

Horticulture.

HORTICULTURE IN YAKIMA VALLEY.

Address of Joseph Lannin, of Sunnyside, Before the Convention of the Northwest Fruit Growers' Association.

I have been requested to address your honorable body upon the following themes:

1. The advantages of Yakima county as a fruit growing section.
2. The kinds of fruit best adapted to this section.

The cultivation of fruit is one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, employment engaged in by man. We find fruit of various varieties celebrated in songs and stories handed down to us from the earliest times. The first man, according to Jewish tradition, was a horticulturist under the superintendence of his Creator. The wise king, when he referred to things beautiful, compared them to apples and to the apple tree. And dull indeed must be the mind that does not experience the sensation of pleasure when reading in the seventh book of the 'Odyssey' by Homer a description of the splendid fruit grown in the garden of Alcinoos, watered by irrigation—a system well understood 1200 years before the Christian era.

Fruit has played a conspicuous part in the world's history according to the conception of our forefathers. Through eating of a certain fruit Adam lost his position in the Garden. Because of an apple offered as the prize of beauty, the city of Troy was destroyed; and a golden apple caused Atlanta to lose her race.

The cultivation of trees, vines and flowers is in entire harmony with the best thoughts and instincts of man. There is, in my opinion, no other employment so refining to the heart and soul, because the horticulturist is, or may be, in constant communion with Nature. And be it remembered that Nature has an infinity of important secrets willing always to impart to any one who has her key. The key is not hid away in some dark corner, but may be found by any who keep their eyes and ears open. It is hoped that many of Nature's secrets touching horticulture may be unfolded at this meeting so that we all may be benefited and enlightened.

1st—*The Advantages of Yakima as a Fruit Growing County.*—The three principal natural agents for the production of fine fruit are soil, sunshine and water. The soil of Yakima county is all that can be desired—rich in all the elements necessary for the formation of a vigorous growth of timber; and without a strong, healthy growth of timber we cannot expect to gather first class fruit. The soil of this county is not only rich on its surface, but downward to the depth of 30 or even 40 feet in many places. This fact

proves that our soil is almost inexhaustible in its nature. The writer saw trees growing in this county six, seven and eight years old, heavily laden with fruit, and the same season make from fifteen to twenty-four inches of timber. This alone goes a long way to prove the stimulating properties of our soil.

In Michigan trees of the same age, having a less quantity of fruit, would make little or no timber. It is well understood by practical fruit growers that a growth of from four to six inches on the apple tree annually is necessary for the health of the tree and for the assurance of a fair crop. Now, when we find that trees, whether apple, peach, pear or prune, grown in this county will bear as they do nearly double the quantity of superior fruit they do in eastern states, and make at the same time treble the growth of timber, we are forced to attribute these effects to some cause or causes. Soil is the principal cause, for without good soil, sunshine and water will not bring forth such effects. From observation since I came to live in the Yakima valley, I am led to believe that fruit can be grown profitably for 40 per cent less than can be done in Michigan or Illinois.

Sunshine is necessary for the production of fine flowers and fine-colored fruit. Without a certain proportion of sunshine fruit will remain green and insipid. Long spells of cloudy weather during the summer months, as there are in some parts of our country, prevent that beautiful color which obtains in the fruit of this county. In California the sunshine is too intense during the day and the heat too strong during the night to admit of long keeping, crisp apples or the finest flavored peaches. The apples of that state grow large, as do the peaches, but will not, in my opinion, compare in flavor with apples or peaches grown in this state or in Michigan or New Jersey.

In Yakima county there is almost continual sunshine from the 1st of April to the 1st of November, while the heat ranges from 75 to 85 degrees above, with a few days when the mercury rises to 95 and 100. This degree of heat is just about right, with cool nights, to impart a rich color and a fine flavor to fruit. At the World's Fair at Chicago in '93 it was

generally conceded that the fruit from the state of Washington, taken as a whole, was the finest on exhibition; the fruit from California being a little too dark, caused by too much sunshine and heat, while the fruit from eastern states was lacking in color. A certain degree of cold in winter is also necessary for the production of fine-flavored fruit such as apples and peaches.

Water is the third agent referred to above. Without water the best soil and the softest, clearest sunshine will avail nothing in the production of vegetation. In countries depending upon water from the clouds there are times when the heavens refuse the genial showers, and as a consequence vegetation will languish, and should the drouth continue, as it often does, damage and destitution follow. On the other hand, an overplus of water brings disaster and destruction in its train. The writer remembers several occasions when the drouth during the month of September was so severe in Michigan that peaches, particularly the Hill's Chile, withered on the side exposed to the sun; and several fruit growers living on the margin of the lake drew water in barrels to their trees. While on the other hand the rainfall was so severe and cold during the month of May when the trees were in bloom, that the pollen in the blossoms was destroyed and the prospects of the fruit growers ruined for the season. In this county we are not dependent upon the clouds for water, but utilize the soft, sparkling water flowing down to us from the everlasting snows of the mighty Cascade mountains. To me the conformation of this county is an interesting study, enclosed as we are by mountains on the southwest and north, preventing rain from visiting us during the summer months except at rare intervals; yet Nature has compensated us for lack of rain in so shaping our valley that water from the streams can be utilized and led where we will. Truly "Irrigation is King." And be it remembered that the finest figs in the world, those of Carthage; and the richest peaches and plums, those of Damascus, were cultivated under irrigation. We assume then, that with a rich soil, clear, warm sunshine and plenty of water, just when

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