

# THE PORTENT.

A Story of the Inner Vision of the Highlanders, Commonly Called the Second Sight.

By GEORGE MACDONALD.

## CHAPTER IV. LADY ALICE.

When the bell rang for dinner, I managed to find my way to the drawing-room, where were assembled Lady Hilton, her only daughter, a girl of about 13, and the two boys, my pupils. Lady Hilton would have been pleasant, could she have been as natural as she wished to appear. She received me with some degree of kindness; but the half cordiality of her manner toward me was evidently founded on the impassiveness of the girl between us. I knew at once that we should never be friends; that she would never come down from the lofty table-laid upon which she walked; and that if, after being years in the house, I should happen to be dying, she would send the housekeeper to see me. All right, no doubt; I only say that it was so. She introduced me to my pupils—fine-eyed, mainly English boys, with something a little overbearing in their manner, which speedily disappeared in their relation to me. Lord Hilton was not at home. Lady Hilton led the way to the dining room; the elder boy gave his arm to his sister, and I was about to follow with the younger, when from one of the deep bay windows glided out still in white, the same figure which had passed me upon the lawn. I started, and drew back. With a slight bow, she preceded me, and followed the others down the great staircase. Seated at table, I had leisure to make my observations upon them all, but most of my glances found their way to the lady who, twice that day had affected me like an apparition.

She was about twenty years of age; rather above the middle height, and rather slight in form; her complexion white rather than pale, her face being only less white than the deep marbly whiteness of her arms. Her eyes were large, and full of liquid light—a light throbbing with the light of invisible stars. Her hair seemed raven black, and in quantity profuse. The expression of her face, however, generally partook more of vagueness than any other characteristic. Lady Hilton called her Lady Alice; and she never addressed Lady Hilton but in the same ceremonious style.

I afterward learned, from the old house-keeper, that Lady Alice's position in the family was a very peculiar one. Distantly connected with Lord Hilton's family on the mother's side, she was the daughter of the late Lord Gendaroch, and step-daughter to Lady Hilton, who had become Lady Hilton within a year after Lord Gendaroch's death. Lady Alice, then quite a child, had accompanied her stepmother, to whom she was moderately attached, and who had been allowed to retain undisputed possession of her. She had no near relatives, else the fortune I afterward found to be at her disposal would have aroused contenting claims to the right of guardianship.

Although she was in many respects kindly treated by her stepmother, certain peculiarities tended to her isolation from the family pursuits and pleasures. Lady Alice had no accomplishments. She could neither spell her own language, nor even read it aloud. Yet she delighted in reading to herself, though for the most part books which Mrs. Wilson characterized as very odd. Her voice when she spoke had a quite indescribable music in it; yet she neither sang nor played. Her habitual motion was more like a rhythmic gliding than an ordinary walk, yet she could not dance. Mrs. Wilson hinted at other and more serious peculiarities, which she either could not or would not describe; always shaking her head gravely and sadly, and becoming quite silent, when I pressed for further explanation; so that, at last, I gave up all attempts to arrive at an understanding of the mystery by her means.

There was something to me exceedingly touching in the solitariness of this girl; for no one spoke to her as if she were like other people, or if any heartiness were possible between them. Perhaps no one could have felt quite at home with her but a mother, whose heart had been one with hers from a season long anterior to the development of any repulsive oddity. But her position was one of peculiar isolation, for no one really approached her individual being; and that she should be unaware of this loneliness seemed to me saddest of all.

After making arrangements for commencing work in the morning, I took my leave, and retired to my own room, intent upon carrying out with more maintenance the survey I had already commenced; several cupboards in the wall, and one or two doors, apparently of closets, had especially attracted my attention. Strange as my look as I entered—as of a room hollowed out of the past, for a memorial of dead times. The fire had sunk low, and lay smoldering beneath the white ashes, like the life of the world beneath the snow, or the heart of a man beneath cold and gray thoughts. I lighted the candle which stood upon the table, but the room, instead of being brightened, looked blacker than before. For the light revealed its essential blackness.

