

## CAUSES OF FAILURE IN APPLE CULTURE.—II.

AN ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY.

## 4. Bad Pruning.



N his mistaken zeal for promoting the vigor of his apple orchard, many a farmer does it irreparable injury. The great stumps of large limbs, eating their way with rottenness into the interior, bear witness to the truth of my statement. I wholly condemn the common method of butchering apple trees.

On Maplehurst Fruit Farm, my oldest orchard, though over seventy-five years of age, would be in prime condition for another twenty-five years only for this practice.

Indeed those trees which, on account of inferiority of kind, were most neglected by the pruner, are now the healthiest and finest in the orchard; while the others are rotten at heart, or hollow, from the great wounds made in pruning.

Many people always insist on removing the leading centre branch, to let in the sun as they say. We wholly object to this system, and would commend somewhat of the pyramidal form, as the ideal for the pruner. This is produced by encouraging the growth of a strong, leading shoot, about which all others are allowed to grow as symmetrically as possible. The annual pruning will then consist simply in thinning out all superfluous small branches which tend to cross each other.

Probably there is no subject upon which more confused notions exist than with regard to the time and manner of pruning trees and vines. Some who pretend to know give such definite advice as, "Prune when your knife is sharp," and others advocate no pruning at all. Some say prune in the winter, some in summer, and others in the fall. In the multiplicity and contrariety of the advice, who wonders that we see so many slovenly kept trees throughout our country?

First, with regard to the TIME of pruning. We have under this head a very old adage, which it is well to remember, viz.: "Prune in winter for wood, in summer for fruit," and probably no better general rule could be given. The philosophy of this is explained by the fact that anything which checks the wood growth of the tree, tends to the metamorphosis of leaf-buds into fruit-buds; and, on the contrary, that which favors wood growth, lessens that tendency. Thus while a tree is young and growing rapidly, it produces no fruit; but when it has attained a certain degree of maturity, and grows less vigorously, it begins to produce fruit. On the same principle it is that a tree that has been girdled will often be overloaded with blossoms, though not yet of the usual bearing age, or limbs which are artificially bent down will yield fruit before the other limbs of the same tree. Now, summer pruning checks the growth of the tree, and therefore tends to increase its fruitfulness. By it we remove the foliage just when it