

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

Packing Apples for Export.

We have frequently drawn our readers' attention to the necessity of more honest apple-packing than is practiced by many who have been preparing fruit for export. While Great Britain is well aware of the value of Canadian apples, she finds it necessary to exercise considerable caution in buying our stock, because of the uncertainty of the shipments as to uniformity of size and condition. One John MacLean, of Glasgow, Scotland, writes a letter to a Glasgow paper regarding the present condition of the apple trade, and also offers suggestions for its improvement. He says: "The trade is a great one, and increases by leaps and bounds every year." The latter remark will not apply to 1895, but this only emphasizes the fact that what we have should be more carefully handled. The fruit from this side the Atlantic suits them better than any other that they get. He says our style of barrel, holding from 120 to 140 pounds, is a failure, and is demoralizing the trade in public estimation. He pays us no high compliment when he says that our packers are knavish, and orchard contractors are unconcerned beyond the present commercial considerations, and both are ignorant and unlearned regarding the wants of the people upon whose patronage the prosperity of the trade is depending. Complaints are made that a few inches at either end of the barrels is select fruit, while the centre is filled with any and every sort. The result is that brokers can give no guarantee under their hammer. Even three random barrels in a shipment lot opened is no criterion. Dealers hesitate to purchase uncertain stock. The broker's ledger is creeping with disputed accounts in consequence of misrepresented stock, and what is worst of all, the family man will not buy a barrel at all on account of its quantity (120-140 lbs.), and the uncertainty of the quality throughout the barrel. Occasionally over-ripe apples are shipped which become a dead loss to everyone who touches them, because they are so nearly perished when landed.

Mr. MacLean suggests that instead of the ordinary barrel which is now used, wicker baskets or crates, containing 40 to 45 lbs. each, would cost less money and be much more convenient to the contractor, costing no more freight and transiting, less liable to heat, and more convenient for family purchase. The broker, dealer and consumer could all see and guarantee what they are dealing in. The result of all this would be more apples used in every family, which would immeasurably augment the demand.

There is one thing certain, there is a great change needed. We have the very fruit that the British people want and are willing to pay for, but they will not accept and pay for motley mixed lots for which no guarantee can be given, and no knowledge of what sorts the barrels contain until they are opened and turned out. We have a clean and high reputation for our cheese, and the estimation of our butter is climbing up at quite a healthy rate through the efforts of our dairy commissioner, and there is no reason why our good apples and other fruits, as well as vegetables, cannot be sent over without contamination with what pollutes the whole trade. We do say that much better work should be done with our present package. Every barrel should be branded with what it contains, with positively no humbugging, and shipments should contain uniformly filled barrels. It is also important that the fruit be put in carefully and firmly without bruising or rupturing the skin. Apples can be pressed into barrels so tightly that they will come out with large indentations over their entire surface, and yet no sign of decay; whereas, if the skin is broken, fermentation and decay is certain, due to the entrance of microbes to the juices.

From what we can learn the present style barrel does not take well in Britain, and there is probably more money in sending forward our fruit in smaller packages of neat form. Choice apples are being sent to Canadian local markets this season very generally in peach basket style. The half-bushel wicker crate would do if it were strong enough to be packed in the vessels without crushing, though it would cost a little more freight being charged per cubic foot of space occupied. Fruit in them would not heat, and there would be less chance of the packer putting up a poor article. A half-barrel (called "ventilated") has been made with space between the staves that would probably fill the bill, and we understand had this been a good apple season it would have been on the market.

Sheep in the Orchard.

An easy and effective way to fertilize an orchard that is in grass is to turn in a large flock of sheep; far more than is necessary to eat all the grass. Of course they will have to be fed from outside, which will put mutton on the sheep and manure on the land. By doing this all the wormy, fallen apples will be eaten as soon as they drop, and the sheep will revel in the cool shade of the trees. This practice is not advisable where there are young trees, as the sheep may gnaw the bark, or may rub the trees, which latter will injure the trees by the grease of their fleeces, and the land in which young orchards are growing should be kept in cultivation.

Cold Storage Shipments of Fruit.

Several shipments of peaches, plums, pears, grapes, tomatoes, etc., are to be made from the Niagara district during September, in cold storage, to Great Britain, via Montreal.

Care of the Lawn.

