

[FOR THE CRITIC.]
AGRICULTURE.

RUFUS RUSTIC—NOTES BY THE WAY.

The quantity of fruit grown in Nova Scotia in the apple line is something enormous, if individual statements, flashing editorials, with a sprinkling of local brag, is a criterion. Also the list of varieties that adorn the spray is a longitudinal sequence. Out of the 999 different kinds under cultivation, only 12 are mentioned as the best and most profitable orchard apples. The *Omega* of the best is "Ben Davis," with its multitude of synonyms. It would be a pleasing incident to learn the name of the worst on the list. A slight discussion arose in regard to the merits of "Ben." The Pro's referred to some two-year old specimens to establish its reputation as a long-keeper. Its color was a favorable market characteristic, and in size and outline a desirable dessert fruit. The Con's did not question its keeping qualities; they said there was nothing in it to spoil or fit to eat, that it hadn't flavour enough to attract an apple-moth, that it sold well where fruit was not known, and since the C. P. Railway had become an accomplished fact suggested the markets of Alaska. Ben Davis was skimmed over with the remarks that it was not in accord with the refined Nova Scotia palate, that an apple with a plethora of aliases was suspicious, and like an Indian dog no one disposed to acknowledge the quadruped.

Some objections were raised to a further extension of orchards. The profit on fruit not being adequate to the out-lay, the quantity exceeding the demand even in years of low average. That in years of plenty, as a farm product, there is no profit in it. Instances were cited where orchards have paid well, that intelligent handling will in most cases give good returns. The extension of markets, the improved methods of evaporating and preserving should be an inducement to farmers to look sharp after their trees, that the time is past for two-cont views. Tree peddlers and nursery men were keel-hauled by the splenic evaporations they had paid for plants, that when they came to maturity were incumbors of the ground, they deplored their ignorance and were determined "to keep an eye to windward next hitch." The jargon was rounded off with something like, "With all thy faults I love thee still." In the giving of orders for trees the Wandering Jews who furnished the stock were usually allowed to be authority for the recommendation of suitable sorts. By that fortuitous method of doing business many orchards have trees the fruit of which is worthless for market purposes.

The question what to do with them is not easy of solution. So many essential conditions of a variable and complicated type are involved that a practical and decisive answer would require to be deciphered by accurate data. Raking together some fallen leaves, it appears evident that autumn fruits are much in excess of the wants of recent available markets. In this class are some really good kinds, many of the trees are well established and quite hardy, but from some unaccountable causes, either faulty cultivation or unnatural conditions, are not remunerative. It is somewhat paradoxical to hear practical fruit-growers denounce varieties which have been generally considered first-class and threaten annihilation because they fail to give satisfaction. Some trees fail from over-bearing, and if the habit is encouraged they fail unexpectedly; the easiest remedy is thinning, if that is objectionable, annihilate the one-half in fruit, buds, twigs, and spray.

With some it is a habit to denounce tree peddlers, and award to that class of persons a large portion of blame for introducing unsuitable varieties. No doubt some have been taken in, others disappointed in their orders, but for all that tree agents are liberally patronized. How many trees would have been planted or orchards set out had it not been for imported trees. The few nursery men in the country were not in a position to supply a tithe of the required stock. The adage that a home prophet is without honour will scarcely apply, as there is a pretty general feeling to patronize home grown trees, they being easier of access and considered better adapted to the climate. If we examine the matter candidly, perhaps we shall find that a full share of the disappointment may be attributed to our want of tact.

What shall be done with these unprofitable trees; cut them down and make fire-wood or graft them with *strictly prime* fruit? Under existing circumstances the latter is preferable. The destruction of 15 or 20 years growth would be too great a sacrifice. With care healthy stocks top grafted with varieties durable and in demand will, in four seasons, be productive trees. In an effort to alter the bearing habit of a tree some special knowledge will be necessary. Cutting off much top endangers the life of the trees. A medium course will afford the scion a sufficient healthy growth. The location, the characteristics of the tree, and reputation of the desired fruit are connections requiring due consideration. There is a salutary adage, "Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof." There are several ways of doing things, and the right way is as good as any. Work well planned is half done especially if spread over a series of years. When fruit growers who have grown old in the business declare an intention to graft out their Baldwins, as being unprofitable, to curtail their Gravenstien trees two-thirds, that the old standard Rhode Island Greening is unsatisfactory; that the Bishop Pippin, alias Yellow Bellflower, is getting demoralized. That Esopus Spitzenburg is blotched with small-pox, and other varieties of doubtful nomenclature are to walk the plank. When such lunatics are fertile themes of discourse, it is time to say "good-night."

WHITE SPECKS IN BUTTER.—A correspondent would like to know what causes little white specks in buttermilk or butter when it has just been churned.

Answer: The cream has been allowed to stand too long before churning, causing the milk mixed with it to get into small hard flakes.

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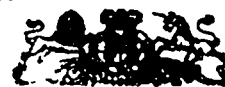
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Welland Canal Enlargement

Notice to Contractors.

SEALED TENDERS addressed to the under-
signed, and endorsed "Tender for the Welland
Canal," will be received at this office, until the
arrival of the Eastern and Western mails on MON-
DAY, the 23rd day of JANUARY next (1886), for
raising the walls of the locks, weirs, &c., and
increasing the height of the banks of that part of
the Welland Canal between Dalhousie and Thor-
old, and for deepening the Summit Level between
Thorold and Ramsey's Bend, near Humberston

The works, throughout, will be let in Sections
Maps of the several localities, together with
plans and descriptive specifications, can be seen at
this office on and after MONDAY, the 11th day of
JANUARY next (1886), where printed forms of
tender can be obtained. A like class of informa-
tion relative to the works north of Allansburg will
be furnished at the Resident Engineer's Office,
THOROLD; and for works south of Allansburg,
plans, specifications, &c. may be seen at the Resi-
dent Engineer's Office, WELLAND.

Contractors are requested to bear in mind that
tenders will not be considered unless made strictly
in accordance with the printed forms, and, in the
case of firms, except there are attached the actual
signatures, the nature of the occupation and place
of residence of each member of the same; and
further, an accepted bank cheque for the sum of
Two THOUSAND DOLLARS or more—according to
the extent of the work on the section—must accom-
pany the respective tenders, which sum shall be
forfeited if the party tendering declines entering
into contract for the works, at the rates stated in
the offer submitted.

The amount required in each case will be stated
on the form of tender.
The cheque or money thus sent in will be returned
to the respective parties whose tenders are not
accepted.

This Department does not, however, bind itself
to accept the lowest or any tender.

By order,
A. P. BRADLEY,
Secretary.

Department of Railways and Canals,
Ottawa, 9th December, 1885.

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