

THE FIG IN AMERICA.

We can produce here as good figs as anywhere in the world; it is a fruit remarkably wholesome, being specially adapted to the sustenance of the bilious and dyspeptic, and it is very much liked by most persons, yet we import more than half a million dollars worth (first cost) annually. North Carolina alone could give us all the figs we now want, while if they were introduced as cheap as peaches, as they might be, the consumption would be four fold what it is. But the fig will grow further north.

General Worthington of Ohio says: The capabilities of our climate, owing chiefly to the extremes of heat and cold, about which so much complaint is made, are much greater than those of the European countries, from which most of us derive our ancestry. The capabilities are as yet imperfectly developed, because we naturally cling to the production and the modes of culture inherited by our fathers, however unsuited to our surroundings. But the frequent failures of late years of some of the fruits on which we were wont to rely, notably apples and peaches, should make us turn to others, although heretofore unknown among us, if equally valuable, and now certain to bear regular crops in our climate. Among these, after a trial of more than thirty years, the first of experiments, and latterly of complete success, I believe that the old-fashioned biblical figs is one of the most promising.

The fig-tree is hardly a healthy, a quick grower, suits our summer climate admirably, and is easily protected without removal through our severest winters, is a sure bearer and very prolific. It grows from the slip, like a currant bush, bearing fruit in three or four years from the slip, and I have had trees three years old bear a fair crop the year after they were transplanted.

After the trees are four or five years old, they produce from the same area, with less labor, a larger and more certain crop in southern Ohio, than either potatoes or tomatoes. The large yellow fig begins to ripen about the same time as the earliest summer apples—this year (1868) on the 14th of July. The smaller purple fig begins to ripen about a month later and has a succession of crops until October.

I mention these two varieties because they have succeeded best with me. I have this year, for the first time, dried a few of the large yellow figs (the common fig of commerce), and find them at least as good as those we import. These can be produced in our climate as cheaply as dried peaches, and much more regularly.

I like them best fresh from the tree and often breakfast on them. The demand by the family has been so great that I have not thought of drying them until this season—when I have a cart-load of ripe figs from an area of less than four square rods. The fig is not likely to be grown in large orchards, but is eminently the fruit of the cottager and villager, and when its merits and adaptability to our climate become generally known, will be as regularly grown for family use, all over the Ohio valley, as the potato or tomato.

A great obstacle to the introduction of new crops is the suspicion, by the much abused public, that anything new is highly commended chiefly because of the profits to accrue to the commender. For the fig-tree, I can safely say that it is so easily and surely propagated, and multiplied, that although it will be very profitable to the cultivator, it is not likely to be so to nurserymen.

THE CONSTANT ROUND OF TERRESTRIAL CHANGES.—Continents gradually emerge from the bosom of the sea. The valleys and plains become adorned with woods and forests, which harbor within their shades unnumbered forms of being. The trees decay, and their lifeless trunks are swept along torrents to the main. The animal remains are swept by floods and tempests into the same receptacle of organic wrecks. Meanwhile the continents themselves undergo destruction, and gradually sink beneath the encroaching waves. The ruins of mountains mingle with the spoils of organic life, which soon disappear from the bosom of the accumulating strata, leaving their petrifications, to chronicle the story of their life and death, and to form an alphabet in the structure of the succeeding continents, by which to learn the history of their formation. Part of the newly formed deposits are upheaved above the sea by earthquakes, without undergoing any process of change; and part are let down through crevices, into internal seats of fire, where they are again upheaved by the elements. Meanwhile vast continents, loaded with empires, gradually become a barren land, as before; but they are no sooner above the waves than, like their predecessors, they began to disappear; and, in course of time, their excavated sites become overthrown by the foaming billows, while their materials enter into the construction of succeeding continents! Such are the fixed mutations of the terrestrial system.

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