

HORTICULTURE



The Cause of Pear Blight.

For ten years I have grown pears for market and have watched and studied the trees almost daily during that time, and I cannot agree with expert station men and others as to the cause of pear blight. I cannot believe that pear blight is caused by bacteria or that a microbe has anything to do with it. An experiment station professor writing in "Country Life in America" recently went so far as to say that the pear blight microbe is in the nectar of the pear blossoms and is carried by bees from flower to flower. I think it is hardly possible for the nectar to be anything but pure when the blossoms open. I think pear blight is caused by conditions of soil and climate. On certain soils and elevations even in Illinois, pear trees are free from blight.

Frank Alkin.

Illinois.

The cause of pear blight is now very well known. There is no question at all of its being a germ disease. The microscope has revealed its character and it has been isolated and examined. The spore of the fungus that causes pear blight is both heavy and sticky and cannot be blown by the wind from one place to another. It used to be supposed that it could be blown from one tree to another and that this would account for the sudden appearance of pear blight after a windy and wet period. The germ of pear blight lives over winter in the live wood adjoining dead wood that has been killed by blight. Insects, especially bees, sip the sap from wounds in infected trees and later visit the tips of trees where small leaves are being formed or blossoms are opening. The spores of the pear blight stick to the limbs of the insects just as pollen sticks to them. When the insects suck the nectar in the flowers, the spores are rubbed off and fall into the flower. From those spores, minute plants of a thread-like character develop. These plants grow through the sap wood and through the leaves and use up the life fluid that should go to feed the leaves. The leaves then wilt and turn color, and we say the tree has been blighted. There is much yet to be learned about pear blight, but the foundation has been well worked out.—Farmers' Review.

Fruit Exhibit at Fairs.

Societies having the control of the fruit exhibit at fairs should see to it that, so far as possible, every variety of fruit grown in the state shall be represented at each exhibition. Managers of agricultural societies should remember that these exhibitions are for the purpose of instruction and for the stimulation of fruit growing. They are not mere gambling devices by which a few men can make as much money as possible out of the premiums. Many of our exhibits are deficient in the number of varieties displayed. Certain orchardists are invited in, and these generally make a display of the fruit they grow themselves. Some of the varieties that are thriving best in the state are not shown at all. The managers of the exhibit could, by a very little work, bring in all the different varieties of fruit being grown in the locality represented by the fair. This should be done even if the management has to buy a few plates of good fruit, of varieties that would not otherwise be represented. The matter of instruction should be made much of, and every variety should be fully designated by lettered or printed labels that are large enough to be read by all. Very frequently the labels on the fruits are very badly written on slips of paper and are placed where they are weighed down by the fruit. This may be satisfactory to the judges, but would hardly do much in instructing the public.

Orchard Cover Crop.

At this season of the year a cover crop may be put into the orchard that has been cultivated, especially if this orchard is in the north. Experiments made with cover crops show that they very materially reduce the distance that the frost enters the ground. In some cases the common vetch has been planted in the orchard in mid-summer, and has made a good growth during the fall, covering the orchard with a carpet of green. This plant freezes during the winter, but the carpet it makes reduces the power of the frost to penetrate the ground. In one test in Wisconsin, where the frost went twenty inches without this cover, it went only twelve inches with it. It is too late now to plant alfalfa or clover, but cow peas may yet be sown, as may also winter rye. These will both make a good cover crop by the time frost comes, and will serve the purpose intended. Where orchards have been in sod all the spring and summer, they should not be disturbed in the fall, but the sod should be left as a cover for the roots of the trees during the winter.

The so-called pedigreeing of plants is a misnomer, when such plants are not produced from seed. Selection is one thing, but it is not pedigreeing. A plant cannot be its own parent.

There should be a label on every package of fruit that is sold in the market showing where and by whom it was grown. This will tend to do away with dishonest packing.

FARM



MISCELLANY

Purchasing Fowls or Eggs.

We are frequently asked the question if, in starting with pure-bred stock, it is better to buy the fowls or buy the eggs. Our answer will depend on the season of year in which the question is asked. If in the spring, we would say, buy the eggs. If in the fall, we would say, buy the fowls. If one should buy the eggs at this time of year, they would need an incubator in which to hatch them, and even then the fowls would not be ready to begin laying until the next summer. They might even moult before beginning to lay. In purchasing half-grown birds this season of the year, about one season is gained over the production from the eggs. There is another thing that favors the buying of fowls, and that is that one can tell just what he is getting. In purchasing eggs, it is possible for serious mistakes to be made, as it is not possible from the looks of the eggs to tell whether its parents are pure-bred or not. In developing the pure-bred flock, it is better to depend on the purchasing of fowls and also on the purchasing of eggs.

