



PICKING, PACKING AND MARKETING APPLES.

THE big end of labor and expense that goes into an apple crop is incurred in the picking, storing and marketing. Picking apples is, or should be, a "hurry-up" job. Every tree in the orchard of the same variety is ready to pick at the same moment, and should be picked the moment it is ready. Every hour that the picking of an apple is delayed after its clock has struck brings deterioration. In an orchard of one tree it is easy to accommodate the harvest to the requirements of the crop. But where apple people have several hundreds or thousands of barrels of one variety it is both difficult and unprofitable to practice such dispatch. For even if we assume, like a political economist, that labor is a sort of fluid to be turned off or on at will, the equipment for apple picking, the ladders, picking sacks, baskets, sorting tables, barrel presses, and all that, become an intolerable expense where they are provided in such abundance that a day or two's use in a year is all that is required of them. Most apple growers allow from two to four weeks for the apple picking. It has been reported that in 1897 the yield of one of the large orchards of Missouri was 120 carloads of apples, and that they were all gathered and either shipped or put in store in ten days.

Such expedition can only come with fine generalship and a perfect system of procedure.

There are different systems of picking, and there is much picking without system. The system followed grows in interest and importance as the number of people engaged is increased. When the "old man" works alone it is no great matter how he proceeds, but when the force is 100 or even a dozen hands the question of profit or loss may hinge upon whether that force works with the precision of an army or the discursiveness of a mob.

Some careful operators pick into baskets, and in turn hand the baskets thus filled to the packing-house or place of storage. But in the main apples are picked into seamless grain sacks prepared for the purpose, with a heavy wire sewn in the sack mouth for the purpose of holding it always open. Before this wire is put into place in the mouth of the sack, a ring an inch or so in diameter is bent into it. This ring is for the purpose of engaging a harness snap attached to a short rope or strap, the same being tied to one corner of the closed end of the sack, the purpose of it all being to provide a thing by which the picking sack can be suspended from the shoulder and expeditiously unslung