

## The Garden.

### THE GOLDEN CHAMPION GRAPE.

The Golden Champion Grape Vine is so highly spoken of in all the English horticultural literature, that we think it well to call attention to its reputed merits. We understand that W. Cunard, Esq., of this city, has planted one of his new Vineries with this valuable new variety; and any one establishing a Vinery cannot do better than secure a few plants along with some of the old standard sorts. Of course it will not do in the open air with us. Like thoroughbred live stock, it will require a comfortable house and plenty of food. The following account is extracted from the *Florist and Pomologist* :—

"It is not only a decided novelty, but a novelty of the very highest excellence. Free and robust in growth, hardy and prolific in habit, magnificent both in berry and in cluster, and exquisite in flavour, what more can be desired? In truth, its merits are of so high an order that they leave little to be wished for.

"The bunch of the Golden Champion is moderately large, compactly-shouldered, and somewhat tapered, with a stout fleshy stalk. The berries are very large, with stout warted foot-stalks, some 2 inches long, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in circumference; they are generally of an ovate shape, but occasionally somewhat roundish, and they have a thin, pale yellowish-green skin, which acquires a rich golden amber tinge with a slight bloom when they are fully ripe. The flesh is tolerably firm, but tender, with few seeds, very rich and juicy, with a flavour which, though compared with that of the Black Hamburgh, is, to our taste, much more saccharine and luscious than that variety, even when grown on the same stock.

"This new Grape supplies, as far as can at present be judged of it, a long-felt desideratum—namely, a high-class free-growing white grape, of hardy constitution, suitable for general cultivation as a companion to that best of all Grapes for general purposes, the Black Hamburgh. It was raised by Mr. W. Thomson, of Dalkeith, some five years since, from a seed taken from a Grape that was itself a cross between the Champion Hamburgh and the Bowood Muscat, and has been freely exhibited during the present year, when, among other awards, it has received a first-class certificate from the Fruit Committee at South Kensington. The foliage is very slightly lobed, and deeply and sharply serrated."

We have no doubt Mr. Harris, of the Halifax Nurseries, will soon be able to supply young vines of this sort, as he has a keen eye to meritorious novelties.

### CANNAS IN THE OPEN GARDEN.

The *Canna coccinea*, or "Indian Shot," is one of the oldest inhabitants of the Plant Stove or House devoted to Tropical Exotics. It was to be seen in every Botanic and Private Garden, petted and coddled as if it were too tender for the sun to shine or wind to blow upon. We recollect when *Diehlytra spectabilis*, the "Chinaman's Breeches," which is one of the hardiest plants on the face of the earth, was treated in a similar manner; and eighty years ago (which we do not remember) English Greenhouses gave shelter to Larch trees, which now grow as robustly on the promontories of Cape Breton as the native Spruces. It appears now that Cannas may be treated like Dahlias; our summers are hot enough for them, and the roots may be stored away in a cellar in winter. Last summer, in passing along Lockman street, we noticed in one of the front plots a fine large Canna, which seemed to enjoy its quarters and treatment. M. Sisley, of Lyons, France, in a communication to the *American Agriculturist* for the present month (February) expresses his surprise at the neglect of the noble Cannas in America, and recommends their general culture. There are now many species and varieties, differing much in height, and in form and colour, both of foliage and flowers. In foliage they rival the lily of the Nile, and their flowers vie with those of the Gladiolus.

### AUCUBA JAPONICA.

Ash Wednesday being a College holiday, we strayed into the nurseries of Mr. Harris, Richmond Road, and there made the acquaintance of several new varieties of a plant of no ordinary interest. This is the *Aucuba Japonica*, known well enough in English Gardens, and to every English man, woman, and child, on account of its mottled leaves, as the Variegated Laurel. It is commonly known there also, by its Japanese name "Aucuba." It is a shrub with very large evergreen leaves of a bright shining green, mottled and blotched with yellowish white. It is one of the oldest "foliage plants" in existence, and its neat habit has rendered it a favorite in England, where it is commonly grown in front plots in the cities, as an "architectural plant" suitable for relieving the fronts of heavy stone buildings. Persons who have made pilgrimages to see the Duke of Wellington's London House, will recollect to have seen some fine plants of the *Aucuba* there. It was introduced into England from Japan so long ago as 1783 by Mr. John Graeffer, according to Aiton's "Hortus Kewensis," vol. V., second edition, page 257, where it is called the "Gold Plant." It is figured in Bot. Mag., table 1197.

In England it flowers in early summertime. It is described by Thunberg as growing commonly in Japan, both wild and cultivated, and of the height of a man, but it seldom attains that stature in England. In most botanical works to which we have referred (Persoon, London, Aiton, and many others) the *Aucuba* is described as monoecious, having male and female flowers on the same plant. That is not the case, and the only correct description which we have found is the one contained in the new "English Cyclopaedia," of which a complete set was recently presented to Dalhousie College Library, by Admiral Sir James Hope.

The most remarkable facts connected with the plant depend indeed upon its being dioecious, the male and female flowers being each produced by separate plants. For seventy years none but the female plant was known in Europe and America, and consequently no fruit or seeds were ever produced. After the female plant had been obtained, few opportunities occurred of obtaining access to Japan. At last, some twelve or fifteen years ago, a botanical collector (Mr. Robert Fortune, a personal friend of the writer of this notice,) bethought him of hunting up the long lost husband; he succeeded in his efforts, and now we see in Mr. Harris's nursery at the present moment the male plant in full blossom, with neat trusses of brownish purple flowers, each flower with four bright cream colored anthers; and the female plant with clusters of large red berries, the size of coffee beans. There are, likewise, various varieties showing differences in the blotching and spotting of the leaves. Mr. Harris has only now to raise a young progeny of seedlings from the seeds produced, to afford us a living illustration of one of the most interesting chapters in botanical history.

Most of the circumstances we have mentioned are from memory, and we have not works of reference sufficient to give a detailed history of the recently introduced varieties, nor can we state the precise year in which the male plant was first brought to Europe, and from thence to America. It ought to be described somewhere in the "Annales Botanices Systematicae" of Walpers, but strangely enough we have searched through the volumes of this work in vain.

The *Aucuba* like all broad leaved Evergreens is not hardy enough to stand the winter in the open air in Nova Scotia, but may be kept over winter in a cool green-house, or parlour window.

### THE LATEST NOVELTY IN CLIMBERS.

Among the striking and "very" new plants recently exhibited at the Royal Horticultural Show at Leicester, was