With the candle in my hand, I proceeded to open the various cupboards and closets. At first I found nothing remarkable about any of them. The latter were quite empty, except the very old came to, which was a piece of very old elaborate tapestry hanging at the back of it. Lifting this up I saw what seemed at first to be panels, corresponding to those which formed the room; but, on looking more closely, I discovered that this back of the closet was, or had been, a door. There was nothing unusual in this, especially in such an old house, but the discovery roused in me a strong desire to know what lay behind the old door. I found that it was secured only by an ordinary bolt, from which the handle had been removed. Soothing my conscience with the reflection that I had a right to know what sort of a place had communication with my room, I succeeded by the help of my deer knife,

in forcing back the rusty bolt; and though, from the stiffness of the hinges I dreaded a crack, they yielded at last with only a creak.

The opening door revealed a large hall, empty utterly, save of dust and cobwebs, which festooned it in all quarters, and gave it an appearance of unutterable desolation. The now familiar feeling that I had seen the place before, filled my mind the first moment, and passed away the next. A broad right-angled staircase, with massive balusters, rose from the middle of the hall. The staircase could not have originally belonged to the ancient wing which I had observed on my first approach, being much more modern; but I was convinced, from the observations I had made as to the situation of the room, that I was bordering upon, if not within, the oldest portion of the pile. In sudden horror lest I should hear a light footfall upon the awful stair, I withdrew hurriedly, and, having secured both the doors, betook myself to my bed-room, in whose dingy four-post bed, with its carving and plumes reminding me of a hearse, I was soon ensconced among the snowiest linen, with the sweet and clean odor of lavender.

I made no use of my discovered door although I always intended doing so, especially after, in talking about the building with Lady Hilton, I found that I was at perfect liberty to make what excursions I pleased into the deserted portions.

My pupils turned out to be teachable, and therefore my occupation was pleasant. My sister frequently came to me for help, as there happened to be just then an interregnum of governesses; soon she settled into a regular pupil.

After a few weeks Lord Hilton returned. Though my room was so far from the great hall, I heard the clank of his spurs on the pavement.

He received me with some appearance of interest, which immediately stiffened and froze. Beginning to shake hands with me as if he meant it he instantly dropped my hand as if it had stung him. His nobility was of that sort which stands in constant need of repair. Like a weakly constitution it required keeping up, and his lordship could not be said to neglect it; for he seemed to find his principal employment in administering continuous doses of obsequiousness to his own pride.

## CHAPTER V. THE LIBRARY.

One day, a week after his arrival, Lord Hilton gave a dinner party to some of his neighbors and tenants. I entered the drawing-room rather late, and saw that, though there were many guests not one was talking to Lady Alice. She appeared, however, altogether unconscious of neglect. Presently dinner was announced, and the company marshaled themselves, and took their way to the dining room. Lady Alice was left unattended, the guests taking their cue from the behavior of their entertainers. I ventured to go up to her, and offer her my arm. She made me a haughty bow and passed on before me unaccompanied. I could not help feeling hurt at this, and I think she saw it; but it made no difference in her behavior, except that she avoided everything that might occasion me the chance of offering my services.

Nor did I get any further with Lady Hilton. Her manner and smile remained precisely the same as on our first interview. She did not even show any interest in the fact that her daughter, Lady Lucy, had joined her brothers in the school-room. I had an uncomfortable feeling that the latter was like her mother, and was not to be trusted.

The neglected library was open to me at all hours; and in it I often took refuge from the dreariness of unsympathetic society. I was never admitted within the magic circle of the family interests and enjoyments. If there was such a circle, Lady Alice and I certainly stood outside of it; but whether even then it had any real inside to it, I doubted much.

