

# FRUIT, TRUCK, VEGETABLES.

## Among the Lettuce Growers of Ohio.

How Greenhouses Pay in the North and How They Could Be Made to Pay Under the More Favorable Conditions of the South.

Sometime ago I went to Cleveland, Ohio, to take part in the organization of the "Association of Greenhouse Vegetable Growers and Market Gardeners of America," for so reads the ambitious title of the completed organization. And it occurred to me to note how easy it is to get intelligent men outside of general farmers, to associate themselves for mutual help.

On a brief call for this meeting we had assembled at Cleveland nearly 200 representatives of the market gardening craft, men who own acres of glass, and are wide awake for every improvement in their work. They came from Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

The morning of the first day was occupied with a general interchange of ideas in regard to the proposed organization and its scope, and in the afternoon we all assembled at the hall and went on trolley cars to the suburbs, where the Cleveland growers had automobiles and wagons to haul us around among the various market gardens, so that we could see what is being done there. We visited nearly a dozen places where there were large areas in greenhouses and all filled with lettuce. The houses were mainly built on the modern ridge-and-furrow plan, the eave troughs resting on a series of posts high enough to walk under from one house to another, so that acres can be included under one roof, and some of them did have an acre or more. There is no room wasted in these houses, for there are no benches and no walks except narrow footways between the beds, and the heating pipes are ranged one above another on the posts between the houses. All are heated with hot water from a general boiler system.

I saw them cutting for market little slips of a few leaves each that a Southern trucker could not get his freight out of. They grow there the loose curly lettuce known as Grand Rapids, which never makes a head, but is really of fine and crisp character. They told me that the general opinion was that head lettuce could not be grown in Ohio, but I saw some fairly good specimens of Rawson's Hothouse lettuce grown in one house, not so fine though as I have seen the same variety grown in Southern greenhouses. The Western people like and demand the loose Grand Rapids lettuce, which an Eastern market gardener could not sell in the markets of New York and Philadelphia at any sort of a paying price.

And it occurred to me that our Southern growers have no need to fear the competition of the acres on acres of lettuce grown in northern Ohio. I was told that at Ashtabula the culture is on a larger scale than at Cleveland. There they re-plant the houses and grow another crop

after the one now being marketed, and later plant the houses in tomatoes and radishes.

I was in Cleveland from Thursday morning till Saturday night, and during that time the sun peeped out in a smoky sort of way once or twice. In fact I do not believe that in any of the lake country they ever have in winter any brilliant sunshine as we have in the South nearly all the time. Looking out over the wide expanse of the lake one never sees, either there or at Chicago, a sharp sky-line like we see on the ocean or the Chesapeake, but a dim, smoky, hazy distance, where water and sky blend together imperceptibly.

And it seemed to me that if these energetic men can make money in winter forcing with such little help

from the sun, how much better we could do under glass in the bright sun of the South. They had been burning coal there for weeks to get this fall crop of lettuce, while the fall crop as far north as North Carolina has hardly needed even the poor cover of the cloth.

In all the South, houses, such as the Cleveland growers have, could be planted in lettuce now as the fall crop from the frames goes to market, and a crop could be made in the dead of winter, for far less money spent for fuel than they spend in the fall weather. Then, with tomato plants started in odd corners of the house, the lettuce could be followed.

(Continued on Page 16.)

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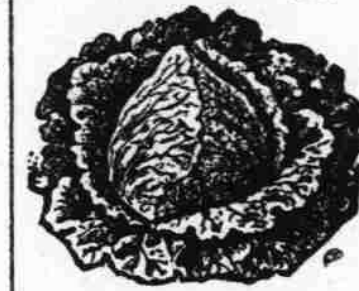
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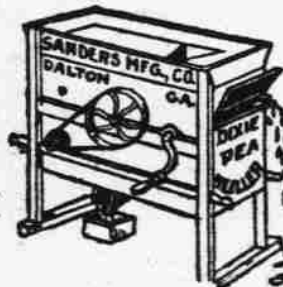
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