

Godron remarks<sup>73</sup> that the cultivated varieties may be divided into two main groups, which he supposes to be descended from two aboriginal stocks; namely, those with oblong fruit and stones pointed at both ends, having narrow separate petals and upright branches; and those with rounded fruit, with stones blunt at both ends, with rounded petals and spreading branches. From what we know of the variability of the flowers in the peach and of the diversified manner of growth in our various fruit-trees, it is difficult to lay much weight on these latter characters. With respect to the shape of the fruit, we have conclusive evidence that it is extremely variable: Downing<sup>74</sup> gives outlines of the plums of two seedlings, namely, the red and imperial gages, raised from the greengage; and the fruit of both is more elongated than that of the greengage. The latter has a very blunt broad stone, whereas the stone of the imperial gage is "oval and pointed at both ends." These trees also differ in their manner of growth: "the greengage is a very short-jointed, slow-growing tree, of spreading and rather dwarfish habit;" whilst its offspring, the imperial gage, "grows freely and rises rapidly, and has long dark shoots." The famous Washington plum bears a globular fruit, but its offspring, the emerald drop, is nearly as much elongated as the most elongated plum figured by Downing, namely, Manning's prune. I have made a small collection of the stones of twenty-five kinds, and they graduate in shape from the bluntest into the sharpest kinds. As characters derived from seeds are generally of high systematic importance, I have thought it worth while to give drawings of the most distinct kinds in my small collection; and they may be seen to differ in a surprising manner in size, outline, thickness, prominence of the ridges, and state of surface. It deserves notice that the shape of the stone is not always strictly correlated with that of the fruit: thus the Washington plum is spherical and depressed at the pole, with a somewhat elongated stone, whilst the fruit of the Goliath is more elongated, but the stone less so, than in the Washington. Again, Denyer's Victoria and Goliath bear fruit closely resembling each other, but their stones are widely different. On the other hand, the Harvest and Black Margate plums are very dissimilar, yet include closely similar stones.

The varieties of the plum are numerous, and differ greatly in size, shape, quality, and colour,—being bright yellow, green, almost white, blue, purple, or red. There are some curious varieties, such as the double or Siamese, and the Stoneless plum: in the latter the

<sup>73</sup> 'De l'Espèce,' tom. ii. p. 94. On the parentage of our plums, see also Alph. De Candolle, 'Géograph. Bot.,' p. 878. Also Targioni-Tozzetti, 'Journal Hort. Soc.,' vol. ix. p. 164. Also Babington, 'Manual of Brit. Botany,' 1851, p. 87.

<sup>74</sup> 'Fruits of America,' pp. 276,

278, 284, 310, 314. Mr. Rivers raised ('Gard. Chron.,' 1863, p. 27) from the Prune-pêche, which bears large, round, red plums on stout, robust shoots, a seedling which bears oval, smaller fruit on shoots that are so slender as to be almost pendulous.