Newly-seeded lawns should be allowed to become well-established before mowing with the lawn-mower. If seeded in the autumn, say about September, and it comes out the following spring in a promising condition, the mower can be started perhaps by the middle of May, but no harm will come by waiting till later. If coarse grass and weeds come up, they can be kept down with a scythe till the lawn grass is well-established, when the mower can be started. At this time the mowing helps the grass by forming a slight mulch, and also tends to thicken it up in the bottom. When the seeding is done in the spring it is generally best not to commence using the lawn-mower upon it before the cool weather of September. The first two cuttings should be done with the mower at the highest notch. In the meantime the coarse growth of grass and weeds may be kept down with the scythe. Impatient ones may think this a slow way of getting a lawn, but in this case it is wise to make haste slowly.

Established lawns require more attention than simply cutting and watering. If the soil contained a liberal amount of fertility at the time of seeding, it will need nothing to enrich it for two or three years. At the end of that time a dressing of fertilizer will keep it up to the previous standard, and it will even become thicker and better if mown frequently and kept moist. After that time a light annual dressing should be given. March or April is a good time to apply it. As an artificial fertilizer, L. H. Mead, in the Country Gentleman, recommends at seeding time four parts fine ground bone or dissolved bone-black, and three parts each of sulphate of potash and nitrate of soda. If such a mixture is used, it may be better to apply the bone and potash in the fall, and the soda in the spring. Nitrate of soda should never be applied in the fall, because of its extreme solubility. To those who have or can easily procure well-rotted stable manure, nothing else will be necessary. It should be spread evenly as possible and allowed to lie till the warm weather of spring, when it should be carefully raked off. It is well to be careful that the manure contains no foul seeds whose germinating power have not been destroyed by heating.

Every spring some bare spots will be noticed, which should be given a sprinkling of seed, over which a few handfuls of soil should be scattered. A slight dusting of seed over the whole lawn two or three weeks after fertilizing will not be lost. The action of the frost will cause more or less of an uneven surface, which can be easily put into shape by a light raking over, followed by the heavy roller while the ground is soft. If a horse is used he should wear boots. Above all things, in laying out a lawn keep the size down to what can be kept in order without the work becoming irksome. A half-kept or neglected lawn is an eyesore, whereas a well-kept green is a thing of beauty, and takes the place of more expensive decorations.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

MANGE IN HORSES.

D. C. B.:—"I have a mare about fourteen years old; in good order. Did very little work this summer. She seems to be very itchy all over the body, and has rubbed herself against stumps and trees till she has taken a great deal of the hair off her shoulders and neck. She will get across a big log and rub her belly on it, and scratch herself with her teeth when she has the chance. Can you tell me what is ailing her and prescribe a remedy?"

[Mange is a very highly contagious affection. It spreads with amazing rapidity from one horse to another, and the early symptoms are well-described in your letter. It generally commences at the roots of the hair of the mane and tail, and, unless checked by proper treatment, the animal very shortly becomes denuded of hair and presents a bleached appearance, the skin being dry, scurfy, and deeply furrowed, with here and there a few solitary hairs projecting from its surface. At this advanced stage of the malady the skin emits a peculiar odor. A dry, burning heat is present. If the extremities are diseased, the hair upon them will exhibit a dry, ragged appearance, and sores become scabby and ulcerated from the animal constantly rubbing one limb against the other. The general health is affected: appearance, unthrifty and mean-looking. The immediate cause of mange is beyond all doubt due to a species of insect or parasite, known as the "Acari Equi," being present upon the skin in immense numbers, and can be readily determined by combing a quantity of scurf upon a piece of black cotton and observing closely the movements of the animal. A common lens will aid the observer. Treatment: Sulphur, in one or more of its various forms, has been a specific remedy against mange from time immemorial; but it depends on the method of application, as by many this disease is considered incurable. Take of sulphur, one pound; mercurial ointment, four ounces; lard, two pounds; olive oil, one-half pint. The above ingredients should be thoroughly combined, and a portion should be liberally applied to every part of the skin. After the first application wash the animal with warm water and soap and apply again. It is seldom that over three or four dressings are required to effect a radical cure. The stable, clothing, harness, brushes, combs, etc., should be scalded and thoroughly cleansed, otherwise the disease will again appear and run a similar course to which it did in the first instance.

