

CHRISTMAS FRUIT IN LONDON, ENGLAND.

SINCE Ontario fruit growers' are so deeply interested in the export of their fruit to Great Britain, and have reason to hope that this trade will be successfully opened during the coming season, by means of improved cold storage provisions, and the experimental shipments carried on under the supervision of Prof. Robertson, we give some extracts from the Daily Standard, concerning the fruits on the Christmas market.

A stroll round the wholesale fruit markets of the Metropolis, and a visit or two to the Pudding-lane sale-rooms and the docks and wharves, will satisfy anyone that the prospects, as far as the Christmas supplies of fruit are concerned, are better than they have been for many a year. Naturally, the question of Christmas fruits leads one, especially when experienced in the ins and outs of the enormously expanding fruit trade, to state a few facts, first of all with regard to the apple—the king of fruits. At the present time we are deriving our outside supplies from Belgium, Canada, France, Holland, Italy, Spain, and the United States. They are coming in in fair quantities. During one week lately we received twenty thousand bushels from Canada, thirteen hundred from France, two thousand five hundred from Italy, four thousand three hundred and thirty from the United States, and fourteen hundred and one from Spain. These quantities, added to other but insignificant supplies, and the receipts at other ports outside London, bring up the weekly total of apple imports to over fifty thousand bushels.

On the other hand, the home stocks are short, and especially of choice samples, for which an unlimited demand prevails at high prices—at prices, it may surprise the general public to know, higher than have been known in the history of the fruit trade. Whilst we have a goodly display of grand Nova Scotian Ribstons on show, of deeper-colored Blenheim Orange, and of delicately-hued King also of magnificently-colored American Ben Davis, Baldwins, and the pale but golden-skinned Newtown Pippins, we have in spite of the shortage in the home stocks, English apples far superior to those named above in every point. We have some grandly-colored Blenheim Orange of enormous proportions, of perfectly-shaped King, big mellow-looking Ribston Pippin, Giant Golden Noble and Bismarks, the latter a splendid fruit, for sale, Lane's Prince Albert, and last, but not least, Bramley's Seedling,

one of the finest cooking and heaviest croppers known; also Wheeler's Russet and Old Nonpareil, that old-fashioned but exquisitely flavoured apple, of which tradition has it that it came from France, and was set by a Jesuit in the days of good Queen Bess. These English apples are referred to simply to show that, in spite of the advances made by the foreign producer, the British apple, as regards size, color, lusciousness, flavour, and value, stands without a rival, and in this year of Jubilee holds its own—aye, and easily—against all comers. What shall be said of Bess Pool, that finely-striped red apple, the best of which come from Herefordshire, and which keep well from November till March, and is such a pomological dainty that few except the richer classes ever have the pleasure of tasting it. The seedling tree of this apple was said to have been found by a country lass, in a wood. She, gathering some of the fruits, carried them to her father, the keeper of the village inn, from whom grafts were in due course obtained, and the variety handed down to posterity. The name of the little lassie was Bessie Pool, hence the name of the apple.

Pears deserve more than a passing notice. Fifteen and twenty years ago, enormous pears from Paris used to be marked up in the Grand Row at Covent-garden Market at ten, twenty, and thirty shillings each, and they were even lent out for table decoration at West-end parties. They were immense fruits, and usually created much astonishment when seen. So with the large supplies of Autumn pears. French fruits have monopolised the English markets. During the past few months, however, they have been eclipsed by the superior pears from California. The Californian Easter Beurrés are superior to the French ones. So with the Beurré Diel, Glou Morceau, Winter Nelis, and Beurré Clargéon. A few pears are now coming in from Guernsey and Jersey, and the Channel Island Chaumontelles, of course, are always much sought after, when they are large and well colored. The English supplies are so short as to be hardly worth a notice.

And then what of the grape? Only a day or two ago, when passing through Covent-garden market at five o'clock in the morning, amidst a flare of gas-jets, the rush of the loaded porters, the continued hubbub of the busy buyers and the shrewd salesmen, growers, and commission salesmen, we were particularly struck with the superior quality of the fine punnetted grapes especially, which form one of the most attractive features of the Christmas fruit trade at Covent-garden market. Many of these hothouse grapes were picked in shallow, flat-shaped handle baskets, telling at a glance they came from Guernsey, whilst the deeper grape baskets denoted their arrival overnight from Worthing and kindred centres. In addition were to be seen mammoth-berried Gros Colmar grapes from Scot-