

WESTERN NEW YORK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.—II.



PROFESSOR ROBERTS, of Cornell University, gave a very interesting address upon "The Methods of Maintaining the Fertility of the Orchards." He said that the productiveness of the orchard does not always depend upon the amount of plant food in the soil. The fertility of the soil ought to mean the amount of plant food which may be set free by proper methods of treatment, but, in many cases, large amounts of plant food are locked up in the soil of an orchard which only need proper treatment to become available for the trees. In such cases it is not the addition of manure, so much as cultivation, that is needed. The orchard should be ploughed deep, and often, while the trees are young. The great trouble with most orchardists is the lack of both skill and force to bring out the fertility which is in the soil. While the trees are young they should not be forced into a too rapid, succulent growth; a healthy, continuous and hardy growth is more desirable.

When once in fruit the trees need extra food. Perhaps they should not always be under the plow. Clover may be raised in the orchard. This need not always be re-plowed in order to continue the clover seed. The seed will take in an old meadow almost as well as if re-plowed. It should be harrowed every spring and sown with clover seed and ashes.

We hear a good deal said about trees that are great producers. This is not the best condition. There is such a thing as "the more you have the less you've got." Quality is everything now-a days. Numbers ruin, and quantity floods the market.

Pruning, too, is of great importance. Is it not possible to prune the orchard much on the same principle as we prune the grape vine? Is the plant food improved in quality by transporting it through 80 feet of wood before reaching the fruit which it is destined to support? We grow too much timber in our apple orchards. We ought to separate forestry from fruit culture. Our orchardists are growing too much wood, too many seeds, and too many poorly flavored apples. If by heading back the top and furnishing a reasonable amount of plant food, by fertilizing, cultivating, or by feeding sheep in an orchard, we can remedy this difficulty, a great advance will be made.

Prof. Roberts' whole address was of a practical and suggestive nature, and we give in another column a verbatim selection from it.

Mr. Woodward said that he agreed with Prof. Roberts' statements. He, himself, always made a sheep pasture of his orchard, and it was a fact that the sheep made the best insecticides he ever had. He would advise keeping one hundred sheep on every ten acres of orchard. Do not starve them. Give them plenty of linseed meal and bran, to pay them for the good they do, and this will make them ravenous for apples. He had not plowed his orchard for fourteen