In the library I found companions more to my need. But even there they were not easy to find; for the books were in great confusion. I could discover no catalogue, nor could I hear of the existence of such a useless luxury. One morning at breakfast, therefore, I asked Lord Hilton if I might arrange and catalogue the books during my leisure hours. He replied:—

"Do anything you like with them, Mr. Campbell, except destroy them." One day I had sent a servant to ask Mrs. Wilson to come to me. I had taken down all the books from a littered undisturbed corner, and had seated myself on a heap of them, no doubt a very impersonation of the genius of the place; for while I waited for the house-keeper, I was consuming a morsel of an ancient metrical romance. After waiting for some time I glanced toward the door, for I had begun to get impatient for the entrance of my helper. To my surprise, there stood Lady Alice, her eyes fixed upon me with an expression I could not understand. Her face instantly altered to its usual look of indifference, dashed with the least possible degree of scorn, as she turned and walked slowly away. I rose involuntarily. An old cavalry sword, which I had just taken down from the wall, and had placed leaning against the books from which I now rose, fell with a clash to the floor. I started; for it was a sound that always startled me. And, stooping, I lifted the weapon. But what was my surprise when I raised my head to see once more the face of Lady Alice staring in at the door! yet not the same face, for it had changed in the moment that had passed, and it was pale with fear—not fright; and her great black eyes were staring beyond me as if she saw something through the wall of the room. Once more her face altered to the former scornful indifference and she vanished. Keen of hearing as I was, I had never yet heard the footsteps of Lady Alice.

One night I was sitting in my room, devouring an old romance which I had brought from the library. It was late. The fire blazed brightly, but the candles were nearly burned out, and I grew sleepy over the volume, romance as it was.

Suddenly I found myself on my feet, listening with an agony of attention. Whether I heard anything, I could not tell; but I felt as if I had. Yes; I was sure of it. Far away, somewhere

in the labyrinthine pile, I heard a faint cry. Driven by some secret impulse, I flew, without a moment's reflection, to the closet door, lifted the tapestry within, unfastened the second door, and stood in the great waste echoing hall, amid the touches, light and ghostly, of the cobwebs set afloat in the eddies occasioned by my sudden entrance.

I started, and my heart swelled; for I saw a movement somewhere—I could neither tell where nor of what; I was only aware of motion. I stood in the first shadow, and gazed, but saw nothing. I sped across the light to the next shadow, and stood again, looking with fearful fixedness of gaze toward the far end of the corridor. Suddenly a white form glimmered and vanished. I crossed to the next shadow. Again a glimmer and vanishing, but nearer. Nerving myself to the utmost, I ceased the stealthiness of my movements, and went forward slowly and steadily. A tall form, apparently of a woman, dressed in a long white robe, appeared in one of the streams of light, threw its arms over its head, gave a wild cry which, notwithstanding its wildness and force, had a muffled sound, as if many folds, either of matter or space intervened—and fell at full length along the moonlight. Amidst the thrill of agony which shook me at the cry, I rushed forward, and kneeling beside the prostrate figure, discovered that unearthly as was the scream which had preceded her fall, it was the Lady Alice. I saw the fact in a moment; the Lady Alice was a somnambulist. Startled by the noise of my advance, she had awaked; and the usual terror and fainting had followed.

She was cold and motionless as death. What was to be done? If I called the probability was that no one would hear me; or if any one should hear—but I need not follow the course of my thought, as I tried in vain to revive the poor girl. Suffice it to say, that both for her sake and my own, I could not face the chance of being found, in the dead of night, by common minded domestics, in such a situation.

I was kneeling by her side, not knowing what to do, when a horror, as from the presence of death suddenly recognized, fell upon me. I thought she must be dead. But at the same moment I heard, or seemed to hear (How should I know which?) the rapid gallop of a horse, and the clank of a loose shoe.

In the agony of fear I caught her up in my arms, and, carrying her on my arms, as one carries a sleeping child, hurried back through the corridor. Her hair, which was loose, trailed on the ground; and as I fled I trampled on it and stumbled. She moaned; and in that instant the gallop ceased. I lifted her up across my shoulder, and carried her more easily. How I found my way to the stairs I cannot tell; I know that I groped about for some time, like one in a dream with a ghost in his arms. At last I reached it, and, descending, crossed the hall, and entered my room. There I placed Lady Alice upon an old couch, secured the doors and began to breathe—and think. The first thing was to get her warm, for she was as cold as the dead. I covered her with my plaid and my dressing gown, pulled the couch before the fire, and considered what to do next.

