

## WILSON'S ALBANY STRAWBERRY.

It is both interesting and profitable to take a look at the changes which time makes in the horticultural world, and sweeping the eye over the space of a quarter of a century, gather up some of the lessons which the retrospect may teach. It is now a little more than twenty-five years ago that the late James Wilson, a nurseryman of Albany, in the State of New York, raised several seedling strawberry plants from seed of the Ross Phoenix, Hovey and Black Prince. It is not supposed that he endeavored to combine the qualities of any of them by means of artificial cross-fertilization, but inasmuch as the plants of these varieties were growing in near proximity, trusted to natural means for any impregnation of the one by pollen of the other. Of these seedlings only one gave promise of being valuable. This one he preserved and multiplied, and in the Summer of 1853 exhibited some of the plants in bearing at the exhibition of the Albany Horticultural Society. But his exhibit at that time did not attract much attention. His failure to excite any interest in the minds of others in his new seedling strawberry did not prevent him from bringing it forward again the following Summer. He now showed a number of the plants in pots, laden with fruit, and such was the size and number of the berries upon each plant that people were astonished, curiosity was excited, and public attention fairly aroused to the examination of the claims of this new strawberry. Intelligent and experienced cultivators of fruit clustered around the stand on which the plants were displayed, and many then united in the opinion that for productiveness, size of berry, firmness of flesh and good flavor, it would surpass any then known variety as a valuable market strawberry.

And what were the varieties that were then relied upon for home and market purposes? We find on looking back, that in 1846 the then great American authority in horticulture, A. J. Downing, names Hovey's Seedling and Black Prince as best adapted for extensive culture for market; and for the two best sorts for family use, one early and one at the middle season, he names Large Early Scarlet as the best of all early sorts, and for the other, Hovey's Seedling or Black Prince, adding that the two latter are both large fruits, productive and excellent. The varieties then most in cultivation were the Black