Fall Work in the Vegetable Garden.

There is much work needed to be done in the vegetable garden in the fall. When spring comes there is no time to properly prepare land that has to be used for the first garden crops in the spring. The land must be properly prepared in the fall, must be plowed and harrowed, and must receive a heavy dressing of barnyard manure. This is available for plant food only after it has decayed, and if it is put on in the spring, the early plants do not get the benefit of it, except in a very small degree. But where it is plowed in the fall, the process of decay goes on while the ground is still open, and nearly all the plant food is in a condition to be assimilated as soon as the ground is warm enough to work in the spring. The greatest cause of failure in some farmers' gardens is this very ignorance of the fall preparation. The gardeners near the great cities never forget fall preparation of their land. In no other way could they satisfy the demands for early vegetables.

The Milk Powder Industry.

During the last few years we have heard more discussion as to the possibility of making a milk powder than ever before. The milk powder aimed at is one in which the proteids retain their normal condition, and need only water added to them to change back into normal milk. This preservation of the proteids in their natural condition is considered by scientists to be the essential requisite of the milk powder. There are powders on the market, but they are merely the result of evaporating milk, and can no more be changed back into milk than cheese can be so changed. There are many efforts being made to induce farmers to put their money into these projects, but the men being solicited should remember that up to the present time there have been no indications that any discoveries have been made making such a milk powder possible.

Fuel for Pumping Water.

In these columns at various times we have noted the great progress being made at the New Mexico station in its investigations of irrigation by pumped water. The cost of fuel per acre has been shown to be very small whether wood or coal has been used. The station now reports that it finds a still cheaper fuel in crude oil. A 22-horse power gasoline engine was used and the cost of the ten-hour run was as follows: Crude oil, \$3.05; kerosene, \$6.57; gasoline, \$6.65. This will be of great interest to those who are putting in plants to irrigate their gardens and plats by means of pumps.

Co-Operative Creameries in Ireland.

Co-operation is becoming a permanent feature of Irish butter making. The co-operative creameries there have made good records and have proved very profitable. They have in the main produced a butter that has sold well on the English market. The result has been good returns for the product of the creameries and good dividends to the co-operators. Recent reports from Ireland give the number of co-operative creameries now in existence there as 267. These have 46,299 members, and the creameries are turning out 14,000 tons of butter every year.

Sheep Nostril Fly.

An official publication in London says that the shepherds in some parts of the country are controlling the sheep nostril fly by treatment with tar, fish oil, and similar substances. The advised precaution is taken to remove the sheep from pasture that is known to be infested before it is time for the appearance of the mature flies.

Staining Legs Yellow.

Some of the exhibitors of birds with yellow skin, where the standard requires a yellow leg, use iodine to give intensity of color. The application must be a very light one, as the iodine will produce soreness if used in large quantities. The practice, however, is not one that can be commended, as every bird exhibited should stand on its own merits.

THE MIDWAY ISLANDS

By Joseph A. Arnold.

THE Midway Islands are perhaps the least known of this country's Pacific possessions. However, from their situation and the unique position they occupy in the commercial world, they are highly valuable. The name "Midway" explains in a word their exact position in the Pacific, and they lie within a few degrees of the meridian which divides the eastern and western hemispheres.

The Midway Islands were discovered and claimed as possessions of the United States in 1859 by Captain Brooks, of the Gambia. The islands are two in number, entirely encircled by a coral reef eighteen miles in circumference, with the exception of an opening on the northeast, which permits the admission of vessels of less than eighteen feet draft.

Sand Island, the larger of the two, is about 900 acres in extent, and is aptly named, it being entirely a desert of fine coral sand, upon the light surface of which the sun shines with dazzling brilliancy. Its companion island, oddly enough, presents another extreme of barrenness—a rock, paradoxically named Green Island from its utter lack of vegetation. There are, however, large deposits of guano in its rocky crevices, and, as is the case with Sand Island, countless thousands of birds find habitation on its surface.

The coral reef round the islands protects them in a measure from the high seas of the deepest portions of the Pacific. Soundings taken within the vicinity have shown the depth of 4900 feet, with vague and sudden fluctuations of ocean bottom. The climate is delightful, the temperature being mild and not subject to great variations during the different seasons. It is perpetual summer here, but without the enervating effects of excessive heat.

