

HORTICULTURAL.

Door Yard Grass.

EDS. PRAIRIE FARMER: I wish I was learned, and knew how to talk of things by the book, and I would describe to you with all the proper technicalities what seems to me the most beautiful door yard grass that has ever fallen under my eye—so much prettier than Marie Estelle's chick-weed, that I should not think of it in comparison. It may be a very common thing in Illinois—if so, they have certainly a treasure. I send you a sprig enclosed, with the roots attached. I have also sent the same to the *Ohio Cultivator*.

My little door yard was spaded deep, in the spring, and planted to flowers, and kept clean of every thing like weeds or grass, till late, when it was neglected. My first discovery of this beautiful grass was the last of July, when I noticed several roots spreading out their spires, already large enough to have wounded a dining plate, but without seed, and so soft and velvety! and of such a rich green that I called the attention of the household at once, and gave them (the roots, not the household,) room and sunshine in my four by thirty plat. Soon the delicate seed stems were seen, and the little joints put out in every direction, each one taking vigorous hold and soampering on again, in spite of drouth. I was just on the point of sending you a specimen when I saw M. E.'s article in the *Cultivator*. Your note in the *FARMER* of the 30th, I saw this morning, and so trouble you also with a sprig. If this grass is durable, if its roots, as they seem to fasten easily in the soil, are not winter killed, I am sure there is nothing in the form of grass so beautiful for a lawn. It covers the ground completely as far as it grows, and would, I doubt not, soon become very thick, as it runs rapidly, and every joint, as you see, that touches the earth takes root. Now

Pity the ignorance of a poor old woman,
Who sends this grass that grew beside her door;
And if it be a vulgar thing, and common,
Just tell her so, and she'll ask nothing more.

There's naught more beautiful than grassy lawn,
When like an emerald robe it meets the light—
A robe of velvet—where the cloud at dawn,
Flies on every spire a diamond bright.

Where the young children rollic in their play,
Without a fear of the obnoxious soil
To pants or pinfrees; and make the day
Much less a weariness for mothers' toil.

Smile not, dear reader, at my humble strain;
A grassy lawn is happiness and health,
To brush the diamonds off at early dawn
Would drive our girls and boys, perhaps, to wealth.

Not in kid slippers, or embroidered dresses,
But bare-foot, if you please, with skirts so high
That not a dew-drop should descend—theirresses
Bread to the morning breeze, with mirth asly.

So I would have them go—without a tremble
Of fear—of freckles or tanned cheeks or arms—
Free as the winds, with nothing to dissemble:
Each hour so spent would give them glorious charms.

Mr. Editor—This is not poetry—its plain prose
and run into rhyme itself; I had nothing to do
with it. Yours, FRANCES D. GAGE.
CARBONDALE, August, 1860.

THE plant you send us is the *Eragrostis reptans* (Creeping Meadow Grass), an annual of no value whatever as a lawn grass. It is a beautiful grass, delicate, graceful, but has no more claim for position among the useful grasses, than Marie Estelle's chick-weed. It has a green tea fragrance when dried, and will be generally found in sandy localities. We are sorry so many beautiful things in nature are evanescent, especially when the ladies have "set their hearts on them."

Pomological Notes and Extracts.

HALE'S EARLY PEACH.—Of this, F. R. E. says: "This is a variety entirely new, and, so far as I have had an opportunity of examining it, promises exceedingly valuable as an extra early sort. It ripens here (Cleveland, O.) say from 10th to 15th July. It is of medium size, belongs to the rareripe class. The trees are vigorous growers, no mildew, and as generally attached to the class which the fruit assimilates. It is claimed to have originated with a German at Randolph, Portage Co., Ohio, from a seed brought from the old country." Bateman says of it: "Hale's Early Peach, I have seen and tasted the past and present seasons, and fully agree with the commendations of F. R. E. This fine peach was brought to notice by Mr. Hale, a nurseryman of Summit County, Ohio, who advertised and sold trees of it two or three years since. The fruit is as large as Early York, and full a week earlier—its color, form and quality like George the Fourth. The tree is of better habit than Early York or Tillotson—hence it is likely to prove the best early peach extant."

