

TO THE TULIP GROWERS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

GENTLEMEN,

I am induced to address you, in consequence of a circular and certain resolutions, adopted at a meeting of florists, at Denton, having been distributed widely, and purporting, as they do, to be proceedings in connection with the Great Northern Tulip Show.

I shall make no comment on their professed sympathy with the young amateurs and cottagers; nor on the scheme which proposes to separate the large from the small growers, or, as they elegantly express it, the giants from the dwarfs; nor yet on those equitable principles which secure prizes to a certain portion of the exhibitors *exclusively*; nor on the cups and class-money which they *expect* to raise; nor on that pharisaical charity towards Manchester, which says one thing and means another; nor on that envy, which, like the jaundiced eye, sees everything through an improper medium; but simply state a few facts, to show to the public what *we* contemplate, and what *they* may reasonably expect.

I scarcely need allude to the resolution, unanimously passed at York, that the management of the next Great Northern

Show should be entrusted to the Manchester Amateur Tulip Society. I am glad to say that that society consists of precisely the same number of members as when the resolution passed; that they are perfectly agreed in all that has been done in reference to the Great Show; that they are determined to carry it out in every respect equal to the exhibition at York; that the whole of their arrangements are as complete as it is possible to be in this early stage; that the list of prizes, though not particularly announced in the advertisement, will exceed in amount the York schedule; that the arrangement of them is made more favourable to the small grower; that the services of competent judges have been secured; and the day of exhibition left to the choice of the exhibitors.

It is quite true we have agreed upon ten shillings as the subscription for each, except the members of our society, who pay double that amount. Is ten shillings inconsistent with the idea of a great show? or is it for the sake of five shillings that these gentlemen have formed the strange opposition scheme of "two Great Northern Tulip Shows" being held in the same town, at the same time? The *onus* of the circular and the folly of the attempt are upon a par. It is equally true, we can promise no favour to any one, but hope to secure justice to all; and I may add, it never has happened in my experience, that all exhibitors have met equally well prepared. Supposing the subscription to have been five shillings each, what would follow as a consequence? Insignificant prizes. The amount a man may subscribe to an exhibition in no way affects his chance of success; hence the fallacy of Mr. Slater's and his friends' arguments, and the folly of their interference. If the subscription be small, the amount distributed in prizes must be small also, unless great sacrifices be made by some one.

Allusion has been made to the show at Wakefield, at which there were about forty subscribers, at five shillings each, or ten pounds for the whole. The principal part of this sum was given to the first pan, and to defray the incidental expenses of the exhibition, leaving scarcely a shilling each for class competition. Is this held up to the young amateur and cottager as a model meeting? Is it rightly designated a Great Northern Show?

At York, had the exhibition taken place as at first proposed, that is, in 1848, the subscriptions would have been about fifteen pounds. In 1849 they were augmented, by an additional number of subscribers, to twenty-five pounds; and even this sum, I believe, would scarcely pay the *expenses* of the exhibition. Whence then must the prize money have come, had it not been for the union and cordial co-operation of the York florists, and the untiring and admirable exertions of their secretary, Mr. Hepton. I may here mention that Mr. Hepton recommended to me a higher amount of subscription.

It is quite true also that Mr. Jennison, the proprietor of the Belle Vue Gardens, has, with his usual liberality to the florists of Manchester and the surrounding districts, promised to the funds of the exhibition the sum of *twenty pounds*, the use and enjoyment of his splendid panoramic gardens, tents, and unequalled accommodation, a band of music, and other things of considerable importance, equal to *fifteen pounds* more; and for this liberality, the only return he requires is that the flowers shall remain in his possession, as a further attraction to the numerous visitors who resort to these attractive gardens.

It is urged as an objection to our arrangements that the flowers are to remain staged. We, on the contrary, hope that this plan will be followed as a general rule, in all open meetings, to prevent that system of purloining flowers, at the close of an exhibition, so frequently practised by parties, for dishonest purposes, much to the prejudice of floriculture.

It has also been stated that the opposition has its origin in our having deviated from the principles acted on at Wakefield, York, &c. though it must be apparent to every sensible man that that is not the true cause. The same breath which censures us and professes an adherence to the rules and regulations at York, requests the nurserymen to aid them with money to convert the tulip show into an horticultural display of plants, &c. also. Admirable consistency!

There is one thing more I will allude to, and that is the expenses inseparable from a public exhibition. These, I have stated, are guaranteed to us at Belle Vue, with the handsome donation and the whole of our subscriptions for prizes; forming a more imposing schedule than has ever appeared for one class of flowers in this or any other part of the kingdom.

And lastly, it must be stated, that the meeting at which this opposition scheme was concocted was held at Denton, a hamlet near Ashton; that the parties who constitute the committee reside at distances from Manchester varying from five to twenty miles; that the only two names in the committee connected with Manchester were never consulted on the matter, one of them being our treasurer, and neither of them particularly interested in any movement amongst the tulip growers of the country.

Having now given you a simple statement of facts, I will leave it entirely in your hands to say whether the opposition is a justifiable one, or whether anything has been done by our society to forfeit a single particle of your entire confidence.

I remain yours faithfully,

R. DIXON,

HONORARY SECRETARY TO THE MANCHESTER
AMATEUR TULIP SOCIETY.