

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

POPULAR STRAWBERRIES.

VARIETIES FOR PROFIT AND PLEASURE.

Those who are engaged in the growing of fruit for market, soon find that their success greatly depends on a proper selection of varieties. Strawberries that are among the very best for home use, are often almost worthless for market purposes—sometimes on account of the want of firmness to stand shipment, and at other times the varieties may not be sufficiently productive to grow profitably. Then again, though some kinds may combine both of these qualities of firmness of berries and productiveness of plants, yet unless they have size or color of berries to recommend them, they will still be lacking a necessary element for obtaining success. In these times of over-crowded markets, it is very important to have some qualities to distinguish berries from the common run of fruit, if paying prices are desired. Perhaps a short description of some of the market varieties will at this time prove of interest.

Captain Jack.—Though this variety has nothing in the way of remarkable size to distinguish it, yet it has other qualities that make it a favorite in many localities. In some places it seems to succeed even better than it does with me. Here upon my grounds this variety resembles somewhat the "Wilsons" in size and habits of growth, but in other portions of the country, and especially at the south, it proves decidedly superior.

One of my correspondents in Texas writes me:—"The 'Captain Jack' with me is larger and more showy than either 'Charles Downing' or 'Col. Cheney.' They are uniformly large, and more productive than the 'Wilson's'." Another correspondent in Southern Mississippi says of it: "I do not know of a variety that stands up so well in the box, and keeps its color so long as does the 'Captain Jack.'" The plants seem to thrive here upon the hottest soils and prove very productive.

Forest Rose.—This beautiful berry is rapidly rising in public favor, and it could hardly be otherwise, as a variety that combines large size, brilliance of color and fine flavor of fruit, with productiveness of plant, can hardly help but prove a favorite. The largest specimen berry up to this time measured eight inches in circumference. Possibly further experiments may show even greater results. The plants are the most thrifty of any of the fifty or sixty varieties upon my grounds, and make quite a contrast to some of the other kinds growing near at hand.

Duncan is a moderate sized berry of considerable merit. The fruit is usually about the size of the "Wilson's," but ripening earlier and having a less acid flavor, and brighter color, renders it well worthy of attention. It seems to be specially suited to heavy clay and rich gravelly soils.

Great American, President Lincoln, Sharpless, and Pioneer deservedly continue to attract a large share of attention, as berries measuring from five to fourteen and a quarter inches in circumference are certainly well worthy of notice.

Monarch of the West, Seneca Queen, Crescent Seedling, and Cumberland Triumph continue to merit attention, but are so different in their respective qualities as to require separate descriptions. These cannot, however, be given at present, but must be deferred until some other time.

There are two seasons of the year that are especially selected for setting out strawberry plants—either spring or early fall. Formerly the spring was the favorite time, but now that the new method has arisen of starting the plants in small flower-pots, many are selecting the latter time, as by this method, if the ground is rich, nearly a full crop of berries may be obtained in less than ten months. These potted plants also prove very desirable for transporting from one section of the country to another. In my next I can perhaps describe the unusual success obtained with these pot-grown plants, and the different systems that are used in growing them successfully.

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COOKING POULTRY.

When properly cooked, few articles of food are more desirable than "broilers," or young chickens; but, unfortunately, they are seldom prepared in such style as

to develop their best qualities or yield half the gratification they might. Like most kinds of meat they are cooked so injudiciously that the juices are lost and the flesh becomes hard and stringy. This is too much the case with fried or baked chickens, as well as with the young "broilers."

"Broilers" are usually sent to market too young, and if they are ordered by proxy, and the selection left to the judgment of the butcher or poultry merchant, they are apt to be little more than "skin and bones."

Every lady should have been educated to understand perfectly how to make a judicious choice of every article of food before she assumes the care and responsibility of a household. If she has not had this most desirable and much needed training in her girlhood, then a course of earnest self-education should be entered upon and perfected as rapidly as possible to enable her to judge correctly of the quantity and quality of every article needed for the comfort of her family. The mistress of every house, as far as lies in her power, would do well to attend to her own marketing. If she does this, let her, in the selection of chickens for broiling, be sure that they have been long enough out of the shell to furnish a sufficient amount of nourishment to pay for the trouble of cooking.

For broiling, split a chicken down the back; clean and wash thoroughly; twist the tip of the wing over the second joint; wipe the body dry, inside and out, with a clean meat cloth (never with a wiping-towel); spread it out, and with a rolling-pin or potato-masher break the projecting breast bone, so that the chicken may lie flat on the gridiron when ready to broil. Set it in the ice-chest for several hours after cleaning; still better if it is left there all night, and thus be sure it is well aired.

