

# The Democratic Sentinel

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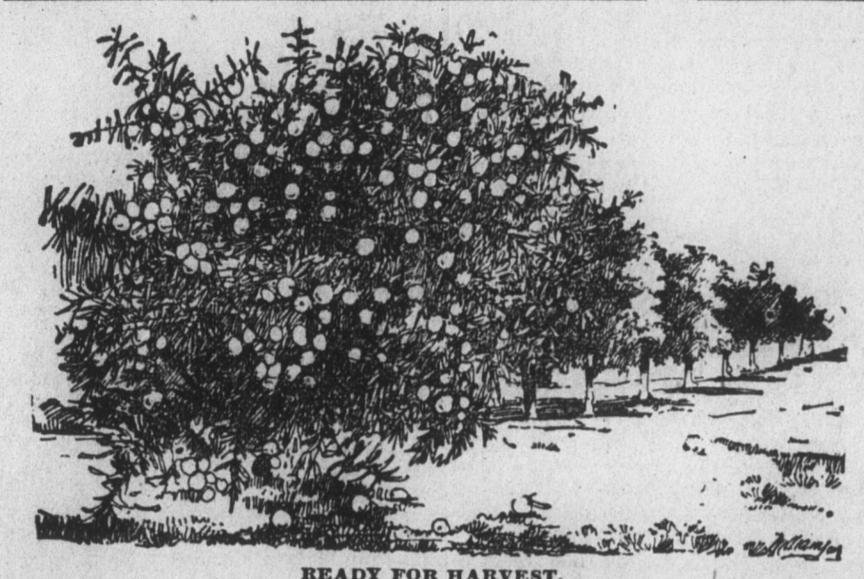
## ORCHARDS OF "EGYPT."

### THE FRUIT-GROWING REGION OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS.

A Mammoth Industry and How It Is Developed—Fruits of Fruit Growing—Some Peculiarities—Bananas—How the Orchards Are Planted and Cared For.

*An Apple-Raising Man.*

Southern Snickerdome. For more than half a century Southern Illinois has been known as "Egypt," writes a Flora correspondent in the *Globe-Democrat*. What similarity Southern Snickerdome bears or has borne to the land of the erstwhile Pharaohs is a disputed question. Some say that at an early day this section was celebrated for its corn crops, and that residents of counties farther north made frequent pilgrimages to purchase it, even as the sons of Jacob went down into the Egypt of old with sacks and shovels. That is the explanation offered by the Illinois politicians, but their northern fellow-citizens tender a different tale. They state that the term was not intended to typify a land of plenty, one flowing with milk and honey and teeming with wine and corn and oil—one "where every prospect pleases and only man is vile"—but rather a country the poverty of whose soil was equalled only by the dense ignorance and constitutional indolence of its people. The products of the Illinois Egypt were popularly sup-



READY FOR HARVEST.

posed to consist principally of "buck-ague," "yellow dogs," "possums, and hoopoes; the chief occupation of the people to be chewing plug tobacco and swallowing quinine. The inhabitants of the modern Egypt were supposed to be held in a bondage of laziness from which no Midianite Moses would ever lead them to be groping in mental darkness, compared to which the shadows that fell upon the land of the Pharaohs was an Italian sunset. Southern Illinois was regarded as the Nazareth of the new world, from which no good was expected to proceed. It was sparsely settled, and land might be had almost for the asking; it was within easy



TREE PLANTING.

reach of Chicago, St. Louis, and other mighty markets; the Father of Waters caressed it on the west, and the raging Wabash fretted along the east, and the sunny waters of the Ohio sparkled on the south. Railways pierced it, and a sky of Italian softness smiled upon it; it was threaded by a thousand small streams and medicinal springs, such as Fonce & Leon, vainly sought among the swamps and alluviums of Florida, burst from its sunny bosom but it lay under the ban, and did not prosper or progress. Home-seekers hurried across



SPRAYING AN APPLE ORCHARD.

it to waste their energies upon the arid plains of Western Kansas, or wear out their lives in unequal battles with the Dakota blizzards. Finally along the line of the Illinois Central Railway the culture of small fruits and berries was begun in a small way. It proved quite profitable, and a new era dawned upon Egypt. Hand-some towns sprang up and flourished. Industrious immigrants came pouring in, who planted peach orchards and set out strawberry beds of many acres. Car-load lots of the luscious products began to find their way to the Northern markets, and soon great fruit and berry trains, consisting of several sections, were rolling northward, and the return stream of money and merchandise brought comfort and higher culture. The "possum and his improvident parents began to disappear. The natives