Sand Island is the better suited for human habitation, although its barren surface offers but poor hospitality. The highest point, that on which the flag of the United States now flies, is a mere sand dune, ten feet above the general level of the ground. There are a number of less pretentious dunes, formed and held intact by the roots of a small dense shrub, groups of which are sparingly distributed over the rest of the island.

In the thick shrubbery millions of birds abound, and in nesting time lay their eggs flat on the sand. Terns, of several varieties, boatwain's birds, gulls, albatrosses, sea pigeons, plover and curlew are a few of the species which are found in great numbers.

In walking through these rookeries, immense clouds of birds are aroused, and their flight veritably darkens the sky, while during the nesting season eggs are demolished at every step. If clouds of the birds are disturbed and fly away at the approach of man, there are as many more that prefer quietly to sit at his feet, even sometimes snapping, as if resenting his intrusion on their sacred precincts. Of late years the island has been frequently visited by Japanese for the purpose of obtaining the birds' feathers, a practice which has resulted in the death of thousands of the beautiful birds.

The United States Government, however, proposes to put a stop to this indiscriminate slaughter of the innocents. Plover and curlew are two species of game birds, the flesh of which is extremely palatable, and the eggs of the tern, closely resembling those of the bantam chickens, are also highly prized as food. When one desires these eggs all that is necessary is to clear a space in one of the rookeries, where fresh laid eggs may be collected every morning.

If the islands are barren and unfruitful and so sun-baked that the glare necessitates smoked glasses of the darkest shade, the marine life abounds in color and magnificence. Tropical fish in all the glory of multitudinous shades of vivid colors abound in the water, while sharks, sea elephants and cetaceans animals are also to be found. Fishing here is delightful sport, and some of the wildest "fish" stories are related of the sizes of the catches.

The most recent chapter in the history of these two dreary isles, and the one which has directed public attention more or less to their strategic importance, was recently consummated through the choice of Sand Island as one of the relay stations for the new Pacific cable, which has united Uncle Sam's new possessions in the far Pacific with the seat of government.

When Hawaii and the Philippines came into the possession of the United States, direct and efficient means of telegraph communication was wanting. President McKinley was quick to realize just what such a bond with our new possessions would mean both to the land and water forces of this country stationed there. In his message to Congress on February 10, 1899, he directed attention to the necessity for such a bond, and urged the consideration of the matter by both houses. The means of communication then in vogue called for at least fifteen or sixteen different stations, controlled for the most part by European corporations. The rate charged was then \$2.35 per word, and the Government was paying, up to the end of the Philippine insurrection, about \$400,000 a year for its messages.

It was at this time that the late John W. Mackay offered his aid to the Government, outlining the plan which, with a few unimportant changes, is now in operation. During the winter he offered Congress to lay the cable

purely as a private enterprise, and when the bill providing for Governmental construction and operation came to be considered, it was defeated. Afterward the work was undertaken by the Postal Telegraph Company, and on July 1, 1900, was completed, the Midway Station having been established as being the most practicable relay between Honolulu and Guam.

On Midway Islands, before the advent of the cable itself, there was a small colony of men, partly employees of the company and partly the officers and crew of the U. S. S. Iroquois, forming the representation of the Government. Lieutenant-Commander Hugh Rodman, U. S. N., designated Governor by the Navy Department, under whose jurisdiction the islands are now maintained, assumed direction.

On the highest point on Sand Island, sailors from the U. S. S. Iroquois raised the flag of the United States, and the ensign was thrown to the breeze in a spot near the southwest end of the island, twenty-eight degrees, twelve minutes and twenty-two seconds north; longitude 127 degrees twenty-two minutes and twenty-three seconds west. The entrance to the reef, a roomy and broad one of three-quarters of a mile, was christened Welles Harbor.

The greatest value of the islands lies in the fact that they are most conveniently situated for the sighting and reporting of vessels. The value of such a station to our navy is at once apparent. Congress has been asked to provide for its establishment and maintenance. Should favorable action be taken it is likely that the Midway Islands, which have heretofore been barren and uninhabitable save by the occasional visits of poachers and crews of stranded vessels, will become the seat of a thriving community under the flag of the United States.—Youth's Companion.

THE MIKADO'S PRECEPTS.

Words of Wisdom and Advice That Hang in Every Japanese Tent.