About an hour before time to cook the chicken put the giblets into a small skillet with a little pepper; pour in a cup and a half of boiling water and set it where they will boil gently till quite tender. Then salt them; take up and chop very fine, sifting over a little flour. When sufficiently fine, return them to the water in which they were boiled, stirring occasionally as it thickens. Beat to a smooth paste three tablespoonfuls of butter and one of flour, ready for use when the chicken is cooked. Put the gridiron over a clear but not fierce fire. When hot rub the bars with a clean cloth dipped in nicely clarified drippings or butter, and place the chicken over. Sprinkle on a little black pepper. Turn over to prevent scorching. When of a delicate brown both sides, but not more than half cooked, sprinkle on both sides what salt is needed and a little more pepper. Leave it over the fire a moment for the seasoning to penetrate, then put it into a steamer or farina kettle (a steamer is much the best) large enough at the bottom to keep the chicken in good shape. Spread over it the butter and flour that has been made ready, and then cover or "smother" it in rich cream, if plenty, or add more butter and cover with milk. Cover very close, if a farina kettle is used, so no steam may escape, and set it into the receiver or lower kettle, in which there should be enough boiling water just to touch the bottom of the upper kettle. Let it simmer or "smother" in the cream and seasoning from fifteen to twenty-five minutes according to the size of the chicken.

When about ready to take up, pour the gravy in which the giblets are simmering over it; then take the upper kettle out of the receiver; set it over the stove; let it boil up briskly two or three minutes, stirring the liquid gently, without disturbing the chicken, till it all thickens; then lift it carefully to a platter on which are slices of nicely toasted bread, and pour the gravy about it.

These directions are long on account of the minute specifications, but the whole work can be done in thirty-five minutes; and if on a faithful trial this is not conceded to be vastly superior to the common specimens of dried-up, tough broiled chicken we shall be disappointed. For those who like highly seasoned food a very small sprinkling of savory herbs or a little tomato ketchup may be thought an improvement.

Fried chicken should be prepared in a similar manner. Fry carefully in hot butter or lard till delicately brown on both sides, then treat as broiled chicken.

Until chickens are full fleshed and suitable for baking this double cooking is the only way we are acquainted with to secure a wholesome and palatable article.

When old and tough, baking chickens may be pre-

pared in a similar way, only reversing the order; "smothering" first, an hour, if very tough, in water instead of cream, and bake till well browned.

Pigeons, quails, partridges, etc., are delicious if half baked, then "smothered" till very tender; and all such dry meats as these birds are greatly improved by being larded all over the breasts with nice salt pork before baking.—*Mrs. Henry Ward Beecher, in N.Y. Christian Union.*

WHAT SALARY DOES A FARMER RECEIVE?

He receives the equivalent of a larger salary than ninety-nine out of a hundred of them are willing to admit. They underestimate their own profits, and overestimate the profits of men living on a salary.

There is a great difference among those who live by farming. A great many work the soil because they do not know what else to do, or because they cannot live by anything else. Many of this class hardly deserve to be classed as farmers. They lower the standing of farming as a business. I believe there is no business by which a man can live so well with so much neglect, as agriculture. Still, nothing better repays good care and ability. It is rather slow to yield brilliant returns at the outset; so is any business. The farmer's profits are concealed in the rise of land—in improvements by ditching, clearing, new buildings, more tools, or better stock. Most farmers have no idea how much it costs them to live. They forget to figure in the pork, poultry, mutton, butter, flour, vegetables, etc., etc. The salary man lives entirely by his individual efforts. In estimating a salary, we must do so by looking at the privileges enjoyed, the hard work of brain and muscles, and the gain in property and improvements.—*Rural New Yorker.*

THE SHEEP'S SENSE OF HEARING.

It is said that so acute is the sheep's sense of hearing, that she can distinguish the cry of her own lamb among as many as a thousand others all bleating at the same time, and the lamb, too, is able to recognize its mother's voice, even though it be in the midst of a large flock. James Hogg, who was a shepherd as well as a poet, tells us that it was very amusing to watch the sheep and lambs during the shearing season. While the sheep were being shorn, the lambs would be put into a fold by themselves, and the former would be sent to join their little ones as soon as the operation of shearing was over. The moment a lamb heard its mother's voice, it would hasten from the crowd to meet her, but instead of finding the "rough, well-clad mamma" which it had left a short time before, it would meet a strange and most deplorable-looking creature. At the sight of this, it would wheel about, uttering a most piteous cry of despair. Soon, however, the sheep's voice was heard again; the lamb would thereupon return, then once more bound away, and sometimes repeat this conduct for ten or a dozen times before it fully understood that the shorn ewe was in reality its mother.—*Wood.*

CINDERS IN THE EYE.

Persons travelling by railway are subject to continued annoyance from the flying cinders. On getting into the eyes they are not only painful for the moment, but are often the cause of long suffering, that ends in a total loss of sight. A very simple and effective cure is within the reach of every one, and would prevent much suffering and expense were it more generally known. It is simply one or two grains of flaxseed. They may be placed in the eye without injury or pain to that delicate organ, and shortly they begin to swell and dissolve a glutinous substance that covers the ball of the eye, enveloping any foreign substance that may be in it. The irritation or cutting of the membrane is thus prevented and the annoyance may soon be washed out. A dozen of these grains stowed away in the vest pocket may prove, in an emergency, worth their number in gold dollars.

PERSUASION by logic may shut up the mouth of gainsaying, but persuasion by love brings the heart into holy captivity.

WOMEN should understand that no beauty has any charms but the inward one of the mind, and that a gracefulness in the manners is much more engaging than that of their persons; that meekness and modesty are the true and lasting ornaments. These only are the charms that render wives amiable, and give them the best title to our respect.