

THE QUARTER ACRE LOT OR ORCHARD.



THE quarter acre lot and orchard, I think, is a fit subject for my paper, as in towns and also a large area of the cities we either own or rent a house with a quarter or half acre of land; therefore, I think this paper should demand a considerable amount of discussion. But before I enter into the quarter acre lot and orchard, I would say to the young men of both city and town that there could not be any nicer or better, or, perhaps, any more profitable study than the orchard. Let a schoolboy in his early 'teens take the seed of the apple, pear or plum; let him sow them, and what a delight it will be to him when he will first see the tiny little leaflets peep through the soil. Then he becomes interested as he watches the growth, until the time comes for to graft or bud that stock with his favorite fruit, and there he does assist nature in her grand design; and still he watches its advancement, and before he is through with his study he receives his reward, for the tiny little leaves that he first watched coming through the soil is now a large tree loaded with delicious fruit. Oh, what a happy thought and what pleasure for that young man when he grows to be an old man to think that he assisted nature to some degree! But I fear I have lost sight of my quarter acre lot and orchard. And now, by way of illustration, say a quarter acre of land contains, as most lots are laid out, 112 x 56 feet. Now, take the site of our house and yard; of the quarter acre, what is left for the orchard? The house will be 15 feet from the street line, house and shed 40 feet, which will leave about 57 x 56 feet, on which can be planted 10 fruit trees—1 early apple, 2 late apple, 2 plum trees, 2 pear trees, 1 cherry and 2 winter apple trees; and beside these say 6 gooseberry, 6 currant, a few raspberry bushes and

some grape vines and a small bed of strawberries, and yet there will be room for a few rows of early potatoes and other vegetables. Certainly as the trees grow in size the ground will be covered by them, and it will not be fit for vegetables. And if we only knew the benefit of good ripe fruit to our health, we would use more of it. But, sir, we are told that when they are got from the store the fruits are half ripe and wilted after lying in the shop window for several days, and I do believe that is one reason why the people do not use more fruit. But the quarter acre orchard will get over all that. What nicer amusement can the merchant wish for, after being all day in his store, or the mechanic after leaving his work; it may be some dusty workshop. Yes, and even the hard-toiling laborer will find pleasure in going into his little garden and spend a short time among his fruit trees and vegetable beds. It is much better than loafing at some street corner or tavern door. In his garden he will reap his reward, for early in the season when the good wife goes into the garden and gathers in the nice fresh vegetables, which we all long for at this particular time of the year, we can truly say it is the reward of his labor. And when the fruit season has come, and again she takes a trip into the garden and plucks the first plate of strawberries or raspberries, and, how tempting, those few lovely apples, plums for preserve, or those nice cherries for the little children. And of a winter's evening, after supper, the wife brings up a nice plate of apples from the cellar, will not the husband and children be delighted? And all this from the quarter acre lot!

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