

inform us, in the first place, how they have been kept in such fine order. I had no idea that pears could be kept so well, and to tell the truth, I have never had much faith in winter pears. I have rarely seen one worth eating.

B. That has been my opinion; I would not give a good *Northern Spy* or *Swaar* apple for a bushel of the best winter pears I have ever seen.

Well, gentlemen, I am glad to have an opportunity of convincing you of your error. These pears have been kept in a cool dry cellar, some spread on shelves, and some packed away in boxes among layers of straw. None of them have been ripened in a warm room: but I am sure that if they had, *some of them*, at least, would have been better than they are.

Now, by way of reserving the good wine till the last, we will pass around this handsome yellow pear, which I confess *looks* much better than it tastes. What do you think of it?

A. Barely tolerable, sir. It is too dry and musky for my taste. It is not tender and melting as I think a good pear ought to be.

What say you Mr. B.?

B. I agree with Mr. A.

Well, you are right, gentlemen. This is not really a good pear, *now*, for eating; but it is esteemed very highly in the kitchen, and I only brought it forward that I might tell you something about it. It is past its season; it should never be kept later than the middle of December. Up to that time it is pretty good to eat, and first rate for stewing and preserving. Then it is one of the best of growers and bearers, the tree is every year loaded with immense clusters, and they are always fair. Notwithstanding it has been cast out by the Pomological society, I still regard it as a most profitable and useful variety.

A. Would you recommend such a pear for a small garden?

No sir by no means.

B. What is its name?

*Bleeker's Meadow*; it originated, I believe in Pennsylvania.

Well, here is another native pear, originated on Long Island. It is not so finely colored as the other, but you will find it more agreeable to the taste.

A. A good pear, sir; not buttery, like a *Virgalieu*, but juicy and fine flavored.

What say you Mr. B.?

B. I should call it good, sir, for this season of the year; and if it be a good bearer I should be glad to have a tree of it in my garden. What is its name?

*Princesse St. Germain*; a hardy, productive, valuable pear, and it keeps and ripens as well in the cellar as a *R. I. Greening* apple. I have always a full crop of it; but I find that on the sunny side of the tree, and on all the exposed parts, where the fruits get that brown or ruddy tinge you observe on some specimens, they ripen well and acquire a fine flavor; while those green ones, from the lower and interior parts of the tree, remain hard and insipid. But this is pretty much the case with all winter pears.

A. Can this pear be grown on the quince stock?

No, sir; but you can "double-work" it as the nurserymen say—that is, bud or graft some variety like the *Virgalieu*, or *Duchesse d'Angoulême*, on

the quince, and then graft the *Princesse St. Germain* on that.

Here is another Long Island variety that is coming rapidly into favor. It is called the *Lawrence*; you have no doubt heard of it.

A. This comes nearer my idea of a good pear than either of the others. I should call this *very good*.

B. So should I; really melting and fine flavored like a *Virgalieu* in October. I must change my opinion about winter pears. But do you mean to say this has ripened in the cellar?

Certainly it has; and it is moreover a good grower and a good bearer, succeeding well both on pear and quince stock, in the orchard or the garden. A gentleman on Long Island has planted a large orchard of it, to grow fruit for the market.

Now I will introduce you to a foreigner, none of your vain, swaggering pretenders, however, that assume great airs to astonish the natives; but a plain citizen under whose brown coat you will find genuine merit, I think. The name is *Winter Nelis*. On the other side of the water, it is called *Colmar Nelis*, *Bonne de Malines*, *Beurre de Malines*, &c. What do you think of it?

A. Excellent, sir, excellent; the best yet. Besides being buttery and juicy, it has a rich vinous flavor, surpassing all we have yet tasted.

B. A first rate example of modest merit. If we never receive anything worse than this from abroad, I would say *the more the better*.

Well, here is another, almost, if not quite as good, but less talked of and less known. I think by and by it must be very popular.

A. How remarkable its form—as round as an apple; and its color is as clear and bright a yellow as the *Virgalieu* in October; and how luscious, fresh, and high flavored. I think it comes quite up to the *Winter Nelis*. Don't you think so Mr. B.?

B. I do, indeed; and it far surpasses it in beauty. How is its growth and bearing?

A capital grower, sir, and a good bearer; not so prolific as a *Bartlett* or *Virgalieu*. It grows equally well on pear or quince. The specimens you have tasted were grown upon the quince stock. It is almost past its season. Through all December it has been fine, eaten from the shelves in the cellar. It is called *Doyenné Sieulle*. You may note it as a good December pear.

We are not yet at the bottom of the dish, but the remainder of the gossip must be deferred till a future time.

MAJOR.—We are ready Mrs. Grundy for you. [*Mrs Grundy reads.*]

#### DESCRIPTION OF PLATE.

Dress of rich glacé silk, shaded blue and white; the skirt has three deep flounces of black lace, each headed by two *ruches* of narrow ribbon. *Caraco* body, high at the back, and opening to the waist in front: it is trimmed round with two rows of narrow black lace, each headed by a *ruche*: the opening of the front is crossed by two rows of lace, below which are three *nœuds* of ribbon. The sleeves are three-quarter length, and are open in the front of the arm nearly to the top; they are trimmed with lace, and the opening is closed at equal distances by bows of ribbon. This