## CHAPTER VI. THE FIRST WAKING.

While I hesitated, Nature had her own way, and, with a deep-drawn sigh, Lady Alice opened her eyes. Never shall I forget the look of mingled bewilderment, alarm and shame, with which her great eyes met mine. But, in a moment, this expression changed to that of anger. Her dark eyes flashed with light; and a cloud of rosy wrath grew in her face, till it glowed with the opaque red of a cannelia. She had almost started from the couch, when, apparently discovering the unsuitableness of her dress, she checked her impetuosity, and remained leaning on her elbow. Overcome by her anger, her beauty, and my own confusion, I knelt before her, unable to speak or to withdraw my eyes from hers. After a moment's pause, she began to question me like a queen, and I to reply like a culprit.

"How did I come here?"  
"I carried you."  
"Where did you find me, pray?"  
"Her lip curled with ten times the usual scorn."  
"In the old house, in a long corridor."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## MANNA EATERS.

The People of Arabia and Persia Make It From Tamarisk Branches.

In some of the eastern countries, notably Arabia and Persia, a manna answering closely to that mentioned in the scriptures is still naturally produced in considerable quantity, says Good Housekeeping. It comes from the tender branches of the tamarisk, and is known to the Persians by the name of "tamarisk honey." It consists of tear-like drops, which exude in consequence of the puncture of an insect during the months of June and July. In the cool of the morning it is found solidified, and the congealed tears may be shaken from the limbs. That, in fact, is one of the methods of gathering manna. Herodotus alludes to the same nutritious product, so that there is no doubt it has been known in those regions from the earliest ages. It is easy to see how it might be produced in wonderful quantities without any special manifestation of the supernatural. It is a sweetish substance, pleasant to the taste and highly nutritious.

Some students of the Bible have supposed the manna there mentioned to have been a fungus growth; but while the explanation would be a natural one, the modification which it would require is an unnecessary one. There are numerous interesting things, nevertheless, about the various kinds of fungi, which modern experimentation has decided to be edible; and not only that, but highly palatable and nutritive. What country boy of an imaginative nature but has frolicked in mimic warfare with imaginary foes, getting the smoke from his artillery and infantry from the numerous puff-balls which a convent pasture afforded, while his own lung power furnished the "crash and roar and cheer" for the inspiring contest! Yet science has demonstrated that those very puff-balls were once good to eat—in fact, capable of furnishing the most dainty refreshment

# FARM AND GARDEN.

## MATTERS OF INTEREST TO AGRICULTURISTS.

Some Up to Date Hints About Cultivation of the Soil and Yields Thereof—Horticulture, Viticulture and Floriculture.

### Foot Puncture in Horses.

One of the most common causes of lameness is puncture of the sole of the foot. It is caused by the animal stepping on a nail or other sharp object. The puncture is most likely to occur in the neighborhood of the frog, or where the sole and wall of the foot join, but it may occur in any part of the sole. When the nail comes in contact with the horn of the sole it is likely to glance until it meets the projection of the wall or the softer rough frog; hence the greater frequency of puncture in these localities.

