some trees of the Shiro plum, very full of fruit. In the same number of Farm and Ranch there was a letter from Mr. S. about his Shiro plums, which is as follows:

I send you by express a box with a single cluster of Shiro plums, containing, as near as I can count, 54—weight not quite three pounds. They are not quite ripe but I was afraid to let them hang longer for fear they would not carry. This is the bunch alluded to by Mr. Knetzan of the Lampasas News. While there are no curculio this year I find some gougers got in their work "unbeknownst" to me. The tree is half Gonzales and half Shiro, both varieties loaded. I never thinned a plum just to see what a sod tree could do with plenty of rain. As both of these varieties are extra fine every way and unfailing bearers something good should result from the cross, so save the seed and give them to your friends, with instructions to plant in hard, unbroken ground, sod or clean, just like nature does. One being yellow and the other red should give all sorts of fine hybrids.

H. M. Stringfellow.

Note—These Shiro hybrids were magnificent to see and delicious to the taste. No fruit has reached this office that so fully measured up to the requirements of looks and taste as did these plums, in the judgment of a number of good tasters. If it is safe to say in these days "by their fruits ye shall know them," we would dare assert that this fruit was grown by one to whom the perfection of the fruit grower's art had become an old story. Most plums having Jap blood in them are "tame" in taste. Not so with these.

The Cork Oak.

We have often wondered why the cork oak was not grown in this State. From an article, in the Rural Californian, we find that it is being planted to some extent in that State. We have no doubt that it would do well in Florida and be both useful and ornamental. The true cork oak is Quercus suber, but on looking it up in Prof. Bailey's Cyclopedia of American Horticulture, we found that he says that the bark of Q. occidentalis cannot be distinguished from that of the true cork oak, Q. suber, while the tree is more hardy. It seems to us that experiments should be made with one or both of these species, in Florida. The Rural Californian says:

Of all the forest trees we grow there is no other family that in all lands is held in greater love or reverence than the noble oaks, under whose grateful shade the ancient druids were wont to worship and which still witnesses the lighthearted gambolings of childhood's most pleasant hours, under varying conditions and in points as remote from each other as are to be compassed on the same planet. For the oak is to be found on all continents and on nearly all islands of considerable size. So too, in all countries species may be found that grow in rank forests and others as groups or in isolated specimens only.

The English oak has been recorded in song and story ever since the birth of our mother tongue and not less famous are some of our truly magnificent American species. Timbers of our White oak have been sent to international exhibitions in Europe which have brought forth exclamations of wonderment and admiration from the most noted timber experts on the further side of the big pond. From Canada down to the evergreen and water oaks of the Southern States there is a wonderful range of species and there are noble, grim old patriarchs among them all. On the Pacific Coast and especially in our own State we have many fine species, so fine and varied in fact that they are worthy of a more extensive consideration than space will at present allow but they will be fully treated later on.

The Cork oak is an evergreen native to Southern Europe and North Africa where it attains an age of about two hundred years and a height of about sixty feet though often of immense girth and greatly varying form. In foliage it has a soft, quiet reposeful appearance, quite the reverse of the prickly leaved kinds which seem to bristle with the lightest zephyr. On its native heath it assumes many forms but is always rugged and self-reliant in character, sometimes dividing close to the ground and again sending up a single sturdy column for thirty feet before branching. It seems to thrive in any well-drained soil except of limestone formation but is very impatient of heavy soils and stagnation of water about the roots. Like all oaks it grows fast if under favorable conditions and it is equally true than when unsuited as regards soil, climate and necessary conditions no class of trees grow slower, though none are more tenacious of life.

From a commercial standpoint the Cork oak is an important tree and has been somewhat extensively planted with a single eye to its economic value. It is hardier than the olive so its possible range is by no means restricted. In its native habitat the thick bark, which forms the cork of commerce, is removed every nine or ten years, beginning with about the twentieth year of its life. This spongy bark is about three inches thick and comes away easily if taken in proper season which is in general late summer when what is known as the "second sap" is on the move. Mr. Wm. Robinson, one of the world's greatest gardeners, tree lovers, etc., says that he has wandered through enormous forests of them in the mountains of Algeria and Tunis, but the finest specimens are found in those hot countries in the deep-soiled bottom lands or on the shaded slopes.

