

WILLAMETTE FARMER

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Correspondence.

Letter from Illa. W. T.

ILLA, W. T., July 22, 1884.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

As I haven't written to your valuable paper since I left Wasco county, Oregon, I will try and tell you something of this part of the country. It has been seven years since I came here, on Snake river, and I have been going into the fruit business as fast as my means would permit. I commenced with 200 peach trees, and 100 each of plum and prune, 200 apple and 4 pear trees, a few cherries, apricots, grapes, and the smaller fruits, all of which grow well, and in fact do better than at any place I have lived before. I now have over 2,000 fruit trees growing and shall keep on setting out until I get 5,000 trees. When I commenced in the fruit growing I read the FARMER and everything else I saw relating to the subject, and worked and watched and tried to find out what kind of fruit would be the most profitable to go into extensively, and have about decided to set out two or three thousand prune trees. I have the Italian and German that I have been growing six years. The peach, Washington, Columbia, Jefferson and egg plums, all of which are full and fine looking.

The prunes are very full and large. Apples are full enough except a part of them have what we call the apple louse. The apples have fallen off and the trees are injured. They are everywhere that I have heard of this year. They have the same trouble in California, often killing the buds before the leaves come out. In some places press pumps have been used throwing a spray of Paris green into the tops of the trees. I tried a solution of strong vitriol which killed the lice, also the leaves, but not the bark. My pear trees are very rank in growth, but not very full. Some of them show a little blight on the leaves as though they had been scorched.

The peach trees will bear a full half crop which is considered good for this season after the injury they received during the past winter. Cherries and small fruits do well every year. Although there are some disadvantages to contend with I think the fruit business is going to be a success in this locality.

Yours respectfully,

Geo. W. BURFORD.

The Best Strawberries.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

According to promise, after noting carefully which plants and berries were the best this season, I proceed to state the result or conclusion.

The Sharpless, Jucunda and Wilson, in the order mentioned, are the best on my place. The Wilson did poorer this season than it has ever done; the Jucunda did uncommonly well, being large, prolific, and late. Out of twenty-three kinds it was one week later than any of them. The behavior of the Sharpless was singular this season, being not only among the earliest but lasting down to within one week of the latest, the Jucunda. The earliest was the Warren; and, it is not only the earliest but it is also among the richest berries I have ever eaten. It is not so firm, nor so good a market berry as the Wilson, but for home use I prefer it to that great market berry—the Wilson. If the Sharpless would always behave as it did this season we should need no other. It was early, medium, and away down to quite late, covering nearly the whole season. It is A No. 1.

The Jucunda is only medium to very late, nay, with me, the latest of all. The only real objection I have to the Wilson is, the last pickings are so small. Deep and constant culture improves the size, and quality, too, of the Wilson. The Jersey Queen is late and productive; but, is not as large as the

books would have it; and, although a pistillate, bore handsomely. The Big Bob is a failure—a miserable failure. The Glendale is late, firm, productive, too sour for eating, but good for canning. I do not think it worthy. The Jersey Queen is equally late, even later, and far better. The Finch's Prolific has behaved admirably, and is the easiest berry to pick I know of. My pickers would almost quarrel about who should pick them. They are large, firm—making no juice handling—and grow in such clusters that you can get a handful at a time, soon filling a box. Hence we love to pick them.

It takes the breadth of a continent and a decade of years to prove a strawberry. The Sharpless, Jucunda and Wilson have stood the test. They have been found "not wanting"—are worthy. These three are early, Wilson; medium, Sharpless; and late, Jucunda. They fill the bill. Still we may need, in time, new ones, as these may run out, degenerate, or become diseased to such a degree as to be worthless. There is much complaint now, in various States, of the Wilson, it having the blight, scale, and seems sickly. Hence many are discarding it. So, too, in some sense, of the Jucunda; rarely of the Sharpless, it being a young aspirant, having been sent out by J. K. Sharpless in 1872, and consequently now twelve years old. The Jucunda (Knox's No. 700) is over thirty years old. Indeed, many contend that Knox's No. 700 is really the old Jucunda brought here from Europe nearly half a century ago. The Wilson originated with Mr. Wilson, of Albany, N. Y., near a quarter of a century ago, and is, to-day, more universally known, cultivated, and successful than any other strawberry in our country. Any new and superior fruit I welcome; but cling to the old till the new is proven superior.