### SYMPTOMS.

Since the nail usually pulls out, and the horn springs back to its former position so as to close the opening the nail made, there is sometimes difficulty in locating exactly the seat of the wound. As a result of this many an animal has been made to stand on a lame foot by a stifle shoe having been put on the well foot. Locating this sort of lameness in the stifle joint is a common but inexcusable error, as the action resulting from lameness in the two parts is entirely different. The so-called "gravel" which is said to enter the sole of the foot and then "work out" at the heel is usually the "working out" of the pus or the matter resulting from a

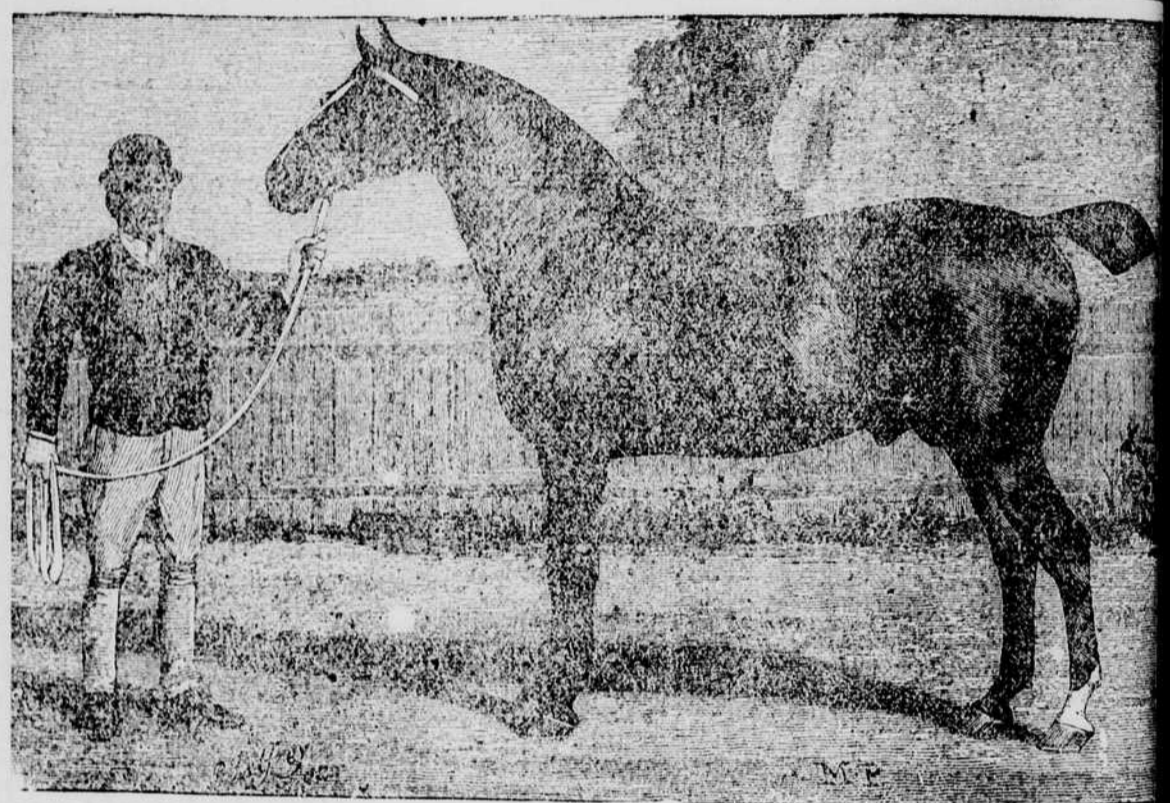
### Oat Culture at Champaign.

In Bulletin No. 34 of the Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station is given a report of the experiments tried in oat culture on the Station farm at Champaign. The average yield of forty-eight plats was at rate of 62.3 bushels per acre, the largest yield being 75 and the smallest 40.8 bu. per acre; five plats yielding less than 50 bu. and seven over 70 bu. each per acre. The oats on each of twenty-four plats weighed over the standard weight of 32 lbs per bushel; those on twenty plats, less than 32 lbs per bushel. Seventeen varieties were tested. Fifteen of these, twelve of which were selected from a much larger number because of good yields in former years, were grown on duplicate plats. While the land was apparently unusually uniform in quality, the difference in yield of plats of the same variety was marked in a number of cases; in one case being over 12 bu. per acre. The best yielding varieties were: Texas Rust Proof, 74 bu. per acre; Texas Red, 68.2 bu.; New Dakota Gray, 67.3 bu.; Calgary Gray, 67.6 bu.; New Red Rust Proof, 67.1 bu.; American Banner, 64.4 bu.; Green Mountain, 64.4 bu.; Pringles Progress, 64.3 bu. In trials for five years the best yielding varieties have stood in following order: Pringles Progress, Texas Rust Proof, New Dakota Gray, New Red Rust Proof, American Banner, Improved American, Calgary Gray has been grown two seasons. It ranked third among fifty-nine varieties in 1892. Three plats were sown with different mixtures of varieties and three with the product of different mixtures grown in 1892. Each mixture gave a slightly larger and each product of mixture a slightly lower yield than the average or the varieties used in making mix-

