

HORTICULTURAL GOSSIP. XII.

BY L. WOOLVERTON, GRIMSBY.

SHORTENING IN PEACH TREES.—“What are you doing to your peach trees?” said Ignorans, watching me with my pruning shears lopping off the ends of the branches. I am shortening them in. I find it a very useful mode of pruning peach trees. “I can’t see much use in it.” Well, I will tell you what use I find in it. (1) It increases the vigor of the tree, and makes it less liable to the yellows. (2) It thins the fruit of the coming season, and thus insures a yearly crop, providing the winters are favorable. (3) It prevents the breaking down of the trees either with fruit or with ice. You see yonder block of trees carefully shortened in last March. Now the result has been very marked, for while many orchards about here this year have been dreadfully mutilated with the tremendous weight of fruit, and will need a year or two to regain their vigor, that orchard is uninjured. It has borne large, handsome fruit, and is fit for similar service next season.

Ignavus said, “Well, it may be very useful, but, pshaw! it is too much trouble. It will take half one man’s time to cut them that way. I had rather let them grow as they choose.”

“When is the best time to prune peach trees?” said Prudens, “I want to try the system.” I think in September, immediately after the fruit is picked. The wounds will heal nicely before winter, and the remaining buds will mature better for the thinning. Failing in September, I would do it in early spring, just before the new growth begins.

“Would you shorten in the old wood?” No, not as a rule. I would only cut off from one half to two thirds of the last growth in cases of vigorous trees. But I would cut back the old wood in cases of old trees where the limbs are straggling or stunted.

PICKING AND PACKING PEACHES.—As Ignavus and Ignorans walked away quite satisfied with their old way of letting things take care of themselves, Prudens further enquired, “How do you gather your fruit in such a large orchard?” My plan is to supply the pickers with plenty of handle baskets. These they fill and set down by the carriage roads which intersect the orchard at convenient distances. A boy