In England and Ireland it has developed most marvelously where conditions have been of the best though its use has been restricted to ornamental plantations. It is not always hardy there though some trees have reached a considerable size and distance north of London. In gardens on the Riveira it is very common as it is all over southern Europe. In France it has been planted well up into the central parts and wherever known has been pushed as far north as climate will allow. In many other countries, notably India, it has been extensively planted in late years for a combination of shade, protection and profit.

In California little has been done looking to the economic side of the question though rumor has it that the University of California has put out some on the slopes of Mt. Hamilton to note their growth and bark development. Even as an ornamental tree it has not been used so extensively as its merits deserve though occasionally fine large specimens may be found that must command the admiration of all tree lovers. In the parks of Riverside, notably the A. S. White park; in Central park, Pomona; and at other points the public may easily see well-developed trees. In and around Los Angeles are also a considerable number though locally Alhambra lays claim to having the largest and finest. Wherever I have seen it I have always been impressed with its rare beauty—as beautiful as any oak that grows, and have marveled that it has not found more favor with tree planters in general. Either for home or street decoration it has never proven a failure as far as my investigations have reached, nor has it failed to return a satisfactory growth for care expended.

Why Boys Leave the Farm.

We have at various times printed articles on this subject, yet it is one which never loses its interest. Of course, it is a fact that the cities need the fresh blood from the country to keep going, and it is also true that in many cases the farm is not large enough to support all the sons of the family. Yet, it is certainly to be regretted that farmers' sons cannot see that their avocation is daily rising in public estimation and is no longer looked upon as only suitable for uneducated boors. Farming is now a learned profession and it requires brains and education to keep up with the procession. The Wisconsin Agriculturist says:

To the advice of President Jesse, of the Missouri State University, that boys study agriculture, O. P. Sturm, editor of the Saline County (Mo.) Index, replies with approval of the suggestion, but doubts if it will be extensively followed by farm boys who have a chance to get a liberal education. Editor Sturm is of the opinion that the reason why boys leave the farm is tha they imagine themselves socially at a disadvantage as compared with the soft-handed, fair-cheeked city youths they chance to meet in the parlors of their lady friends on Sunday evenings. They fancy that, like Maude Muller, their country sweethearts prefer the young men of the city and would like some other life than that of the farm. Even in college, Mr. Sturm says, the young women seldom turn their smiles and approval toward the farmer boy in preference to the law student, What engineer or the medical student. What influence, he asks, could be more potent?

There is a measure of truth in this explanation, but also an admixture of error. The country boy who amounts to much is at no real disadvantage in competing with the rival from the city for the love of a sensible girl from either city or country. He may not always win, but his chances are good, and in most cases a little better than those of the city youth. He is a more vigorous, ardent and jealous wooer; is prone to over-estimate the importance of the "small talk," the compliments and the polite attentions of his rival, and for this reason often rushes at the citadel of the favored young lady's affections and carries it by storm, while his dainty city-bred competitor is dallying with doubts and playing the part of an earnest trifler. Young women admire manliness, character, brains and energy; and nowhere is this truer than in the colleges and universities where character and ability are the standards by which all are judged, and the boys from the farm get the best that is going.

Young persons of both sexes who have not the good sense to look beneath the surface to the true elements of manhood and womanhood are often carried away by appearances; and stylish clothes and softness of hands or tongue may count more with such persons than the weightier considerations of solid worth; but this is simply a phase of all human nature, and not a trait peculiar to rural life. As a rule, like seeks like in marriage, and the elective affinity of character for character is not neutralized by trifling causes.

We are in a transition period on this subject. The vocation of the farmer is rising in character and importance. It is a becoming a profession. It is respected and honored by all men and women of discriminating judgment. It also gains in real attractiveness as country life gains, through the telephone, the rural mail delivery, the troley line, improvement of roads, better methods of of farming and the building of better farm homes, the attractiveness of life in the city. A generation hence will see country life esteemed more highly than life in the city; and if the country-bred young man shall ask for an advantage over his city rival in his quest of a wife it will certainly be his. But in our judging the young man from the country can today give his rival in courtship odds and beat him in nine cases out of ten. The tendencies of young people to seek the city or, leaving the city, to return to nature, are grounded in deeper principles of human nature than those brought to light in the by-plays of social life. They are largely of an economic character, but there are many other elements entering into the problem.

Soap Trees.

The soap trees are yielding a heavy crop this year. The press for some time past has been silent about the virtues of this tree, but Dr. Moulie says it is designed to cut a very important figure in the industrial development of the state. Besides making soap, the berries yield an oil superior to olive oil. The soap tree will be heard from. —Ocala Banner.