected, in the act of drying, on the edges of each spot. The Rev. M. J. Berkeley could tell us what the larger spherical bodies are which fell this day by myriads from the sky, carried up there, I presume, by some distant whirlwind.

We gathered a leaf spotted with yellow dusty patches a few days since in Mr. RUCKER'S garden at Wandsworth, but though there were grains of Fir pollen in the spots, and those of some other plant which we could not ascertain, together with a few spores of Fungi, the principal part of the matter consisted of slightly ferruginous apparently siliceous dust.

The ferruginous spots on the white petals of Philadelphus forwarded by Mr. DARWIN, consisted of coloured less distinctly siliceous particles, and multitudes of irregular bodies so minute as to present the Brownian molecular motion.

It is quite astonishing what a multitude of bodies are carried about by the wind in the form of dust. EHRENBERG some years since made us acquainted with the dust of the trade winds, but interesting matters may be found at home if we can in any way arrest the bodies which traverse our atmosphere. Flakes of snow bring down various things with them, and it is probable that few showers fall without leaving some sediment, though not so thick as in general to attract notice. An examination of such sediments or deposits with the microscope will soon materially modify our notions of spontaneous generation, and at the same time show a fertile source from which unexpected hybrid forms may arise. Indeed were not Fungi so much the creatures of peculiar atmospheric conditions, there would seem to be no limit to the diffusion of their species. *M. J. B.*

THERE still remains in our gardens one of the most beautiful half-shrubby plants in the world, named by Dr. LINDLEY Platycodon sinense. In the year 1852 it was thus described in PAXTON'S *Flower Garden*:—

"This is the finest herbaceous plant obtained for the Horticultural Society in China by Mr. Fortune; but it requires skilful management to gain the beauty of the specimen represented in the accompanying plate, which was prepared in the Chiswick garden. It is there cultivated in a pot, filled with peat, loam and sand, the first and last in excess, exposed freely during the summer under the slight shade of a low wall, and in winter kept dry in a cold frame. Thus managed it produces fine straight stiff branches from 2 to 3 feet high, bearing several large deep blue flowers in succession at the end, and ripening seed in some abundance.

"The first knowledge we had of the plant was from finding it among some dried specimens collected by the Rev. G. H. VACHELL, about the neighbourhood of Macao, and the islands adjacent, in December 1829. Mr. FORTUNE brought it from Chusan. At first we took it for a mere variety of the large-flowered Platycode, originally figured by GMELIN, from Siberia, under the name of 'Campanula foliis lanceolatis glabris, inæqualiter dentatis, utroque extremo integris, ramis unifloris terminantibus;' and under that name it has become dispersed through our gardens. But a further acquaintance with the Chinese plant, and a comparison of it with a wild Dahurian specimen, has satisfied us that it is really quite distinct. The Russian plant is described as having a weak stem; unable to sustain itself erect ("caule surgit simplici pro ratione tenui, hinc indè flexuoso"—GMELIN), which is exactly what was found when it was formerly cultivated in our gardens; this, on the contrary, has stiff stems, with almost a woody texture. Then, the large-flowered Platycode has but one flower at the end of the stem ("in summitate flos insistit speciosissimus") or at the most two; on the contrary, our species always has a long raceme, and will even sometimes branch, as is apparent from Mr. VACHELL'S evidence. Moreover, in the first, the capsule has the form of an inverted cone, in the last it resembles a hemisphere or half egg. We are, therefore, obliged to distinguish it by a new name.

"There is a semi-double white variety, figured in the Journal of the Horticultural Society. Both produce seed, by which they may be propagated. Some years must however elapse before plants will bear such flowers as were produced in the specimen now represented."

We are asked what has become of this Platycode, and what sort of treatment is best suited to it. As great numbers have been given away at the ballots of the Royal Horticultural Society, some instructions for managing the plant in a first-rate way would be acceptable to many, and we venture to throw upon our obliging correspondents the task of satisfying the curiosity of a great lover of flowers.

—— To have GRAPES ALL THE YEAR ROUND fit for table is certainly a very satisfactory achievement in fruit culture, depending partly on a well-made selection of sorts, but still more on the cultural skill brought to bear on the management. The subject has lately been opened in the pages of the *Florist*, wherein Mr. Hill, of Keele Hall, well known as a most successful Vine grower, tells us that for the last three years he has not been without a bunch of Grapes for his employer's table any day in the year. To obtain this supply seven Vineries are kept going, in the following order; and planted with the undernamed varieties:—

1. Frankenthal: generally breaks of its own accord towards October; fit for cutting March 25. Here, however, Mr. Hill would add Muscat Hâtive de Saumur, and Buckland Sweetwater.
2. Black Hamburgh, Buckland Sweetwater, Black Prince: started December 1st, the earliest fit for cutting by the middle of May.
3. Black Hamburgh, Black Prince: started January 1st; in cutting from the middle of June to early in August. Lady Downe's grafted on Hamburgh comes in useful after the latter is over.
4. Hamburghs principally, with a selection of other sorts: started at the end of February; ripe in August and September.
5. Hamburghs: break of their own accord; ripe generally early in September; to hang well they should be ripe by middle of September; they yield a supply from November to January, and sometimes to the end of February.
6. Muscat of Alexandria, started March 1.
7. Barbarossa, West's St. Peter's, Lady Downe's, Old Tokay, Trebbiana: the latest house; has but little rest, just enough to wash, paint, and top dress; the fruit hangs till middle of March. To this house Mr. Hill would add Kempsey Alicante, and Burchardt's Prince.

The best early white Grape Mr. Hill thinks may be the Muscat above mentioned, which, started on the 1st of January, was by the middle of May almost fit for table, and has moreover the true Muscat flavour. The next best he finds to be Buckland Sweetwater. As a late sort Mr. Hill thinks very highly of the true old Tokay, when allowed plenty of time to ripen; and he highly recommends it as a white companion to Lady Downe's Seedling, which is with him the best late black sort.

The subject is continued by Mr. TILLERY in the same publication. At Welbeck they have nine houses