On the walls of the barracks, on the sides of the tents, at the foot of every Japanese soldier's cot hangs a printed copy of seven moral precepts, says the New York World. The Emperor of Japan is supposed to be the author. At any rate, he, as General-in-Chief, issued them to his army. The last thing the soldier sees on retiring, the first thing to greet his eyes when he awakes, are these precepts.

Every morning after roll-call an officer of each company reads the precepts to his men. Then he makes the men recite them in concert, and afterward calls upon individual soldiers to repeat them.

In barracks the officers drill the men in the knowledge of the precepts, and explain them in detail, illustrating their explanations with examples drawn from history. Deeds of Washington, Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Grant and other famous commanders are related, that the soldiers may know the precepts in practical application as well as in theory.

Baron Kaneko, a Japanese statesman who recently visited this country on a confidential mission, asserts that the personal valor of the Japanese soldiers is due to the practice of the seven precepts. Here they are, as translated by Baron Kaneko from the Mikado's edict:

- "To be sincere and loyal and guard against untruthfulness.
- "To respect superiors, keep true to comrades and guard against lawlessness and insolence.
- "To obey the command of superiors, irrespective of its nature, and never to resist or disregard it.
- "To prize bravery and courage and be diligent in the performance of duties, and guard against cowardice and timidity.
- "To boast not of brutal courage, and neither quarrel with nor insult others, which will incite general hatred.
- "To cultivate virtue and practice frugality, and guard against extravagance and effeminacy.
- "To prize reputation and honor, and guard against vulgarity and greed."

In Kansas.

Everything seemed so quiet that the oil reporter leaned out of the car window and addressed the old man with bridle whiskers, who was sitting on the dusty platform.

"Guess you are a prominent citizen of the town?" ventured the newspaper man.

"Wa'all," drawled the old man, chewing a pine splinter, "all the folks around here have known me for years."

"Thought so. Ever run for office?"

"Once."

"Democratic or Republican?"

"Neither."

"Ah, Prohibition?"

"No."

"Then what kind of office was it?"

"The clerk's office to get a marriage license, after I'd been courting the Widow Jones for nine years. You bet I run."

Why He Disliked the Man.

I once heard of a man who, discussing a name on the visiting list, said to his wife, "You know perfectly well that I don't like that man." "Don't you think you are a little unreasonable?" asked the wife. "Your dislike arose because he did not answer a letter you wrote him, and you found afterward that the letter was hung up all summer in the pocket of your overcoat, and was never sent to him at all." "Yes, I know that," was the rejoinder, "but it was so long before I found it out that I couldn't overlook his rudeness, and I never forgive him, and I don't believe I ever shall." There is a good deal of ill-feeling in this world that is without any firmer foundation.—Printers' Ink.



The Reckless Boy.

Jerry Quigley, a west side newsboy, was in the habit of jumping on street cars and jumping off again while they were in rapid motion.

It was in vain that he was warned against the practice.

"Some day," the conductors used to tell him, "you'll do that once too often, and then you'll quit selling papers."

The prediction, alas, came true! One morning he attracted the attention of a circus acrobat.

And Jerry Quigley is now earning \$15 a week as a member of the celebrated Jimsey Family, performers on the flying trapeze.

A Lone Shark.



Sidelights on History.

The good Caliph Haroun al Raschid, disguised as a plain clothes man, had just returned from one of his nocturnal rambles through the streets of Bagdad.

"Everything is O. K.," he said to the chief of police, "but I wanted to be sure about it. You can't tell when Lincoln Steffens may take it into his head to pay us a visit."

Laughing at the idea of Tom Johnson's city being the best governed municipality in the country, he picked up the morning paper and turned to the news from Chicago to see whether or not the Dalrymple report had been given out yet.

Idleness Justified.

Diggsby—"I don't see how you can afford to lose so much of the time."

Higgins—"I can't afford it because I only get 75 cents a day when I work."

Diggsby—"But that is just the reason why you should get in more days."

Higgins—"Oh, I don't know. When I don't work I don't lose much. See?"

Egotism.

She—"I wouldn't marry the best man in the world."

He—"Pardon me, but your remark was entirely uncalled for."

She—"Why, pray?"

He—"Because I never asked you to marry me."

Truth Comes Out.

She—"Where did you pass your vacation?"

He—"At the seashore."

She—"And did you leave your heart behind you when you returned to town?"

He—"No, but I left my trunk."

Comes High.



Nothing in It.

The mad bull dashed down the street and entered a Chinese laundry through the window.

"Huh!" he exclaimed in disgust, as he slowly backed out. "I've been told it was great sport to get into a china shop, but hanged if I believe it."

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