ELIZABETH GRAPES.—The *Rural New-Yorker* says this grape originated on the farm of James Hart, near Rochester, fifteen years ago, and is in good repute in that neighborhood. It is a white grape, and the bunch compact like a Rebecca, in size and shape, in the cut given.

"The bunches and berries both resembled the Isabella in size and form; skin thin; color greenish white, with a slight purple tinge in the sun; very little pulp. The flavor was good, better than Isabella, we thought at the time, somewhat acid, but pleasant."

"CREMONT STRAWBERRY."—Mr. Worthington, of this city, stated at the Gardeners' meeting the other night, that he got a few plants of this fruit in St. Louis, late last fall and planted them. They have astonished him. They are firm, flesh like Wilson's Albany; flavor vastly superior—a kind of musk flavor when ripe. He thinks them superior to Hovey's Seedling. The fruit larger than any other variety he has ever seen. Thinks them a little earlier than the Wilson and very productive. Who can tell us more of them?

St. Croix Beans.

TABLE BEANS FOR SUMMER.

EDS. PRAIRIE FARMER: While I was in the Island of St. Croix, last summer, I was beset one morning in the market, by an old crippled negress, to buy of her a stiver's worth of "black-eyed peas."

"Now, missis, you never seid nuffin like in your country—Lord bless your life didn't I live in Philamadelphly till I was a grown 'oman—you just plant them you, in Aprile, and they'se have pull by the first of May, and keep at it the hull bressed time till frost comes. No frost here, you know. They's good for string and good for shell, and good for make soup. Come, missis, just buy a stiver's worth."

Her persistence won me; and I gave her the stiver, and she handed me over about a tea-cup full of the said little white peas with black eyes, which she "clared 'pon her word and honor would make soup for a whole dinner."

I went home, laughed at my purchase, and threw them in the bottom of my trunk.

This spring, searching for garden seeds, I found them, and planted them about the middle of May.

In seven weeks they had pods, ripe enough for boiling. They seem both brown and red—the leaf and stalk heavy and of a smooth dark green, and lay close to the ground; the foliage below the bean, and flowers usually; the bean or peapod is round, about as large as a pipe stem, six inches long, and crowded full; very tender, minus all strings, and seems a very good summer string bean.

But what I want to say, is, that the thing seems to think it is in St. Croix, and must grow as the old negress said, till frost comes. She avowed it would live there three or four years without planting. The severe drouth of our summer seemed to suit it exactly. When peas and beans, tomatoes and beets, were burned out, it seemed as bright as ever, and to-day we picked dry beans, fresh shell beans, and snaps from it, and there is no sign of decay—the leaves and stems as green as ever, and full of pods.

I shall gather some seed, and have no doubt that for gardens near cities, for a continuous vegetable, it might be valuable. F. D. GAGE.

The Flora of Ogle and Winnebago Cos., Ill.

EDS. PRAIRIE FARMER: I send you the following transcript of a letter to a friend and correspondent for publication, if you deem it worthy of insertion. Yours, truly, M. S. BEBB.

SALEM, MARION CO., ILL., August 6th, 1860.

DEAR FRIEND: I have often thought I would attempt to give you some account of the vegetation of the district in which I collected the specimens sent you last Fall, and as often I have allowed my good intent to fade away somewhere between resolve and execution. This afternoon I find myself at leisure, and will therefore begin at once a brief sketch in lieu of the more extended description which I had promised myself I would write. My observations will be confined to Winnebago and Ogle Counties.

With the exception of the southern part of Ogle, which will be noticed hereafter, the underlying rock throughout this district is Niagara Limestone, with a nearly horizontal stratification, no where disturbed. Hence all unevenness in the surface is almost, if not wholly, due to the action of water. You, who have lived among the ruptured rocks of eastern Pennsylvania, where volcanic action is evident on every side, can scarcely conceive of the beautiful undulations of a "rolling prairie," moulded by water. It is the realization of all the lamented Downing characterized as the "beautiful in ground." Every stream and brooklet having cut its own course, we have no true marshes, and hence the absence of all true marsh vegetation—a prominent characteristic of the Flora in question.

