

## THE QUALITY OF APPLES.



O be successful in fruit growing, more attention must be given to secure fruit of high quality. If only first-class fruit be offered for sale, the demand for it will be enormously increased. Quantity has been too long the chief aim of growers. The inferior varieties, that yield more largely, have taken the place of those of finer quality, which were shy bearers. This has been especially true of apples. Color has, however, counted as an important factor, and the red varieties, though sometimes inferior, have been in better demand than varieties superior for cooking or eating, that lacked color. Most people like a Greening apple better than a Baldwin, but because the latter has color and is quite as productive, it has had the preference. The Fall Pippin and Swaar are even better than the Greening in quality, but they are shy bearers and cannot be grown with profit without high culture and manuring. The Spitzenberg has good color, but is not a strong-growing tree and is a poor bearer, and is now not largely grown for market. One reason for defective yields and poor quality of apples is, we believe, the decrease of mineral fertilizers in the soil. The stronger and more vigorous growth of the Baldwin and Greening trees enabled their roots to gather more potash, phosphate, and other material for perfecting the fruit. But within two or three years these varieties, especially the Baldwins, have proven less reliable to produce a crop than they used to be. On the other hand, trees of the Spitzenberg variety, which were liberally manured with wood ashes and phosphate, maintained a healthy dark green foliage until fall and ripened large and finely-colored fruit. The deficiency of mineral manures is seen first in the foliage, which is easily injured by blight. Of course, wherever the foliage is destroyed, the fruit is poor or fails entirely.

We believe there is profit for farmers in New England in paying more attention to fruit growing, not merely apples but pears, plums and the smaller fruits, where there is a near market. The aim should be to grow the very best quality and depend on this to secure a paying price. The pears grown near Boston have the reputation of being the best quality grown anywhere. But if due care is given to selecting the best varieties and manuring liberally with mineral fertilizers, other localities can doubtless produce as good pears as any grown in this vicinity. The pear is a fruit which requires a good supply of phosphate. It also requires better cultivation than is usually given to apples. The pear orchard should be cultivated every year, because it is unsafe to apply the large amount of stable manure to pear trees when in grass that is needed to keep them thrifty. We can keep an apple orchard in grass and top-dress it heavily enough to offset this drain on the soil.—Country Gentleman.