

variety of plum³³ had to be carefully protected, as they were usually stripped of all their buds during the winter, whilst other sorts growing near them escaped. The root (or enlarged stem) of Laing's Swedish turnip is preferred by hares, and therefore suffers more than other varieties. Hares and rabbits eat down common rye before St. John's-day-rye, when both grow together.³⁴ In the south of France, when an orchard of almond-trees is formed, the nuts of the bitter variety are sown, "in order that they may not be devoured by field-mice;"³⁵ so we see the use of the bitter principle in almonds.

Other slight differences, which would be thought quite unimportant, are no doubt sometimes of great service both to plants and animals. The Whitesmith's gooseberry, as formerly stated, produces its leaves later than other varieties, and, as the flowers are thus left unprotected, the fruit often fails. In one variety of the cherry, according to Mr. Rivers,³⁶ the petals are much curled backwards, and in consequence of this the stigmas were observed to be killed by a severe frost; whilst at the same time, in another variety with incurved petals, the stigmas were not in the least injured. The straw of the Fenton wheat is remarkably unequal in height; and a competent observer believes that this variety is highly productive, partly because the ears from being distributed at various heights above the ground are less crowded together. The same observer maintains that in the upright varieties the divergent awns are serviceable by breaking the shocks when the ears are dashed together by the wind.³⁷ If several varieties of a plant are grown together, and the seed is indiscriminately harvested, it is clear that the hardier and more productive kinds will, by a sort of natural selection, gradually prevail over the others; this takes place, as Colonel Le Couteur believes,³⁸ in our wheat-fields, for, as

³³ The Reine Claude de Bavay, 'Journal of Horticulture,' Dec. 27, 1864, p. 511.

³⁴ Mr. Pusey, in 'Journal of R. Agricult. Soc.,' vol. vi. p. 179. For Swedish turnips, see 'Gard. Chron.,' 1847, p. 91.

³⁵ Godron, 'De l'Espèce,' tom. ii. p. 98.

³⁶ 'Gardener's Chron.,' 1866, p. 732.

³⁷ 'Gardener's Chronicle,' 1862, pp. 820, 821.

³⁸ 'On the Varieties of Wheat,' p. 59.