



Conducted by E. J. McINTYRE, St. Catharines, Ontario.

December Notes.

Winter brings rest and leisure to the fruit-grower. The last of the apples have been disposed of, or stowed away safely in cellar or pit. Some winter pears or late-keeping grapes remain with the apples, perhaps as long as Christmas; after that, the apples alone represent in their freshness the produce of the orchard. All the other fruits—the plum, cherry, peach, quince, and the berries—are no longer a matter of care, except in so far as the preserving jar is concerned. The insect enemies are sound in their long winter sleep. The ground of the orchard is covered with snow or frost-bound till spring.

Early in December, however, some by-products of the apple orchard may still claim attention. What remains of the apples, after the marketable ones have been selected, can, with profit, be converted into cider, which, in the course of time, will become vinegar of excellent quality, preferred by many to the white wine vinegar. The grocery bill a year or two later may be materially lightened by supplying the grocer with vinegar. The cider presses are now so constructed that very little apple juice escapes, though the old-timers say that the cider is not as good as that which used to be obtained from the wooden presses in which the apple-substance to be compressed lay on a bed of fresh straw. Attached to cider mills as part of their equipment there is in many places an apparatus for converting the apples into jelly. You take your apples to the mill, and you bring home either cider or jelly, as you wish. The jelly is made by steam process, and is an excellent, palatable article, though apt to be somewhat sour unless sweet apples are freely intermixed among those that are to be ground.

Then, again, no farmer should be without a winter supply of cider sauce. It is an article worthy of a place of honor in any storeroom, country or city. Cider sauce, or apple butter, was first brought into Canada, I believe, by the German settlers, who came from Pennsyl-

vania early in the century. Its use is now quite general. The cider is boiled until its volume is reduced by one-third. Then apples, carefully peeled, cored, and quartered are added until the mass is half as large again as the original quantity of cider. Then this is boiled until the apples are all dissolved, a rather tedious process, my memory assures me, especially as the mixture has to be stirred all the time. When the sauce has arrived at the stage that the mistress of ceremonies pronounces "done," it is taken off the fire and spices are stirred into it, and then it is stored away for future use.

Early in December, also, the farmer takes care to see that his trees are protected against the attack of rabbits and mice during the winter. These vermin will gnaw the bark from the base of the trunk of the trees, when other vegetation becomes scarce. Young trees, being more tender, are more liable to their attacks. Once a tree is girdled, it cannot live. I know a fruit-grower who lost over a hundred young trees last year through the ravages of mice. There should be no litter left in the orchard that the mice can take shelter under. It would be well also to hill up the trees a little before the snow comes, and, if the snow reaches up to the trunks, to trample it down occasionally. A strip of tarred paper fastened round the base of the tree will form an effective preventive of injury from mice and rabbits. But the best measure to take is to have no sod, or grass, or litter left in the orchard to attract the mice in the first instance, and the other preventive measures may then be applied only to the rows of trees that are near the fences.

If it is the intention to set out more trees in the spring, no time should be lost in giving the order now. Be sure that you are dealing with a reliable man, in buying your trees. You may be imposed upon in various ways. Other varieties than what you order may be palmed off on you. Small three-year-olds may be given you for large two-year-olds. Exorbi-