There are some others we have on trial; but will not speak of them now, because they may, in future, behave badly, and far be it from me to recommend what might, to others, be a blight and curse. Oregon, or rather the Willamette valley, is the natural home of the strawberry. Our hills and prairies were, before settled, teeming with wild strawberries, and many of them of good size and quality. An experience of thirty-three years has convinced me that we can, with common sense and labor, grow "the greatest berry God ever made" to perfection in the Willamette. I grew Sharpless, this season, weighing two ounces; rich, firm and delicious, too. But to grow them thus requires more trouble than the berries are worth. The Sharpless, more than any plant I know of being "a thing of conditions," "Its environment makes it," as Darwin has it.

These are the conditions that make large, rich strawberries: First, a deep, warm, rich, well underdrained soil—either naturally or artificially. Secondly, deep and constant cultivation. Thirdly, all runners cut. Fourthly, moisture in the form of rain or water applied. "The cat is out of the wallet." Catch her if you can. A. F. DAVIDSON.

The following is said to be true: A preacher out West, Mr. H., was a good man, but very rough in his ways, and very much given to chewing tobacco. One time he was riding on horseback through the country, when there came up a shower. Riding up to a cabin he hastily hitched his horse and knocked at the door. A sharp looking old lady answered the summons. The preacher asked for shelter. "I don't take in strangers, I don't know you!" replied the old lady, suspiciously. "But you know what the Bible says," said the preacher. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." "You needn't quote Bible," said the old lady, quickly; "no angel would come down from heaven with a quid of tobacco in his mouth as you have!" The door was shut, and the preacher unhitched his horse and rode away in the rain.

Midsummer Culture—Saving Hay, etc.

F. D. Curtis in the Country Gentleman writes as follows:

There is an opportunity for some one to do a good thing, and to improve this original millet, so that it may be made available for a late forage plant to eke out poor meadows, and to take the place of better grasses. It will grow on any kind of land, but like other things, will do best where the soil is rich. I am not able, from Flint on Grasses and Forage Plants, to give the botanical name of this grass. When the oat crop is light it is always found in it, and the seeds, coarser and lighter-colored than millet, used to fill the screen-box, and the old-time farmer was bothered to know what to do with them. I have found out that the hens are fond of them, and that when ground and mixed with grain they are good for cattle.

Like millet, the hay will be better if the seeds are not allowed to ripen, and the hay itself does not have the substance and value of timothy and some other varieties. When hay is short and light, as a great deal of it is this year, it must not be forgotten that it is more nutritious than when weak and bulky, and a less quantity should be given at a feeding. The shortness in hay may be made up to a large extent by cutting the grain early while the straw is still bright and full of the juices, which give it value as food. Farmers will find, if they will do this, and feed a little grain with it, that a goodly portion of the hay mow may be sold, notwithstanding the shortage.

It will not do to let the grain stand until it can be cut in the forenoon and taken in in the afternoon, or even when cut the day before. Straw harvested under these rules has very little value as fodder; but straw cut as soon as the most of the grain on it is ripe, is good fodder. My rule is to cut as soon as the straw is quite generally white. Even if there are green heads and some green spots, there is a saving in the shelling of the grain, which is more of an item than most farmers imagine. There is one crop which can be made to help in the saving of the hay by affording a late and nutritious pasture. I mean turnips. All kinds of stock can feed on them till winter fairly sets in, and this will save a month's foddering of stored provender, and a great loss of flesh, before this time, as stock are quite often managed. There is no flesh in frost-killed grass, and not any more in frost-killed and bleached corn-stalks. The dead grass is the Eastern farmer's resort, and the killed corn-stalks the Western. A field of turnips for the stock to feast in would change their condition from depletion to growth.

