Kent, the most celebrated fruit district of England, and for the growth of filberts in particular. Much of the success of filbert culture depends on a correct system of pruning; a matter, to which from the little we have seen on this side of the Atlantic, too little attention is paid.—Eds.]

Whatever differences of opinion may exist respecting the management of most of our hardy fruits in regard to the amount of pruning they require, there is no question that the knife, or it may be the saw, is more freely used in the treatment of this tree than in that of any other. It is not too much to say that in the case of the filbert fully nine-tenths of every year's growth are cut away, and often more than that; and, if we except the grape vine when pruned on the spur system, there is certainly no other fruit tree on which the knife plays so conspicuous a part. As the filbert is in general a free and rather fast-growing tree, the abundance of wood to choose from enables the cultivator to select that which is best adapted to give the shape he wants. This is done with so much exactness, that, in a well-managed orchard of this fruit, one tree so much resembles another that the cursory observer might suppose that they had all been turned out of one mould. A glance at the way this is done in Kent, where so many acres are under this crop, will assist the amateur in keeping the trees within reasonable bounds, and also in making them more fruitful than if allowed to run rampant amongst other trees less vigorous than themselves. To make this more clear, we will divide this subject into the following heads:—

Soil and Situation.—Although occasional plantations of this fruit may be formed on stiff, heavy ground, such plots are the exception, for they rarely prosper and are fast disappearing. A dry, stony soil, not too shallow, without anything pernicious in the subsoil, is the one the filbert likes best; and many hundreds of acres of the best plantations in Kent are on the slopes of hills having limestone at no great depth below. Occasionally they are also planted over the chalk, but the result is less satisfactory.

Generally speaking, the soils which overlie Kentish ragstone, or its substitute, which in local language is called "Hassock" (a soft stone unable to endure frost), are the best; and in tillage quantities of such stones as large as a half-brick are turned up and mixed with the surface soil, presenting anything but an inviting appearance. In such soils both the filbert and Morello cherry seem to thrive better than in ground of any other description, and, what is equally important, they bear well also. Such a soil is, of course, a stranger to stagnant water; and though the substratum is hard when first broken up, there is nothing in it pernicious to vegetation, as seeds will vegetate in it soon after being thrown to the top. Being of a half-sandy nature, it may with advantage be used as a fertilizer to soils of a contrary description. All the filbert plantations are not on soil of the above description, but it is generally admitted that on such the best crops of fruit are produced. The nearer, therefore, that it can be imitated elsewhere, the greater the chance of success.

Situation has also something to do in the matter, and when a choice of this exists the western slope of a hill is the best position; but in the valley of the Medway plantations are formed on all inclinations, dryness of bottom being one of the conditions first of all insisted on, and a soil not by any means meagre in regard to depth is also necessary. The other conditions are all subservient to them. Shelter from very high winds may be useful, but this is of less consequence than for most other fruits; but very exposed places, as the tops of naked hills, are too cold and ungenial, and, though the tree will thrive there, it is seldom fruitful enough to be satisfactory. Though blooming amongst the earliest of all our fruits, the tree is far from being the hardiest. The beautiful little tufts of crimson which form the female or nut-bearing blossom are very sensible to frost, and are often damaged by it. The long green catkins or male blossoms which hang all the winter are hardy enough; but if destroyed before the others make their appearance, the crop, of course, is bad. Generally speaking, however, the well-being of the crop depends on other conditions more than this; and so many things are necessary to perfect success that the crop of filberts is, perhaps, more capricious than that of any other fruit, although when good nothing yields a better return. Upwards of a ton weight per acre has been gathered in favourable seasons; but as filberts are often planted in conjunction with apples, pears, and other fruits, the return is limited in consequence of the ground taken up by these. Nevertheless, the cultivator generally favours his filbert trees if they do well, and the others are cut away.

Preparation of the Ground and Planting.—Ground of the above description is generally trenched, and all hard stones that will do for road-making purposes are taken out; but such soft ones as are of no use and likely to be split up into fragments by the winter frost are left in. I think about 9d. per rod for trenching the ground, and about the same per ton for such useful stones as are taken out, is often paid, and the increased value of the land well repays this outlay. This being done early in the autumn, the young trees are planted as soon as they can be conveniently got in, taking care to do this, if possible, when the ground is dry.

Many growers raise their own plants; in