

Professor Massey's Editorial Page.

The Apple Region of North Carolina

HAVE JUST RETURNED from a trip in the mountains of western North Carolina where they wanted me to hold an institute all alone. The locality was the little hamlet of Cruso away up the valley of Pigeon River before Mount Pisgah. I have mentioned elsewhere the apples of this section, and at the State Fair in Raleigh there was a wonderful display of these mountain apples.

There are a few growers who are caring for their orchards in an intelligent way, but most of the fine apples are grown by reason of the soil and climate and in spite of neglect. But I saw them hauling down Ben Davis apples and getting \$2.25 per barrel for them at the railroad station. I also saw there specimens of Gillyflower apples so superior to those we see in barrels from the North that one could hardly identify the monsters except by the Gillyflower shape. As this apple always sells at a high price, I wondered that they did not grow more of them instead of Ben Davis. Not that I consider the Gillyflower a superior apple, for I do not care for them, as I like a brittle, juicy apple; but it is a popular apple with many people, and always sells for a better price than Ben Davis.

A friend sent me a box of York Imperials from the mountain country, and finer specimens cannot be found anywhere, as big and showy as the same variety from the Pacific Coast, and far better in quality.

At Cruso I was surprised at the gathering of the people, some of whom came from nearly twenty miles away, and one man drove all night to get there in time. The meeting was to have been held in the schoolhouse, and I wondered where there would be people enough to fill it in that wild mountain gorge. But by the time I reached the house there were already twice as many as the house would hold, and we had to hold the meeting out under the trees with the gloriously colored mountains for a background.

I am fond of talking to farmers, but that day was almost too much for me, as I had to talk morning and afternoon till my throat was in a bad state, and then some followed me to my stopping place and asked questions till bed-time, when I had to go to bed with a mustard plaster on my throat. I tried to show them the wonderful adaptation of that section to the apple crop, and talked on apples mainly all the morning, urging the planting of yearling trees and then making low-headed trees that are easy to spray and easy to gather apples from. I never had a more attentive audience, nor one that entered into the spirit of asking questions better.

There is no section in the United States that can grow better apples than the Southern Appalachians from Virginia to Alabama, and when the people are fully waked up to the great advantages they have for growing rich apples, this will be a show place for apples as it is now the pleasure ground of the people.

But I wondered that so many people who visit these mountains in summer leave so soon. They do not see the glory of the mountains in October. No painter's brush could transfer to canvas the wonderful color of the wooded mountains. It is absolutely indescribable, and was a feast to the eye.

My host was a Michigan man who with his wife is fond of the wild woods, trout fishing and hunting, and has built him a pretty cottage at the foot of the mountain in a bank of rhododendrons, with the music of the cataracts in the river in front to lull them to sleep. The only bit of level land he has is a small garden and a few fruit trees, and the great difficulty with these is that the sun peeps in on him after 8 o'clock and the shadow of the opposite mountain falls on him about 3 p. m., and he has less sunlight than needed. "Laurel Bank" is the name set in nickle letters over the porch, and he said: "You would hardly believe that in this forest country I got most of the woodwork of this house from Chicago cheaper than I could get it here."

At Canton, fourteen miles down the valley on the railroad, I visited the great paper pulp works, where they are working 900 men and are grinding up 300 cords of wood daily for paper pulp, and making brown cardboard from the bark and

waste. Men were working in a temperature of 100 degrees shoveling sulphur into great retorts in an atmosphere that I could hardly breathe, making the sulphurous acid for the solution of the wood. And at the other end of the immense buildings the pulp, dried and made into great white rolls like thick paper, was being loaded on the cars to go to the paper mills in Ohio. And in this town which twenty years ago I knew as a little village, they are paving the streets with bitulithic, and a city is growing up, and a home market for all the vegetables the surrounding country can make. And yet, I was told that the farmers up the valley of the Pigeon buy feed and bacon! I tried to tell them how to avoid this not only with apples, but with good farming of the bottom patches, and one man who farms 100 acres, and has been buying feed, followed me at night to learn how to build a silo. I must have hit him, and I hope I helped him, and others, too.

Making a Country Schoolhouse Beautiful.

GETTING A SCHOOLHOUSE in a dense woods is worse than having one in an open field without trees, for the health of the pupils is promoted by having the sunshine on the house at times. But a house standing on a bare lot, without even grass around it, and often an unpainted, barn-like structure is simply hideous. But where there is some attempt at planting it is generally in the nature of making a grove over the whole lot, and this, too, is wrong, for it prevents the growth of grass or the planting of flower-beds and shrubbery.