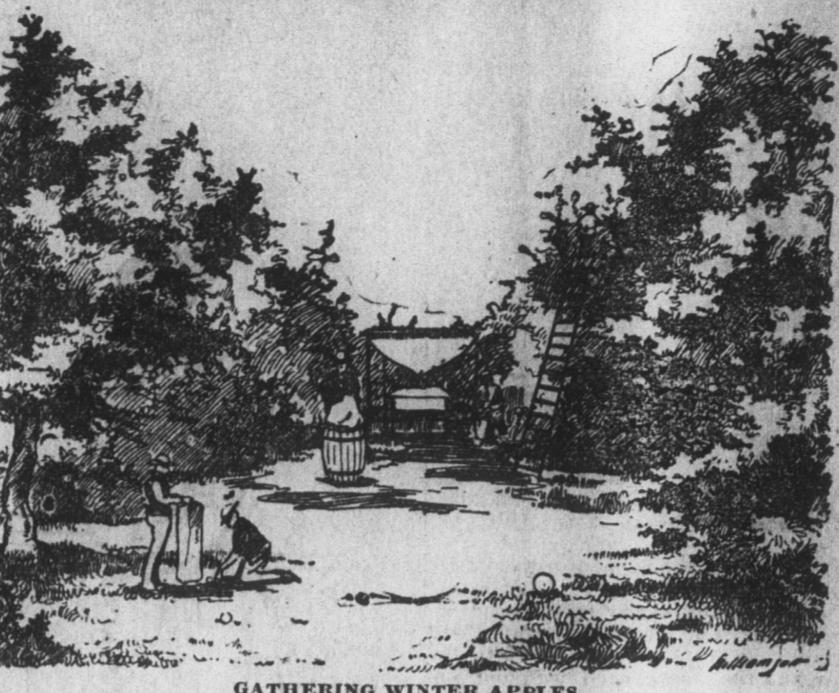
sought the spirit of progress and began to use "boughten" tobacco and wear "store" shirts. Fortunes were made out of fruit. The man with a large peach orchard or strawberry farm was the nabob of his community. Hay, grain, and stock were also extensively raised, but it is the general fact from the first that the now Egypt would never, like the old, become the granary of half a world. The soil was generally good, but it was not equal to that of the Nile valley. Peaches and strawberries continued to be its prime product. For the growth of these it had no superior and scarce an equal between Cape Cod and California. But everybody could not grow strawberries and peaches for the Northern market.

*An Apple-Raising Man.*

Some years ago it occurred to a few restless spirits of opulence that they might form an apple orchard, and they began to experiment. Most people were incredulous. Everybody knew that Egypt would grow good apples, but few supposed it possessed peculiar advantages for that industry. In some seasons the experiments did not prove very successful, but in the counties of Marion, Clay, Wayne and Richland good results were obtained and orchard planting on an extensive scale soon followed. The pioneers of the orchard industry planted many varieties, and as the apple tree is of slow growth, several years elapsed before it was ascertained that the soil and climate were especially adapted to two or three varieties only. Mr. Thomas H. Lowrey is the pioneer of the orchard industry of this section. He planted the first commercial orchard in 1866. It consists of thirty-two acres of various varieties, and is still fruitful to the good old age of twenty-six years. Two hundred wine-sap trees in this orchard produced in one season 3,000 bushels of apples, or an average of fifteen bushels per tree. They sold readily at 80 cents a bushel, or \$2,400 for the lot, which was grown on four acres. Mr. Lowrey last season sold his apple crop, on the trees, in the month of July, for \$225 per acre, the purchaser assuming not only all risks but the expense of picking and barreling the fruit. Two years ago he

barrled. The price paid ranged according to quality and the state of the general fruit crop, from about \$1.10 to \$2.40 a barrel of three bushels each. Perhaps 50 cents a bushel is a fair average price for all grades and seasons. It is no unusual thing for trees that have reached maturity to produce a bushel of choice fruit in a single season, and one made a record of forty-five bushels of apples that sold for 80 cents a bushel. The average for all seasons will prob-

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GATHERING WINTER APPLES.

ably not exceed six bushels per tree. This, at 50 cents a bushel, yields \$3 a tree, or \$150 an acre, although many orchardists insist that the average is much higher. But granting only \$100 per acre as the average, the profit is sufficiently great to make orchards a gilt-edge investment, as the expense necessary to run a grown orchard in condition and pick the fruit is very small, and land is cheap.

