

Garden and Orchard.

The Berberry as a Hedge Plant.

BY HORTUS.

Among the many hedge plants claiming attention from the farmer there is not another as desirable as the Berberry; it is both ornamental and defensive. What we want in a hedge plant is that it will grow rapidly, be perfectly hardy, thrive in all situations and soils, easy to transplant, be free from insects and may be propagated with little cost of time and money. All those advantages are to be found in the Berberry. But these are not all its good qualities; it is exceedingly ornamental, either planted singly as a shrub or in a hedgerow, producing in early summer an abundance of clustering, bright, yellow flowers, followed in the fall by bunches of scarlet berries, which hang on the bushes till late in winter. These berries are used for preserving, and in this respect are almost as valuable as the Cranberry, which it resembles in flavor and acidity. It is this acidity, which is not unpleasant to the human taste, that gives the berries exemption from the birds and leaves them to brighten up and lend a charm by their color to our in general too cheerless winter landscapes. When the bushes are covered with snow, we know of few more pleasing contrasts than that afforded by the bright scarlet berries gleaming from amidst their snowy surroundings.

But it is to its great usefulness as a hedge plant that we wish to draw particular attention. The Osage Orange, Honey Locust, White Willow and others that have been introduced from time to time, have had their day. The Osage Orange is not hardy. The Honey Locust, which succeeds only in some localities where the peach thrives, soon becomes scrubby and miserable rubbish in the colder sections; and the White Willow lives only in the memory of many as a fraud and a delusion. The English Hawthorn also is not hardy enough to succeed. The Buckthorn is greatly recommended and comes nearest of any, with the exception of the Berberry, to which we must give the palm, as being the best and the nearest of all "to filling the bill;" and we have not been hasty in forming this judgment. We have watched for many years the different experiences in hedge-growing of many planters, and particularly the experiences of a gentleman who, to use his own words, "has planted miles of hedges and has tried most kinds," and after all, says, "the Berberry is the best hedge-plant for Canada."

Now we know, and every farmer and landowner knows, that next to having good land is to have good fences, and now-a-days fencing is an expensive item, and the great problem is, what will make the cheapest and most durable fence? particularly in the older and more settled portions of our country. Of course, in wooded sections rail timber is still plentiful, but in many parts lumber is very dear and rail timber is getting scarce, and we must find some other practical, easily applied substitute, that will effectually take the place of the zigzag nuisances now strung across our fair country. Rail fences have had their day, and it is high time they wriggled themselves out of sight for several reasons:

1st. Because they stand upon a lot of land which of necessity from their formation cannot be worked.

2nd. Because their corners or recesses are great nurseries for weeds and vermin, which annually sow the land and destroy trees and grain, and which in turn must annually be destroyed, thereby evolving the loss of a great deal of time and labor unnecessarily.

3rd. Because the older portions of the country cannot compete with cheap lands or prairie provinces in grain production, if one-fifth or one-tenth of their cultivatable soil is encumbered with rail fences.



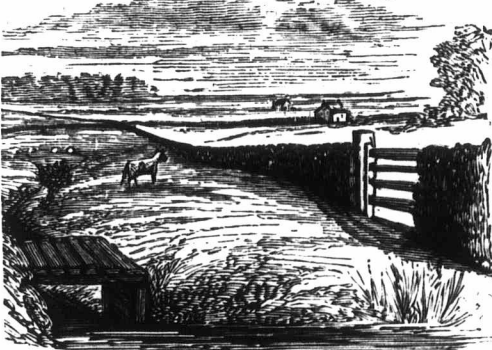
1.—BERBERRY AS AN ORNAMENTAL SHRUB.

And now we come back to our substitute, the Berberry hedge. For ordinary farms, or those farmers who prefer to follow the usual routine of



2.—LEAF, FRUIT AND FLOWER OF THE BERBERRY.

reaping and sowing and keeping but few cattle and sheep, the Berberry may be planted in straight rows, and will, after a few years, prove sufficiently strong to keep stock in or out. But for stock farms



3.—BERBERRY HEDGE.

the following is recommended to make an effectual fence: Make an ordinary straight fence of rails and rail-posts, as shown in cut, and on each side alternately plant a Berberry. These growing up in time on either side completely envelope the fence

and as time rolls on and the posts rot out of the ground, the upright and horizontal rails, though free from the ground, will keep the hedge taut and straight and will last for many years. This arrangement, of course, may be applied to any other kind of hedge plant, but has a particular reference to the Berberry. The Berberry, unlike other hedge plants, has more of a shrub character—the others a tree character—this may be a distinction without a difference, but so it is. The Berberry throws up from near the roots, or at the base of the main branches, straight shoots, which grow on right through the other stems till they tower right over the other growth. These again the succeeding year throw out lateral branches, which devote themselves thereafter to developing thorns, flowers and fruit. Thus we have briefly attempted to show the general characteristics of the plant, showing how admirably adapted it is to be a hedge plant or living fence, for all its branches and branchlets, new or old, retain their vitality whether growing fast or slow, the great requisite; and keep gradually thickening up till it is almost impregnable.

We have now shown that the Berberry allowed to grow naturally, after once being planted, will in itself make a strong fence, without any labor being bestowed upon it by clipping or cutting. This is an important point in its favor, for if a hedge plant is going to require a certain skill in planting—great care in handling and a lot of attention afterwards in trimming, mulching, etc., the plant loses much of its value, by reason of so much labor having to be bestowed upon it. We will treat hereafter, in detail, the subjects of planting, trimming and after care, showing that when care is paid to it, the plant will more than give grateful and corresponding results for what attention, if any, is given.

We now come to the question of its cost, almost the least of all, but still another point in favor of the plant. If wanted at once to plant, it can be procured from nurserymen, good plants, sufficiently strong for planting, at a cent apiece, or \$10 per thousand, and we have no doubt that if many thousands were wanted, they could be purchased for much less. The plant will stand a great deal of exposure to sun and air, having great vitality. No fears need be entertained of any dying or replanting after once being planted, if anything like reasonable care is given to it in digging, packing, and shipping.

We give our readers, this month, a series of original illustrations, which will no doubt prove valuable.

The journeys necessary to procure the information presented in each number of the ADVOCATE; the great expense of our artistic illustrations, and the accompanying letterpress, is paid by the money we receive from our subscribers; and we mean to expend the amount you send us for new subscriptions this year in still further improving your paper.

In addition to this inducement, we will send to any one who sends us one new cash subscriber, either a package of Berberry seeds, or a package of Berberry Plants. They will be mailed, postage paid, to any post office in the Dominion, and we believe the plant will thrive in any part of the Dominion. Grown as a hedge we believe it will be of great value. Try it, and give the FARMER'S ADVOCATE the credit of introducing it, and you will soon have a handsome shrub.

To be Continued.

The new strain of perennial Larkspurs are an excellent acquisition to our gardens. The blossoms are so large, so bright, and when double so very double, and they are arranged as densely as those as those of a hyacinth upon the spikes. They are as hardy and as thrifty as the old-fashioned ones.

The Gardener's Monthly says of the Lily: It is now believed that the disease of the Lily and Gladiolus, by which they lose their leaves before they are mature, arises from the hot soil in which they are grown. There is but little doubt that if the soil be well mulched, lily growing would be more of a success. * * * As an August flowering plant, no garden should be without a clump of the white-day lily. It is hardy, thrifty and copious, and will grow in shady places; its flowers are fragrant.