Generally the water-courses traverse a valley of greater or less breadth, this valley margined by a somewhat abrupt bank, where the water has acted upon the rocks in place, above which begins the rolling prairie.

Thus a variety of stations are produced which have plants peculiar to each. I shall omit in my enumeration those species which seem to flourish about equally well every where.

I. The margin of the water-course, characterized by

Diplopappus umbellatus, T. & G.; *Mimulus Jamesii*, Torr.; *Veronica Anagallis*, L.; *Salix discolor*, Muhl.; *S. eriocephala*, Mx.; *S. cordata*, Muhl.; *S. rostrata*, Rich.; *S. lucida*, Muhl. The shining-leaved Willow (*S. lucida*) is beyond

question the most beautiful of American willows. With its fine glossy foliage and luxuriant sweet bloom, it richly deserves cultivation as an ornamental tree. I think it is London who says its aspect is so entirely unlike that of most willows, that if planted in the pleasure grounds it would not unpleasantly suggest, as other species do, the proximity of water.

II. The level valley. This frequently exhibits a heavy growth of two grasses—*Andropogon furcatus* and *Sorghum nutans*—with *Carices* in springy places. We find here—

Liatris pycnostachya, *Mz. Solidago Riddellii*, *Frank. Rudbeckia subtomentosa*, *Muhl. Cyrtopogon candidum*, *Muhl. Cyrtopogon spectabilis*, *Swartz. Scilla Fraseri*, *Gray. Heuchera hispida*, *Ph. Vaternia edulis*, *Nutt. Artemisia Leuciviana*, *Nutt. var serrata*, *Lysim. chis longifolia*, *Ph. Pedicularis lanceolata*, *Mz. Gentiana detonsa*, *Aria.*

III. The rise at the border of the valley is usually covered with forest trees which have here found protection from the prairie fires, such as *Quercus macrocarpa*, *Tilia Americana*, &c., with a variety of undershrubs and herbaceous plants, common every where in the woods of this latitude, viz. :—

Hepatica triloba, *Chavez. Sanguinaria Canadensis*, *L. Dentaria laciniata*, *Viola pubescens*, *Mitella diphylla*, *L. Trifolium recurvatum*, &c.

IV. Back of this, as I remarked before, the rolling prairie begins, but between the rich soil of the prairie and the bank, there is generally found a strip of light soil where the rock is nearly exposed, and the surface of the ground is strewn with fragments of the chert and limestone. Here it is that the botanist finds his "best things," interesting plants, many of them stragglers from the plains west of us :—

Pulsatilla Nuttalliana, *Gray. Draba Caroliniana*, *Willd. Draba micrantha*, *Nutt. Viola delphinifolia*, *Nutt. Alsine Michauxii*, *Fend. G. am triflorum*, *Ph. Liatris cylindracea*, *Mz. Artemisia caudata*, *Mz. Hieracium longipilum*, *Torr. Troximim cuspidatum*, *Ph. Castilleja sessiliflora*, *Scutellaria parvula*, *Lithospermum longiflorum*.

I believe this is about the southern limit of *Pulsatilla* east of the Mississippi, but it extends southeast along the Rocky Mountains, as far as Santa Fe, at which place it was collected by Fendler.

V. As characteristic of the higher prairies, I may mention—

Ranunculus rhomboides, *Goldie. Viola pedata*, *Petalostemon violaceum*, *Mz. Petalostemon candidum*, *Mz. Baptisia leucantha*, *T. & G. Liatris Scariosa*, *Willd. Aster sericeus*, *Fend. Aster ptarmicoides*, *T. & G. Solidago speciosa*, *Gentiana puberula*, *Mz. Platanchura leucophaea*, *Cerocephala palmata*.

