

# THE Canadian Horticulturist.

VOL. VII.]

FEBRUARY, 1884.

[No. 2.]

## THE JESSICA GRAPE.

The progress that has been made in the matter of grapegrowing within a few years is truly astonishing. It is not more than twenty-five years since all the varieties in cultivation in the open air did not exceed half a dozen in number. The principal of these were the Isabella, Catawba and Clinton. The Isabella is supposed to be a native of South Carolina, and to have been introduced to the notice of northern horticulturists about the year 1818 by the late Wm. Prince, who named it in honor of Mrs. Isabella Gibbs, of whom he obtained it. It does not mature its fruit well in Ontario generally, although until the advent of the Concord it was the variety most often to be found in our fruit gardens. The Catawba is said to have originated in North Carolina, to have been taken from there to Maryland, and was introduced by Major Adlum of the District of Columbia about the year 1820 to the horticultural public. This grape though unsurpassed in quality, unfortunately is later in ripening than even the Isabella. It is said that the original Clinton was planted in the grounds of Professor Noyes, of Hamilton College, N. Y. in 1821, by the Hon. Hugh White, where it still

remains. This variety is very hardy, ripens its fruit over a large part of Ontario, but the flavor is too acid to admit of it ever becoming a favorite in this Province.

For a long time these continued to be about all the varieties we had. In 1853 Mr. E. W. Bull, of Concord, Massachusetts, first exhibited his now celebrated Concord grape, which has been widely disseminated, and more abundantly planted than any other, perhaps than all the others combined. From this time we date a new era in grape growing in America, and great improvements in the earliness, hardiness and general adaptation of the vines to our northern latitudes.

The variety called Jessica and now presented to the notice of our readers is of Canadian origin, having been grown from seed by Mr. W. H. Read, in the County of Lincoln and Province of Ontario. It has proved itself thus far to be perfectly hardy in our climate, free from disease and enormously productive. It ripens very early, among the earliest we have; it is very sweet, free from all foxiness, sprightly and aromatic. The colour is a yellowish green, in some berries a yellow amber. For