

THE EARLY GRAPES OF 1880.

Not slowly, indeed, yet surely, is there progress being made in the number of varieties and the quality of our early ripening grapes. It is but a short time ago that we had no early sort. The Isabella and Catawba were all the sorts we had, the latter rarely coming to perfection, save in the most favored locations, on the north shore of Lake Erie, or on some of the islands that have now become famous for their fine grapes; the former hardly coming to perfection beyond the limits of successful peach culture. Now we have many sorts of varied flavors and qualities, extending their period of ripening from the latter part of August until the coming of winter.

For some time the Hartford Prolific was our earliest grape that could make any pretension to good quality. Blood's Black is early indeed, but in point of quality it is simply awful. The King became black early, and so did the Sherman look as though it were ripe, but both of them retained such a keen acidity that no one without making a wry face could eat them before the advent of autumn frosts, which seemed to be necessary to the amelioration of their superabundance of tartaric acid.

The advent of the Eumelan revived the hope of an early grape of better quality, and such was the promise of value, that the Fruit Growers' Association imported a quantity of the vines, and presented one to each member for trial. Beside this there was the Israella, which it was thought would take the place of the Hartford Prolific. The Perkins came in for a share of attention, and the Cassady and the Telegraph. Rogers' Hybrids marked a new era, and of these the Massasoit by its early ripening showed that progress in that direction had not ceased. Then came the Champion, which by the great hardiness and vigor of the vine and early ripening of the fruit, extended the limit of grape culture far to the northward of previous possibility.

And here we seem at present to be standing, having no variety that ripens any earlier than the Champion, none that possesses more vigor of constitution, more able to resist cold, and to ripen its fruit in the short hot weather of northern summers, but waiting and hoping some other will appear having all these very desirable characteristics, and yet better