

## TROUBLES IN THE FRUIT GARDEN.

## "EXPENSIVE NOTIONS."

## No. II.

Some men having fallen into a beaten path of thought or labor, appear to be unable to leave it, or to think that other paths and other modes may be as desirable. In gardening, this obstinate attachment to old plans and methods has been as detrimental to its advancement as it has in other pursuits. Many a man, and for that matter also woman, in possession of a garden spot, would delight in making it produce the choicer as well as the commoner sorts of fruits, but they are deterred by the expense. If one should take up a book upon the subject, say the culture of the luscious foreign grape, he is at once appalled by the endless preparations required, even when the writer professes to give directions for its culture in the most inexpensive way. The authors of these books assume that this grape can be cultivated only in one way, and that so costly as to put it out of the power of those who are afflicted with that universally lamented but very general malady the "Augusta res domi." But I feel confident that the powers of the grape—its power of adaptation to an endless variety of circumstances—its power of drawing nutriment from apparently exhausted sources, and its power of maturing fruit under apparently adverse conditions, are exceedingly underrated. Indeed people in general, and horticulturists, seemed leagued to prevent the vine doing its best, and proving itself to be the most vigorous and productive of all plants, ever ready to yield its beautiful fruit and grateful juice under the most ordinary treatment and in the most inexpensive way. We purpose now to answer the question. "Can the foreign grape be raised cheaply?" We answer yes, and very cheaply, as will be seen from the succeeding observations:

1. And first for the size of the border, or ground to plant the vine in. Read almost any Grape Grower's Guide, and how appalling the preparations detailed as requisite. Allen's "Culture of the Grape," a very good work for those who have plenty of spare cash, on this point has the following:—"The border should be twenty feet wide for each set of vines—if thirty the better—and 2½ or 3 feet deep. If you

have but little room, you can manage to grow very fair grapes with 12 feet border." Now this involves great labor and expense, and it is not at all necessary. A border four feet wide is abundant for at least the first few years. It is very certain that the first prize given by the Royal Horticultural Society of England for grapes, was taken by those which were grown in a border not more than *two feet* wide. (See *Horticulturist* for October 1856.) The *London Gardener's Chronicle* says on this instance:—"Wonders will never cease. All the grape growers were beaten the other day by an interloper. Seldom have practical men received a more heavy fall. Great rules were violated. The wisdom of our forefathers was thrust aside like a piece of useless lumber. It is incredible though true. The large silver gilt medal, the highest offered for grapes, was awarded to Mr. Glendinning, of the Chiswick Nursery, for three dishes of grapes. The fortunate winner in the instance before us, built a glass shed or lean-to with a border and walk at the back. This back border is *two feet* wide, and in this the vines were planted. Again, fine grapes are borne by vines produced in pots. Buist says, that he has seen a vine in a pot of the Chasselas kind, with 29 bunches of fruit on it. Allen himself says, that "grapes in pots may be grown successfully, proper attention being paid to watering them. A vine in a 12 inch pot may mature from 5 to 10 bunches. A wooden box, or the half of a large keg is preferable, as the soil is less liable to dry and form into a lump; when this is the case, the water is very apt to run away by the sides of the pot, leaving the middle of the soil perfectly dry." And Judge Harrison of Toronto has, we are informed, practised, and prefers pot culture of the vine, with great satisfaction and good results. Hence, a narrow border will, at least for a time, answer every purpose. The labor and expense of preparation of it will be small, and you have this decided advantage that you can, if you choose, add to it when convenient. But now—

2. As to the formation of this border. Hear Allen again—"If the soil is a good loam, begin at one end and trench it; mark off ten feet the entire width, throw out the soil two feet." Harken to Charlton, *Cold Grapes*, p. 32—"Take out to the depth of *two feet* the whole of the upper surface, then dig a trench two feet wide and one foot deep, with one or more outlets for the water to escape all around the margin of the excavated space." Now why all this excavation? Is the sky so low where these