

AN HOUR IN A PEAR ORCHARD.

We recently had the pleasure of visiting the Pear orchard of W. Bacon, Esq., of Roxbury, and of fully realizing some of the marvellous stories we have heard, of pear raising, in relation to both trees and fruit. Mr. Bacon was accustomed to the farm in his youth, and cultivated there his natural taste for rural pursuits. He has "an eye for trees," as others have for paintings, or fine animals, or beautiful landscapes, and knows all their names and peculiar habits, as a parent does those of his children. But that "Divinity that shapes our ends," called him away from the profession which he loved, and placed him in a dry goods store, where forty years of devotion could not obliterate his early tastes. Gallons and laces, muslins, and Thibets, and collars might bring profits to his till, but never could satisfy his desire for the swelling buds, fragrant blossoms and graceful branches of favorite trees. So at the end of more than sixty years, he snatched an hour now and then from the counter, raised a piece of land a yard wide from the salt marsh, dressed it, planted his trees, fashioned their limos to gratify his critical eye, and now, one among them stands the handsomest Dix pear we ever saw! Six or eight other trees comprised his first effort. They were planted directly behind his store, which stands on the main street in the city of Roxbury, and were placed upon a sort of terrace which he threw up from the marsh, and which answered the double purpose of a dike to keep out the returning tides, as well as a bed for the roots of his favorite trees. These eight or nine trees are now each about eight inches through, and pay the interest of more money than we dare state in this notice.

At length the old love got the mastery; the store and all its interests were abandoned to his sons, and he went forth into the cheerful light to indulge his early tastes, and grow young again. He now entered upon his plans with avidity, by making ditches through the marsh, and diking out the salt water that returned with the flood tides. Where paths were to be made, the earth was thrown out to the depth of three feet and its place supplied with oyster shells. Over this earth was thrown street sweepings, old mortar, ashes, and all similar rubbish that he could obtain. To this was added large quantities of *tan bark*, and to this, mainly, he imputes the wonderful success he has had in producing his almost unrivalled crops of pears! Not that the trees find in this the principal aliment they require, but that it forms a soft, moist and porous root bed, where the roots can range without obstruction in search of other and richer substances which he applies to the soil. The land is so thoroughly drained, and so open and light, that a fortnight's rain, he says, makes no difference in its appearance.

The piece of land we went over is something less, we should think, than one acre. On this he has six hundred standard pear trees; that is, trees set in place and not to be removed, though most of them are on quince stocks,—beside large numbers of young trees which are for sale, and plum and peach trees, currants,

gooseberries, raspberries, flowers and ornamental shrubs. Between these he manages to raise his potatoes and such other garden stuff as he needs for his table.

Passing a tree, Mr. B. remarked that it produced four bushels of pears this season, which he sold for *forty-eight* dollars! Another near it a little less, and a Beurre Diel, three years ago, gave him the neat sum of *eighty-two* dollars for a single crop!

The ground upon which all his trees stand, is made ground—redeemed from the salt marsh first by digging ample ditches, and using the material as far as it would go for filling up, and following with loam, leaves, street sweepings, weeds, old mortar, decaying chips, and almost all sorts of rubbish which he could obtain, but, chiefly—he emphasised—*tan bark*, which he applies to this small space at the rate of twenty-five cords per year! He dwelt upon this part of his process with unusual earnestness and gratification.

Passing along, we thought if the ditches could talk, they would tell a favourable story. It seemed to us that they partook in some measure of the nature of common sewers, and collected at the hands of the proprietor an abundance of the richest materials both for trees and their crops. Be this as it may, Mr. Bacon has achieved a success nearer perfection than anything else in that direction which we have ever witnessed. That success has been gained, mainly, by three things, viz:

1. Thorough Drainage.

That the drainage in this case is perfect, is evident from the fact stated by Mr. B., that a fortnight's rain makes no perceptible difference in the appearance of the land. Those who understand the philosophical principles involved in such drainage, will readily comprehend the advantages gained beside that of the passage of rain water through the soil.

2. The Depth and Richness of the soil.

The depth of soil under these trees is not anywhere less than *two feet*, and probably varies from that to *three feet*, and from the surface to bottom, it is thoroughly mixed with the rich substances which have already been named. This is kept light and porous by frequent digging, so that nothing can be more convenient or inviting to roots of any sort of energy to run and feed in, than the bed which is prepared for them.

3. The third material point is that of *Shelter*. The importance of this is not yet fairly appreciated by our gardeners, even, and by the farmer is scarcely thought of in connection with his fields. Mr. Bacon's orchard is surrounded by buildings, only separated from it by passages perhaps twenty feet wide, and by a fence next to the trees some eight feet high. On the south corner of the lot stands one of the largest trees in the number, and he remarked that he "should head that down, because the wind had too much power upon it."

It may be objected by the reader, that we cannot imitate this example in all of these points. We should not, however, plant pear trees where we cannot avail ourselves of the first, *drainage*—and the true policy is, not to