Most of the planting is done in the fall, though many trees are put out in the spring. Some planters plow the ground thoroughly, but the usual method is, in case of fall planting, to plow only strips, five or six furrows wide, where the young trees are to be placed. The best success is obtained with 1-year-old trees, though many 2-year-olds are planted. Great care is taken to place the roots of the young trees straight and give them plenty of mellow earth to expand in. One-year-old trees are simply well-developed switches, but the 2-year-olds are usually "headed"—put forth tiny branches. Great care is taken at the nursery to make the trees head near the ground, tall and stately trunks being considered entirely too ornamental to be useful. This is accomplished by cutting off the tops of the infant trees and stripping the buds from the stem to the proper height. The trees are usually placed thirty feet apart each way, which allows full light to the trees.

Some orchardists plant them 30-38 feet, thus securing a stand of fifty to the acre. When the trees attain maturity the space between them is narrowed down to a foot-path. The orchards are usually kept in corn until the trees are 4 years old, as this affords the necessary cultivation, and the partial shade thus secured is thought to be beneficial to the young trees. They begin to bear about 7 years old, and at the age of 10 are producing a fair crop. They do not reach the best bearing period until the age of 15. From that age until 30 is regarded as the most

likely to imagine anything more fragrant than a sack of apple parings that had been bleached and dried. They certainly seem good enough to become the basis of the best champagne. A great many tons of this fruit refuse are shipped annually from Richland and Clay Counties, nothing a very pretty sum. The evaporated fruit of this section is regarded as being equal to any known to the trade. More than \$60,000 worth of

the old crop will raze over the coffee grounds.

Of course, to most people the inference is inevitable that only the poor and ignorant are influenced by such rubbish. But this is a mistake as far as "Mom" Bender's customers were concerned. A newspaper man once identified three of her customers as public school-teachers, and at least a third of the patronesses were of good social position.

Fifty-nine years ago "Mom" Bender was telling fortunes in St. John street above Callowhill, and in her long life she saved at least \$75,000, which was invested in small houses. Most of these, however, were taken from her by what she claimed was fraud. Four years ago she lived on Franklin road, above Belgrave street, and a neighbor with a turn for statistics was responsible for the assertion that at 25 cents per head "Mom" Bender was making from \$7 to \$10 a day.

Fifty years ago Mrs. Jackson, a huge colored woman, who lived on Eleventh street, below Lombard, was the best known of all fortune tellers of her time, but she was very bright and shrewd in her calling, and varied her predictions to suit the style and character of her visitors, and she sold voodoo charms. One of these was exhibited not very long ago. It was a drum, for the beating of which Abraham Smith received thirty shillings a year. Mr. Walker left a few years after this, and his place was taken by several other ministers. In the meantime a house of worship had been provided. In 1863 the town ordered "that a convenient pew should be made for the minister to preach in," and a humble temporary building was erected.

Here the pious of the town worshipped until 1893, when, after five years of agitation, the "old stone church" was built. It was forty feet square, built of rough stone. The roof was of hewn shingles, and was surmounted by a square cupola, over which a bell swung and a weather vane indicated the direction of the wind. This vane, the records say, had to be taken down, because of the excessive desire of the British soldiers to use it as a mark for their bullets.

During the revolution the old stone church served the Royalists as a prison in which they confined many a man who professed loyalty to the American cause. Later these same Royalists determined to destroy the church, but Rev. Mr. Burnet, who had some influence with the officers, saved the old building from destruction.

After the war it was used for several years as a town hall.

For over a hundred years the old stone church stood, a monument to the piety of the people.

In 1813, however, it was torn down

and everybody expected to assist at the ceremony. As the trees branch low fully two-thirds of the crop can be plucked while the operators stand on the ground. To prevent bruising a large hopper is made of strong muslin, with an opening at the bottom through which the apples pass to a table covered with many sheets of some strong cloth. This is placed where the pickers from four trees can throw into it. As soon as the table, which holds perhaps a bushel, is filled, the upper cloth is removed by taking it up by the four corners and emptied into a barrel or pile upon the ground, and this process is repeated until the supply of cloths on the receiving table is exhausted. Buyers come from St. Louis, Chicago and contract for the apples, sometimes by the barrel, but frequently by the lot.

All at once everything stopped,

not a wheel moved, the drivers in the foreground of this picture held their reins taut and firm, and as firmly held their mouths shut. All the pressure from behind could not make them budge an inch. The high heads of their horses alone tossed with impatience at their tight-reined restraint.