To avoid confusion I have thus far left out of consideration "the Groves," but my sketch would be incomplete with an entire omission of this prominent feature in the distribution of the Flora of Northern Illinois—the plants of the Grove being essentially different from those of the prairie.

The Groves usually occupy the valleys, where they have grown up under the protection from fire afforded by the water course, the timber consisting principally of Burr Oak—*Quercus macrocarpa*—(strangely stunted with acorns not larger than those of Post Oak) and White Oak, with here and there Poplar and Wild Cherry interspersed. Beneath we find an abundant growth of shrubs, principally Hazel (*Corylus Americana*) and *Cornus paniculata*—the Hazel often extending out into the prairie for a mile or more, forming what is called "Hazel ruff."

The plants that are not usually found out of the Grove are

Anemone cylindrica, *Gray. Helianthus occidentalis*, *Réd. Oenothera atriplicifolia*, *L. Nabalis alba*, *Gerardia quercifolia*, *Ph. Gentiana alba*, *Muhl. Sporobolus heterolepis*, *Pteris aquilina*, *L.*

A few species, viz., *Silphium integrifolium*, *Pedicularis Canadensis*, and *Carex Pennsylvanica*, follow the hazel beyond the timber.

A few words concerning the southern part of Ogle county. Here the surface rock is sandstone, forming cliffs and dry ravines. On some of the prominent cliffs that face Rock river, such for instance as one three miles below Oregon, known as "Black Hawk's Pulpit," the botanist will find a vegetation so entirely similar to that of some parts of Massachusetts, and so entirely unlike that of the prairies ten miles above, as to excite astonishment. Take this list of plants collected among others one afternoon I spent there botanizing :

Rhus copallina, *L. Hamamelis Virginica*, *L. Gaylussacia resinosa*, *T. & G. Pentstemon pubescens*, *Polypodium vulgare*, *L. Polygonum articulatum*, *L. Emilia bifida*, *Ker. Polytichum commune*, *L. Dicranum undulatum*, *Allosorus gracilis*, *Presl.*

Here, as in the limestone district, there may be found several rare plants :

Astragalus Mexicana, *A. D. C. Gnothera riparia*, *Nutt. Synthyris Houghtoniana*, *Benth. Lithospermum lirtum*, *Lehm.*

I had intended to say something of the heavily timbered tracks that are found along the Peconica river, with a vegetation similar to the forests of the central portion of the State, and also to notice the changes which cultivation has wrought in the extermination of some species and the increase of others; but my letter already reaches an impertinent length.

Yours, cordially,

M. S. BEBB.

Watering Begonias.

"Not a drop of water should be allowed to touch the foliage." So says "J. W. L." in another column, teaching the way of keeping *Begonia grandis* in fine condition. Excellent advice, seldom given, more seldom taken. Applicable to hundreds of plants with the soft skin and plump but tender organisation of a *Begonia*. Did the reader ever place a drop of ether on his hand in bright warm sun? If he has done so let him call to mind the sharp cold that attended the experiment. A bit of ice would not have been more sensibly felt. The cold that struck him was owing to the rapid evaporation of the spirit; but he disregarded it, partly because there was so little of it, and partly because the skin of his hand has no great sensibility. Had he plunged the whole arm in ether under a hot sun he would not have forgotten the effect.

But the skin of plants like *Begonias* is very thin, and very sensitive. Small differences in temperature affect it greatly. Whether this is owing to the low vitality of vegetable bodies, or to their excessive excitability, or to any other unsuspected cause, the fact remains unquestionable. Animals of high organisation are indifferent to a reduction of temperature that kills a plant. A negro fresh from the Gold Coast is no great sufferer in a frosty day; Lascars, as we see, lie on the London pavements and in the London Docks in mid-winter, looking for charity, and little harm comes of it. But the Palm tree of his native country which yields the oil that lubricates his greasy skin, is in the throes of death when the thermometer marks 40°. It is only excessive cold that seriously affects men who are natives of the tropics; any thing less acts but locally, producing frost-bites and similar injuries. In plants a small matter will rapidly cause local injury. Water—a drop perhaps—falls on a tender leaf, and rapidly evaporates in the highly heated atmosphere of a plant stove. Cold is immediately produced at the spot where water rested; then dies the tissue acted on; or perhaps the vital fluid of the plant, more sensitive than the skin, receives a serious shock; its action is paralysed, and although death may not ensue at the time, all the functions of the plant become torpid, with the inevitable accompaniment of ruined health, if death itself does not ensue. Ask Vines rapidly forced early in a damp house, if this is so. Their leaves may furnish a reply. If blotches disfigure them, they are the mute witnesses of what the gardener has done.