of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society stated at one of the meetings several years ago, that his choice of all was a Seckel that had dropped in the night. But house ripening is possible even for this. Many Seckels have been raised from the Seckel. Foot's Seckel and others—but not equal to the parent. Last year, at least; in this very unfavorable year the tree fruits, Seckel is a variety (except Tyson) that has a crop. Most of the other sorts are nothing. In planting even a few for family use, the Seckel should be overlooked.

### Fancy Farming.

It is not difficult for a man to raise good crops if he has the money enough. A rich man can walk out of the city and in a year put ten thousand dollars' worth of expense upon a poor farm, can make a soil if he has the money enough. But wheat that sells for a bushel will cost at least \$3; and for 50 cents will have cost \$2. It is hard to get good crops if profit is to be accounted. A rich man plays with farm as children do with dolls, doing it to suit his fancy, and quite different as to expense or profit. His fancy and not his pocket that farms for. Such men are not usually employed many hands. They are a great many experiments which other farmers can not afford to try. To show what can be done. And American farmers, although they will imitate, will do better than that. They will take hints in this thing and by gradual improvement they will raise their own style of farming to degrees. Every township ought to have one gentleman farmer who can show what soil can be made to do. In his case it may not be remunerative.



HACKNEY STALLION, P. (1852), AN ENGLISH PRIZE WINNER.—FARMERS' REVIEW.

nail puncture or a bruise. If an animal becomes suddenly and severely lame and there be no evidence of anything in any other part of the leg, such as swelling, heat and pain upon pressure, it is always well to look for puncture in the foot. If the animal stands with the lame foot extended and when walking places the lame foot well forward and brings the well foot up to it, the evidence of puncture is still stronger. To examine the foot properly the shoe should be removed. It is not sufficient to merely scrape the bottom of the foot clean, for if the nail has pulled out and the horn sprung back in position, all trace of its entrance may have been obliterated. To examine the foot properly a pair of large pincers or a hammer is necessary. The former is the better, as by compressing the hoof the exact spot may be found, while tapping the sole with a hammer may cause the animal to evince pain, even though the tapping is not directly over the injury; but with a little care the spot may be definitely located with either instrument. If the injury is of a few days' standing additional heat in the hoof and perhaps slight swelling in the pastern may also be present.

### TREATMENT.

When the point of the puncture has been ascertained the horn should be pared out so as to leave an opening for the escape of all matter. This opening need not be larger than an ordinary sized lead pencil. The practice of burning out this hole with a hot iron or by the use of caustics is very objectionable and useless. A solution of carbolic acid (one part of acid to twenty-five of water) may be used to wash the wound. If the animal be kept in a clean place, and the wound washed once a day with the same solution, a rapid recovery is usually the result. In cases where the lameness is severe, a poultice of wheat bran or linseed meal may be applied for a day or two, but should not be kept up for a longer period.

### PROUD FLESH.

In those cases where the lameness subsides, but luxuriant granulations of "proud flesh" spring up and fill the opening in the horn, they may be cut down by a hot iron to a point level with the inner or deeper surface of the horny sole. Then the cavity should be filled with balsam of fir, a pad of cotton placed over it, and over all a piece of good firm leather, which may be held in place by a shoe. The main point in the treatment of nail puncture of the foot is to give free exit to all matter that may collect, and keep the part as clean as possible. If this be done, the matter will not be compelled to work out at the heels, and no separation or loss of hoof will occur.

