

HOUSE AND FARM.

PRACTICAL HOUSEKEEPERS, FARMERS, HORTICULTURISTS, AND STOCK BREEDERS, ARE PARTICULARLY REQUESTED TO CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES FOR THIS DEPARTMENT.

For the SENTINEL.

FEAR BLIGHT.

Mr. Editor: There has been much discussion in pomological circles as to the cause of pear blight or fire blight.

One theory is that it is caused by electricity. I desire to record an instance of the blight in this town that furnishes strong evidence of the truth of this theory.

Mr. J. T. Hoblitzell has three or four dwarf pears and one apple tree in close contiguity to each other all of which have been within a few days severely attacked with blight. On examining them I discovered a dark line running down two of the main limbs of one of the pear trees to the body and thence continuing to the root which clearly marks the course of an electric current. There was no abrasion of the bark, simply a dark line just the color of blighted pear wood. On the same tree the tips of nearly all the limbs are blackened for several inches.

The apple tree also bears undoubted evidence that electricity has been at work upon it although there is no abrasion of bark.

Mr. Hoblitzell informs me that he first noticed the blight on these trees the day succeeding a severe thunder shower.

I may also add that they are in the immediate vicinity of a lightning conductor, too far, however, to receive protection from it, being just out of its radius.

POMUM.

For the SENTINEL.

SUMMER PRUNING.

The object of summer pruning is well known among orchardists to be for the promotion of fruitfulness.

According to Dr. Warder, the Nestor of American Pomologists, the proper time to do summer pruning is just as soon as terminal buds are formed. In most of varieties of winter or fall fruits the terminal buds—in this county—are just now forming; hence now is the proper time to summer prune most fall and winter fruits.

The same authority adds that pruning may be done "at any period except when the wood is frozen."

Young trees, however, should generally be pruned, according to the same authority, in the spring, as spring pruning adds to the rapid development of wood.

GRASS LAND.

It is a recent discovery that an acre of good grass land is worth an acre of choice plow land. More than this: the grass land is destined to increase in value, because the climate in which it is natural is limited to a few degrees of latitude. Philadelphia does not lie within it, nor any place south of it, unless sufficiently elevated to make a climate corresponding to a higher degree of latitude.

On the continent of North America there are more degrees of latitude in which the climate is suited to figs, oranges, lemons, cotton and sugar cane, than to grass. Now, while dairy products are limited to a belt not exceeding three hundred miles wide, and a part of which must always be devoted to other crops, the importance of developing all our grass land is apparent. The increased demand for butter and cheese of our population, and the great profits arising from this course, make a grass farm of especial value. It is of no consequence that pastures shall be level: still, the land to be mown should not be too rough. It is a well known fact that the grass of mountain regions is more nutritious than that in the low lands.—[N. Y. Tribune.]

FRUIT PROSPECTS have never been better in Holt county than this year, and it is becoming evident that except for peaches and the more tender varieties of grape, there is no country on earth better adapted to the fruits of the temperate zone than the Platte Purchase.

PLANTING EVERGREENS.—The Country Gentleman tells about a young farmer once ridiculed by his neighbors for setting out what they chose to call a "Cedar Swamp," around his residence. They changed their sentiments when they discovered that nearly one half of his fuel, otherwise required, was saved by the shelter from bleak winds which these evergreens afforded in winter, and that they were something more than "only good to look at."

MASONIC.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THIS DEPARTMENT FROM THE BROTHERHOOD WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED.

THE MASON'S WIFE'S TRIAL.

BY MISS BARBER.

New Year's Day came and went, and Miss Emily Browning assumed the name of Mrs. Meggs, and entered upon the untried path from which she had in all her reflective moments shrunk back with a feeling of dread at the heart. She found old and well trained servants who needed directing—the major's daughter, a young miss almost as old as her pretty step-mother, was disposed to treat her very civilly, if not affectionately, and Emily trod the halls of her new home with a step almost as high as the skies, and bound so familiar to her father's household.

But one dark Monday morning—alas! that dark Mondays will happen to us all—Beatrice, the house girl, struck her sable face into Mrs. Meggs's dressing room, with the announcement upon her lips that Rose, the cook, was sick—had quite given up, and was down in the bed with a fever.

Emily hurried on her morning attire and hastened to the kitchen. Not a particle of fire existed in the stove—the dull, dead ashes seemed to look at her half derisively. She next went to Rose's house. The old woman lay tossing about, and groaning dolefully. Indeed, she seemed so ill that Emily sent directly for a physician. Next came the query, who was to take Rose's place in the kitchen? Beatrice did not, by any means, seem disposed to make trial of her skill, and Nelson, a mulatto, who waited about the establishment, declared that cooking was entirely out of the line of his business. He had never made a biscuit in his life.

Poor Mrs. Meggs! her perplexity was great. But it was getting late, and Major Meggs liked, above all things, punctuality about the meals. A fire must, through somebody's instrumentality, be kindled. Nelson at last made his appearance, with an armful of wood. Beatrice condescended to take up the ashes, and Mrs. Meggs herself laid on the splinters and applied an ignited match to them; but she was not used to a stove, and continually burnt or blacked her fingers. When she came to look for coffee, none had been parched; when she was ready to mix the dough, she could not, for the life of her determine whether water or milk was used in the operation. Two or three times she sat down and cried for vexation; it neither parched the coffee nor prepared the bread and toast. So she arose and went heroically to work again. At length the meal was upon the table, and she, the mistress, sat down with smarting fingers, flushed face, disheveled hair, and eyes red from weeping, by the coffee urn, to wait the major and Diana's entrance. At length they made their advent, both looking very unconcerned, and entirely unconscious of any trouble in the kitchen department. The truth was that neither had heard of the cook's illness, and neither seemed to care very much about it when they did hear it. The major merely replied:

"She is subject to such attacks; she will soon be well again;" and scrutinizing the black fluid falsely called coffee, with which his cup was filled, applied it to his lips without saying a word, as a dutiful husband should have done, and swallowed it, dregs and all. Then he threw on his hat, and went down town to his office. Diana good naturedly muttered something about the biscuit being heavy, for the truth was Mrs. Meggs had entirely forgotten that soda was requisite in their composition. She, however, managed to swallow one, and then adjourned to the parlor, to thrum away upon the piano and finish a drawing. Mrs. Meggs listened to her a few moments. "Happy girl!" she said, mentally, "sing while you can. But no," she said, correcting herself hastily, "that maxim was acted on in my education, and to-day I am paying for my inexperience roundly. What shall I do about dinner? I forgot," she added, "to tell my husband not to bring anybody home with him to-day. He is a Mason, and is forever meeting with some of his Masonic brethren and bringing them home to dine. When the cook is well, I am glad to see them; but to-day, when every thing is at sixes and sevens, would it not be dreadful?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

AN English magazine has coined the word statal, to designate all things relating to a state, in the same way that "national" characterizes those of a nation and "municipal" those of a city.

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