

THE STRAWBERRY.

MR. PARKER EARLE, of Cobden, Illinois, who has at this writing, a strawberry field of eighty acres, and who has grown into this immense business from a small beginning, favors us with the following:—

HINTS TO BEGINNERS.

Strawberry growers are to be considered in three classes: 1st, those who grow the fruit simply for the pleasure of it and for home use; 2nd, those who grow for a very near market; 3rd, those who grow berries for distant shipment. Any advice given to a beginner should be based upon a knowledge of these facts, and of the soil to be used.

Pretty fair crops of strawberries can be grown upon almost or quite every kind of soil which produces common farm crops. But on some soils the berries, though looking and tasting well, will not keep well and cannot be marketed at a distance. I will not undertake to say what soils will develop this fault. I have grown berries on a poor, sandy soil, which would not endure shipment a hundred miles; while on land looking no better, crops have been grown possessing great endurance and shipping capabilities. The variety in both cases was the Wilson. I cannot say what element was lacking in the one case which was present in the other. My impression is that good clay loams will generally produce better berries for eating or marketing than sandy or black prairie lands. Yet it is probably a fact that more strawberries are grown on sandy soils, in the United States, for market, than on all other kinds of land. It would be well always to experiment carefully before planting largely for distant shipment. So far then as the soil and the management are concerned, the first two classes may be considered as one. But the grower for market must consider the taste and the whims of the market, as to varieties. The grower for home use will be more particular to have varieties good to eat than those simply big or handsome; while the market grower will soon learn that fine appearances count for more than good eating qualities. People who buy fruit of any kind or in any market, so far as I can learn—I speak of the majority of buyers—pay more for beauty than for flavour. Hence, the Monarch of the West, a very high flavoured berry, which colors very poorly, will generally be rejected, while the Wilson or Captain Jack, both very sour, but coloring well, will sell promptly.