If superphosphates have any special mission, it is for turnips. Here they tell. The growing season is too short, and the wants of the plant so little that they can supply it, and hence it is a very easy matter to grow a crop of turnips. There is a phase to turnip culture yet unstated, and which ought to be more appreciated—the mid-summer culture of the land. Land is getting so foul that we shall have to resort to the old-fashioned system of summer-fallowing, or extend the area of buckwheat and turnips. Buckwheat is a most excellent crop to subdue rough land and bring it into a more mellow condition, but it is a somewhat risky crop, and is apt to renew itself the next year, especially if the land is sown with any kind of small grain. Some farmers have an idea that buckwheat is poisonous to land, and on this account they will never raise it. The straw is irritating to the skin of animals, and the flour causes a rash on the skin of some people, and this is all the poison, in my judgment, there is about it. I have fed the grain to all sorts of animals with no injurious results.

Turnips will take root where buckwheat can, but a crop cannot be expected with as little culture. The soil

should be made mellow and clean. Buckwheat starts promptly, and makes such a rapid growth that it will get ahead of most weeds; whereas turnips are of more delicate growth, on the start, and the land must be thoroughly subdued before the seed is put in. There is value in turnips in this fact. In what better way can a farmer improve a field, and at the same time improve his stock. It would be a profitable advancement in the routine of American farming, if every farmer made it a rule to fit one field every year for turnips. He would get his pay in the crop, and have a field in a condition the next year for producing a large yield.

I do not know of any cheaper or more effectual way to enrich a field and free it from foul stuff than with turnip culture, and feeding them off on the ground. Turnips do not exhaust the land like grain crops. The tap root penetrates to the lower strata, and opens it up for the introduction of the atmosphere and the rains. It also acts as a pulverizer, and so deepens the actual soil and enriches it. I am satisfied that turnips derive a considerable portion of their food for growth from the atmosphere, and when the crop is fed out on the land where grown, there is a manifest addition to its capacity to grow other crops, and beside it is purged of weeds, and left in a friable condition, which makes future tillage easier.

Lousy Chicks.

Young chicks are liable to a great many diseases, so much so that the farmer's wife often thinks their lives hang on a very slender thread. When the chick is hatched out its first work is, and continues to be for a couple of months, to put out feathers. If they are of healthy stock, on suitable ground, and fed regularly with suitable feed, it would seem they ought to get along all right. But there is still another important condition; they must be free from vermin. If on examining a ten day chick the lice are found so thick about the neck and throat that they stand on end like quills upon a porcupine, it may be set down that the lice have the best of the bargain and the chick's days are numbered unless relief come at once. Often the first thing is to put sulphur and lard on, and, upon the theory that if a little is good much is better, and it is put on so injudiciously that the chick dies at last. Sulphur is sure death to insect life, but the chick can seldom stand it. It is a fact that the worst result is in the lice sapping the life blood from the little fellows, thus reducing the constitution so that it is an easy prey to every form of disease. This exhaustive process of supporting hundreds of mites though not a disease, would be bad enough at any time, but when in connection with that of making feathers it requires more than a chick's digestive organs to meet the drain. Now prevention is always better than cure. Sulphur, or lime, will keep the nests clean and if put in a week before hatching time there will be no danger to the chicks when they come out. To make a sure thing of it, however, take a rag and saturate it with coal oil. Then wring it out as dry as it can be wrung and rub each chick thoroughly with the rag when they are first taken off the nest. Or, after allowing the old hen to dust herself thoroughly, rub the rag all over her, under the wings and breast so that the little ones will get the benefit of it while hovering under her. Probably the greatest source of disease among the chicks is overcome when perfectly guarded against lice.

"Father," asked a little three-year old the other day, at dinner, of his papa, "what is it that makes the lightning?" "You can't understand it now," was the answer; "I'll tell you when you get a little older," and the father went to his avocation. In the evening he returned, and the young hopeful, climbing upon his knees, said to him, "Papa, I know now what makes the lightning. It is Dod scratching matches against the sky."