What was happening, anyway?

A fair young girl, fifteen or sixteen years old, was making her way alone across the street on crutches. Like the children of Israel passing through the walls of divided waters did the maiden walk scarcely over the space those many fellows had cleared for her; and not until she was fairly landed on the sidewalk was a hoof allowed to clatter or a wheel to turn. It was a gallant spectacle.

A Gallant Spectacle.

Everybody who has had occasion to cross some of the down-town streets during the busiest hours of the day, says the New York Recorder, knows what a perilous undertaking it is; and, unless "one of the finest" is near at hand to act as escort, it is positively risking one's life. Even strong men feel a cold shudder creeping over them when they brave the terrors of a crossing, where the air is vibrant with the magnetism of plunging, struggling horses, and the yells and "cuss" words of impatient drivers.

Every pedestrian, when he lands safely on the opposite sidewalk, feels a sense of relief and thankfulness that he was not ground to pieces or maimed for life.

At the intersection of Greenwich

street and Park place the writer witnessed some days ago an accident worthy of an artist's brush. It was almost impossible for anyone to "get on the other side" at that hour, there

was such a jammed and fumbled procession of vehicles of every description, with the most uproarious pandemonium.

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A New Kind of Fancy Leather.

A new kind of fancy leather, reported to be obtained by tanning the stomachs of animals, is described by the Boston Journal of Commerce. It

is prepared from the same material from which tripe is prepared. It

makes a handsome leather for pocketbooks, bags and fancy articles, and can be dyed in any color. Only the inner membrane is used. The heavy

integument is split off, leaving a

moderately thin and coarse-fibered

leather and soft as chamois.

There is a great variety of grain and pattern in the same piece of the leather, and much of it is too plain to admit of using it in large articles with the best effect, but excellent results can be obtained by matching opposite

spots of the skin, if skin it can be

called.

The part known as "the honeycomb" makes a particularly

rich appearance when dyed and polished.

It is much more effective than alligator or lizard skin, and much

softer and more easily worked into

irregular forms. Another part has

the appearance of being covered with

jet beads when dyed black and polished.

Any part of the material will

keep people guessing what it is made from, and that is part of the pleasure of owning any novelty.

The inventor or discoverer of this new leather says that he can get from twelve to fifteen feet from an animal.

The aeronaut who goes up out of sight is very apt to come down out of mind.

DEATH OF "MOM" BENDER, Who Made Many Thousands of Dollars by Humbugging People.

Confirmation of the oft-repeated assertion that it is easy for anyone not an idiot to live by his wits is found in the life of Anna, better known as "Mom" Bender, who died recently and was buried at Northwood cemetery, says the Philadelphia Times. She was 87 years of age, and no funeral that has taken place in recent years in Kensington has attracted the same number of curious people as gathered around the little dwelling, 1416 Hope street, where "Mom" breathed her last.

For years this old woman has been the "Witch of Endor" for Fishtown and its adjacencies. Dull, ignorant, utterly without shrewdness, for sixty-five years, with a pot of coffee grounds as her capital, she has been raking in money. She has often stated that during the war her daily income was \$25, and Saturdays and Sundays not infrequently \$50. Wives and mothers whose husbands and sons were in the army visited the old fortune-teller in search of comfort, and her formula was ever the same.

"Yes, my dear, I've a gift from God. I can tell what is to be and what has been. Yes, there is a dark man who loves you; beware of him. He wants to take you across the water and dress you in gold and silver, but you won't be happy with him, my dear. Your true love is a light man," etc., etc., and then the grimy fingers would raze over the coffee grounds.

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PIONEER PRESBYTERIANS. Jamaica, L. I. Has the First of The American Editions.

The town of Jamaica, L. I., ten miles from New York City, boasts of being the first home of Presbyterianism in America. The Presbyterian Church of Jamaica, still a flourishing and wealthy body, was the first organization of its kind in this country.

The records in the Town Hall furnish evidence that Jamaica was founded under a grant given by Gov. Peter Stuyvesant, done at Fort Amsterdam in New Netherland, March 21, 1656. The ground was purchased from the Rockewalk tribe of Indians, who in the deed of purchase inserted these words: "One thing to be remembered, that no person is to cut down any trees wherein eagles do make their nests."

Hempstead was already established and had a Dutch church. The ministers from this town often came over to Jamaica to preach the gospel to the new townsmen. It was not until 1