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POULTRY.

The Type of the Egg Producer.

BY MRS. TILSON.

"Shape makes a breed; color, a variety of a breed," says the Am. Fancier. We see this statement is true, regardless of color's justly great importance, because, for instance, there have long been White, Black, Brown, and Cuckoo Leghorns, and now fanciers have just added a Buff. With two styles of combs—rose and single—and with such different origins and colors, how are they all Leghorns, except in typical shape?

Plymouth Rocks, also, are pea and single-combed, Barred and White; hence, how can the new Buff P. Rock establish relationship, except through similar shape? F. W. Hitchcock, the accomplished poultry judge, told me he judged shape of fowls by comparing each with an ideal carried in his mind's eye. Every breed has an ideal shape, peculiar to itself alone, and independent of color, hence no fowl should use that name unless it possesses its one unchangeable and main evidence. Form is harder to define and recognize than color is, hence should be especially studied.

I have long been considering the type of good layers; because in all animals habits are cultivated and established by their exercise, and parts are developed by use, or remain undeveloped, even shriveling away, through non-use; hence I early believed good layers would be told somewhat by their shape, as well as through their records; then by breeding from hens satisfactory in both ways, laying strains could be established. I consulted many experienced poultrywomen; when I visited a flock, always asking, "How do you select your pullets? What sort of a hen lays best?" From some I got one, from others, two or more signs. All this while I was watching my own flock, and now conclude that I desire in a layer:—

1. Good breast development, because it means use of wings and activity.

2. Width from shoulder to shoulder, measured across at base of hackle, because that is the vicinity of the great respiratory and digestive organs, and we wish to be sure of much and good blood.

3. A fairly long body gives room for reproduction. This must not be confounded with length of back, because position of tail and style of hackle often put short backs on fair-bodied fowls, like Leghorns and Langshans. A prize-winning White Cochin at the Columbian Fair (as her owner, Mr. McNeil, pointed out to me) had no back at all—hackle and tail fairly met; but she had a body—though, of course, a short one. The line measuring length of body should be taken about midway of frame, between top and bottom.

4. A triangular body, apex at rear well tucked up behind, gives no opportunity to attach fat there, where hens naturally do, as one who has dressed poultry and seen the rolls of yellow fat knows.

5. Rather short legs, set well apart, and a firm carriage, indicate vigor.

6. A bright eye and red, tremulous comb show good circulation.

Such a hen as above will make and circulate blood, send it to the desired place, nor waste it running to the neighbors.

When I was mentioning these points, at the Kansas City Poultry Show, to that veteran breeder and judge, Theo. Sternberger, he said: "Come see my Campines, they'll answer your description." I stepped over, and selecting my ideal layer, learned her to be a bird not much more than a year and a-half old, which had already laid over 200 eggs, by actual count. Last summer a White Leghorn of my own, combining in a remarkable degree my favorite characteristics, kindly chose a nest all by herself in the barn. She laid over 60 eggs before resting, laying some of the time every other day, sometimes two days in succession. I first studied crosses and common hens; but when I reached the "standard," saw I had anticipated its main requirements for shape of those great layers, Leghorns, Red Caps, Minorcas, Andalusians, etc.; from amongst which I should always choose the shortest-legged, however.

A late visit to six prominent commission houses in Minneapolis added much to my information on market requirements. One man asked how could be solved the, to him, vexing problem of uniting large chickens and small hens in one breed. He did not buy Cochin hens at all; because, though restaurants take them for stews, families find them too large, and want a neat five-pound carcass. If not taken by hotels, etc., carcasses of large hens lie around unsold for a week. Hotels have to keep on their bill of fare, "chirpers," as wee chickens are called; but few families afford them till weighing two pounds. Here were some strong points in favor of Wyandottes: Their chickens mature quickly; Armour, I am told, prefers them to all others, while the hens do not grow so large as P. Rocks. The latter will answer requirements pretty well, if all flashing, coarse, overgrowing hens are promptly culled out. White Leghorns, which dress a small, compact carcass, will not be found far behind. The chickens are tender eating, have fine breast meat, grow rapidly, and can, by liberal feeding, be brought to good size in fair season.

Ducks and geese are preferred young; but there is some market for older ones. They are always expected to be fat, hence become rather gross after two years of age.