

A NEW INDUSTRY—FIG CULTURE AT THE NORTH A SUCCESS.

BY G. F. NEEDHAM, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Some writer has said: "In a climate like ours any addition to the luxury of fruits should be studied. We cannot have many of the productions of the more southern climes, but by a little care we can have some that are seldom grown."

The vegetable world has been "studied," and the result is that most of our vegetables have been gathered from these tropical homes. I propose in this paper to study one of the tropical fruits, the fig, from both a theoretical and practical standpoint. And I make this emphatic statement that no other crop can be raised which will give so certain and so large returns in our Middle and Northern States, as that delicious fruit, the fig.

The fig flourishes in much more unfavorable climates than our own. In Great Britain, for instance, figs have been grown in the open air for more than three hundred years; the original trees brought from Italy by Cardinal Pole, still bearing. Now, if in that damp, foggy, "misty, moisty" atmosphere, where melons and cucumbers cannot be grown, the fig will succeed, how much more will it flourish in our bright and sunny climate!

The climate of our north temperate zone is one of the best possible for the full development of the fig. It is a well known fact that too great heat is inimical to this plant; it causes the tree to cast its fruit. Our northern climes are superior to the southern for another reason—our days are several hours longer than at the south, which gives a lengthened and tempered day, which precisely suits the fig.

Countries where figs are grown as an article of commerce are exposed to similar vicissitudes of climate as are our Northern States. I have before me a letter from a gentleman in Massachusetts, in which he says: "I was born in the Levant, and I was a resident in Constantinople one winter, when the Golden Horn (the Bosphorus) was frozen over, and there was a snow fall of eighteen to twenty inches for a couple of weeks, without injury to the fig trees in the vicinity."

The reason that the fig yields so abundantly, is not only that it is prolific, but first, because the fruit has no insect enemies, and secondly,