Such a matter as this is for all to think upon. The facts are indisputable. Is the inference wrong? Let gardeners judge. — *Gardener's Chronicle*.

Pelargoniums in Pots.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LARGE FLORETS' PELARGONIUMS.

[Continued from page 167.]

In forming PYRAMIDS, the same minutiae as to potting and watering, form chief elements of success. Here side-shoots that will extend as far as and beyond the rim of the pot, as the base of the pyramid, are of as much importance as the central shoot. In a young plant, therefore, the point of the shoot must be stopped to cause these side-shoots to form, and stoppings afterwards must take place, so as to secure layers of shoots from six to twelve inches apart, according as the plank is weak or strong-growing; one shoot being always selected to continue the leader. From this stopping, several seasons will be required to make a pyramid from three to five feet high, and with a base of from two feet and onwards in diameter. This style of growth is most suitable for verandahs, fine lighted staircases, lofty green-houses, &c. When the lower ring of shoots is fastened to a hoop beneath the rim of the pot, a little hawping with fine thread to the one stake in the center, will be all the support that will be needed for home decoration. When forming and formed, the general treatment will be the same as for low

BUSH PLANTS—grown so as to resemble three parts of a circular ball. This is the most general way in which *Geraniums* are cultivated. If the plants are not raised by the grower, I consider early spring the best time for ordering them. Something may be gained by having them in summer and autumn, by sacrificing mere flowering to growth; but next to a whole season, so far as display is concerned, may be gained by having the plants in the spring, and making flowering secondary to the growth and the forming of the plant. When such young plants as I have advised having, are not only allowed but encouraged to bloom, then the autumn, winter, &c., management will be much the same as for established plants. The subjoined hints have reference to the forming the skeleton of a young flowering plant at first from plants obtained in the spring, just premising that other plants must have similar principles of

TRAINING, though the time lost cannot easily be made up. Suppose, then, as first imagined, that we have a young bushy plant in 60-sized pot in April, and that it has a leading shoot, and three secondary shoots not far above the junction of the stem with the soil. In such a case at first, we let well alone. If there is only one shoot we stop it, in order that the buds in the axils of the leaves may throw out shoots, and by the process lose just so much time in waiting to have a proper commencement. Some three or more side-shoots being obtained in addition to the central leading one, our first object is to encourage growth; and therefore, as soon as the little pot is crammed with roots, we shift it into a 48, or the size larger, when growing freely. If all the shoots are about equal in strength we let them alone. If the central one is taking the strength from the side ones we nip out its point, and this for a time will cause more flow of sap into the unstopped shoots. We place a small stick in the centre for the centre shoot. We tie out the side-shoots by placing a small twig in the soil for each, or fastening them with a hasp to a string round the rim of the pot. In the first case I prefer little twigs, because care must be taken not to depress these shoots too much at first, or they are apt to slip off from the stem, and that would destroy the symmetry of the plant. It is also of importance both in this bush system and in pyramids that the lowest layer of shoots should not be much depressed to the sides of the pots, or the sap will flow into them less vigorously than those that start from the stem at a higher or acuter angle upwards. Era long, if all goes on well, the plants will want a shift into a 32-sized pot, and unless where more than ordinary care can be given that size will be large enough for the first summer.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Cultivate universality of taste. There is no surer mark of a half-educated mind than the incapacity of admiring various forms of excellence.