Two plats were rolled after being sown. Each gave an average yield. Two plats were drilled, the quantity of seed being less than where the seed was sown broadcast. The yield of each was much below the average. For the first time since the station was established in 1888 early sown oats were injured by the frost. In a series of four years slightly the largest yields came from sowing near the last of March. The average yield of straw was 3,314 lbs. per acre. The largest yield was 4,545; the smallest 2,295 lbs. per bushel.

### The Seckel Pear.

Many years ago, when "Dutch Jacob" (as he was called,) a Philadelphia cattle dealer, returned from his shooting excursion early in the fall, he is said to have regaled his friends with pears that were a marvel of excellence, but the locality of whose growth he would never disclose. Subsequently, the Holland Land Co., which owned a considerable tract south of the city offered it for sale in parcels, and Jacob secured the ground on which his favorite pear tree stood, a strip near the Delaware. This was considerably over 100 years ago. Whether he called the pear by any particular name is not known, but in time's changes the land and tree came into the possession of a Mr. Seckel, who introduced the remarkable fruit, and it received his name. This is condensed from a note in Downing's large work on fruits, Bishop White—long since deceased—having furnished the information. The original tree was standing not long since and may be yet. A nice picture of it may be seen in one of the volumes of the Pennsylvania state agricultural association, published a few years ago. The Seckel has been widely distributed and has shown itself adapted to more variations of soil and climate, perhaps, than any other kind. The tree is a good stocky grower, and a sure and abundant bearer. It can hardly be said to be wholly free from blight, but is more nearly so than any other pear tree among the well known varieties. The fruit is most delicious. Its single defect is lack of size for canning. But for dessert, eating out of hand, etc., it has no superior, and for each purpose it occupies a prominent position in the market. It becomes larger by taking off the superabundant fruit when small—not a great task when one has a mind to do it—and in such cases the size is often full medium. Season, last of August to the beginning of October. As is well known, all pears are improved by being picked while yet hard—when the seeds begin to color—and ripened in the house; but Seckel does well ripened on the tree. A member

But, take the country through, the direct effect will be remunerative. Very mistakes will be useful. A mistake is often (although rarely reported) instructive than a success. But it is not every farmer who can afford to be a school master. This class of fancy farmers have done a wonderful good to the agricultural class in particular respect, that is, in the tribulation of improved live stock. It is in thousands of places of our country, improved breeds of horses, cows, sheep, swine, poultry have been introduced through the generous or lavish expenditure of money in the purchase of best breeding stock by the so-called fancy farmers, and by this means have been in the course of time, tributed in the immediate neighborhood, and to this day are bearing fruit that is beyond estimate, in the fact that they have bestowed upon the country at large.—F. L. Hooper in Farmers' Review.

THE IRRIGATION MOVEMENT.—The irrigation movement is accumulating tremendous impetus, which is not alone in the west, but throbbing out the country. The work of organization and agitation, through national, inter-state, state and county associations, will go forward with more energy from now until the next international congress assemble Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the autumn of 1895. That this movement is the hope of prosperity for millions that it will safeguard our institutions with a new bulwark of liberty, in form of small landed proprietors, is a confident expectation of western men. Their appeal is to patriotism and best spirit of humanity. They seek to build to the credit of their country, the good of their race, to the glory of God.

FED THE RAISINS TO ANIMALS.—The and cattle feeding upon "raisins" and other dried fruits are reported by a consul in Smyrna to have been of a common sight in that part of the sultan's dominions. This is owing to the continued low values of produce in the European markets, which in case of many staple productions Turkey have gone from bad to worse. Of these are raisins, which principally through the action of the tariff, have become so devalued that value that, unless some new use can be found, the cultivation of vine in Turkey will, according to a consul, have to be discontinued. North British Agriculturist, Edinburgh.

HORTICULTURE will repay study