Frank Markham, repairing the flume of Isaacs' mill this afternoon, says the Walla Walla Journal, discovered, at 1:30 o'clock, a human body on top of the turbine case. It gave forth a horrible smell and had evidently been dead weeks or months.

Natives of Texas are noted by all newcomers as being very inhospitable. As an instance: A man was traveling on "the boundless prairie," and when night was about to fall, he spied a log cabin near a small piece of cultivated ground. As he was twenty miles from any other inhabitant, he felt that he had been lucky in coming on this settlement. As is customary when within hailing distance, he shouted, "Hello!"

In reply to this a bushy female head was thrust through the door, and, in a loud voice, demanded "What's wanted?"

"I want to stay over night and get a bite to eat," was the answer.

"We haint got nothin' to eat," said the planter's wife.

"What!" said the traveler in astonishment, "Haven't you got corn bread and bacon?"

"We haint got no cawn bread, we haint got no bacon, we haint got no nuthin', and you can't stay."

And as the weary traveler turned from the door he heard a voice which seemed to come from behind a pile of straw in the corner, "Marlar, I reckon you had better tie the dog loose."

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Texas is her northers. It is a sudden wind from the north which often causes the mercury to drop twenty degrees in as many minutes. The morning of a day last winter was as pleasant as one could wish. The thermometer stood at 75 degrees. Before evening it showed six degrees above zero. Thus it is that luckless travelers are caught and frozen to death on the prairies. I have known the wind to change from south to north in less than one minute.

No man can make a good living in Texas by farming. The seasons are too uncertain. In 1879 there was no rain from the fifth of May to the following December.

The farmers of Texas are principally Southern people, who eke out a miserable existence by raising cotton and corn. Their sole diet is bacon and corn bread; and lucky is he who can get money enough to buy these, together with quinine, which the Texan takes almost as regular as his meals.

There is money to be made at cattle raising, but this requires large capital. Sheep are also raised here, though in Hamilton county the mobs of outlaws have almost totally discouraged sheep-raising. Cattle men are very hostile to sheep men.

Ex-Secretary Everts tells a good story at his own expense about a small donkey which he sent up to his country-seat some years ago for the use of his children, of whom some were then quite young. One of his little daughters, going out to admire the animal in its paddock, was sorely distressed when the donkey lifted up its voice and brayed dolefully. "Poor thing! Poor thing!" exclaimed the sympathetic child; but, suddenly brightening up, she turned to her nurse and said: "Oh! I am so glad! Papa will be here on Saturday, and then it wont feel so lonesome!"

"What shall we name baby sister?" asked a mother of her little four-year-old daughter. "Call her Early, mamma, that's a pretty name." "Early, that's not a girls name." "Oh, yes it is. Don't you remember you read to me about the little girl who was to be Queen of the May, and who wanted her mother to call her Early?"

Mr. J. M. Barham, of Mehama—in the foot hill region of the Santiam—showed us a pie-plant stem, the palm of which was three feet and two inches across and the stem was in proportion. Mr. B's place is seven miles above Mehama on the little north fork of the Santiam. The quality of the soil in that region is of great fertility.

THE "BOSS" THRESHER.

The "New Massillon" Heard From.

SILVERSON, Ore., Aug. 14, 1883.

We, the undersigned, have this day seen the "New Massillon" 33-inch Separator and Russell Ten-Horse Self-steering Traction Engine (purchased by W. G. Daws of T. B. Wait) run, and pronounce it the best threshing outfit we have ever seen. It threshed fast, and can't be beat separating and cleaning.

A. COOLIDGE & Co., C. McALPIN,
JOHN RAINE, Q. A. MARSHBANKS,
F. McCLAIN, W. H. TURPIN,
C. STALL, JOHN DAWS,
H. T. VON VOLKENHEGE.

I concur in the above statement.
W. G. DAW.