Trees of large size should be used mainly on the outskirts to frame in a picture of a pretty lawn and some flower-beds. Make a wide border around the building and plant it with a variety of flowering shrubbery that will bloom at different times in the season. Have a walk curving from one side of the lot past the door and out at the other side so that there can be a broad scope of grass in the center. Around the outskirts plant a variety of trees and give them room to take their natural forms, making with them a broad, irregular border to the lot, and not planting them in straight rows like an orchard. Make these trees largely evergreen, for the school is held mainly in winter, but still have some deciduous ones for their spring beauty. Then do not trim up the coniferous evergreens or the magnolias with an ugly stem, but let them branch from the ground in natural form.

Keep the playground in the rear and screen out the rear buildings of convenience with lattice and vines. On the outer edges of the shrubbery border around the house, which screens the base of the building, you can have fall-planted bulbs, such as hyacinths and tulips and narcissus, and follow these in summer with annual plants that the pupils are taught to raise from seed in boxes and outside. Once get the children interested in making the front of the lot beautiful and they will not damage it. Lawn mowers are very cheap now, and the lawn should be regularly mown and the grass annually top-dressed with fertilizer to promote the growth of the grass.

Now is the time for planting the deciduous trees and shrubbery, but spring will be better for the evergreens. There are many trees and shrubs native to the different sections that can be used effectively. Too many people look always for "far-fetched" things. Some laughed at me years ago for planting sweet-gum trees at the North Carolina A. & M. College, but there are few prettier trees than these are now, and splendid in their fall colors. Our native maples and elms are also good and the oaks should not be neglected.

Then, where the long-leaf pine grows go into the woods and with a sharp spade cut under the young trees a foot or so high to cut the tap root. Then let them stand another season, and they can be moved after they have made more lateral roots. Little cedars a foot high transplant easily, as do also the little cypress trees from the swamps, and they make finer trees on the dry ground than in the swamps. Hollies can be easily moved in spring if all the leaves are pulled off, but will certainly fall if you do not remove the leaves. Magnolias also should have the leaves taken off so that the roots can get a start before the leaves evaporate the moisture too much.

Then in shrubbery we have many pretty things to add to the spreas, etc., so commonly grown. The wax myrtle of the wood is a pretty evergreen; the common gall berry is also attractive;

Itea Virginica makes racemes of beautiful white flowers in spring, and is easily found along the branches. The staminate form of the fringe tree is also very beautiful in bloom. Sourwood makes a pretty shrub or small tree and has pretty flowers and gorgeous color in the fall. Ilex verticillata, the deciduous member of the holly family, can be found in the swamps and is very gay in winter with its red berries. In fact, any teacher who is a lover of plants and knows the native shrubbery can get the boys interested in getting these things from the forest, and they will learn to admire beauty even in common things. There is such a wealth of trees and shrubs in the South that any one can adorn his grounds and make them very attractive by getting the wild plants alone; and getting these and learning their names and habits will be an education to the boys and girls.

Right and Wrong Ways of Milking

MILKING THE COWS is regarded on most Southern farms as disagreeable work. When the calf is allowed to take its feed from its mother's udder at milking time, as is common on the farms of this section, milking is indeed a disagreeable task. On the other hand, when the calf is removed from the cow after sucking once or twice and the cow is taught to stand quietly without feed to be milked, the task is neither hard nor unpleasant.

A milk cow is kept for the milk she gives, and if careless milking reduces the quantity of milk one-fourth, then the feed consumed by the cow only brings three-fourths as much as it should.

In twelve dairy herds tested by the Wisconsin Experiment Station good milking gave a daily increase per cow of 1.08 pounds of milk and .1 pound of butter fat. In several cases it was found that some particular milker in a dairy herd did his work sufficiently better than other milkers to be worth \$10 a month more to the owner of the herd. In Denmark the question of proper milking is regarded of sufficient importance to make it worth while for the Government to make a special appropriation for the teaching of correct milking to men and women of all ages.

To secure good milking of the dairy herd, weigh the milk of each cow and keep a record of it; give the milkers proper instruction and offer a premium for the best results and attach a penalty to unsatisfactory results.

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What a wonderful country the South would be if the good acres did not have to pay for so many pauper acres. And all over the South millions of acres are on the road to pauperism by the tenant cropping system. The greatest land-pauperizing influence in the South is the miserable cropping system. It has run more land to waste since the war than good farmers have been able to redeem; more land on the road to old fields than is being farmed well.

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