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A KENT COUNTY FRUIT GROWER.

Capt. Robert S. Emory's Successful Methods in Pear and Peach Culture.

Written by a Baltimore Sun Reporter.

During the past summer the many excursionists, and especially the strangers, who took trips on the steamers passing up and down the Chester river were much astonished at the great quantity of peaches, pears, tomatoes and cantaloupes the steamers took aboard at the various landings. Intelligent persons who had traveled in various States were frequently heard to comment on the unusual excellence of the products and the liberal yields of the orchards that are so conspicuous from the river boats and which add so greatly to the picturesque farms of Kent and Queen Anne's counties. Trips through this region when fruit shipments are at their height are delightful and well illustrate the wonderful resources for successful fruit growing in the two counties named.

One of the veteran fruit growers of Kent county is Capt. Robert S. Emory, near Chestertown. Capt. Emory has at his home place extensive peach and pear orchards and his own private landing, where the Chester river steamers stop every day and from which he ships his fruit. He also has other farms, on which he grows mainly peaches. Capt. Emory is president of the Maryland State Horticultural Society and is one of the most earnest, ardent and successful of fruit growers in the State.

He can be said to be the pioneer in pear culture in Maryland. He commenced this enterprise about 1862 by importing quince stock and budding on them more than score of varieties of pears. In 1871 the American Pomological Society, which was founded in 1848, held its annual meeting and exhibition in Baltimore. Marshall Pinckney Wilder was its president. The entry of pear exhibits from the State was meagre and the local secretary of the exhibition telegraphed to Capt. Emory to come up and bring samples of all his pears. He quickly responded. The collection of 21 kinds he brought created a mild sensation and greatly surprised all the fruit experts. The Captain's display of pears was in competition with all the other States, including California, but he was unanimously awarded the society's silver medal, which he to-day is justly proud to show to his friends. The judges in making the award were on account of the marvelous size of Captain Emory's Lawrence pears, inclined to doubt their purity. Among those present at the exhibition was Downing, then the leading horticulturist of the United States, who pronounced Capt. Emory's exhibit one of unusual excellence, and declared "these Lawrence pears are true to name and excel in size and beauty any I have ever seen."

Among the varieties of pears which were then prominent were the Bartlett, Howell, Beurred Anjou, Lawrence, Mannings Elizabeth, Buffam, Duchess d'Angouleme. Two varieties, which have since been introduced, the Le Conte and Kieffer, Capt. Emory considers as quite immune from attacks of the San Jose scale.

The Kieffer is the most wonderfully vigorous grower of all the pears and an almost certain annual bearer, but the Captain thinks its introduction has dealt a death blow to many other much superior pears by causing reduction in prices. It is a well known fact, says Captain Emory, that Kieffer pears have been, and still are, put up and branded as "Bartlett pears and sold at such low prices that the handling of Bartlett pears has become unprofitable to the grower. While we have pears that are superior to the Bartlett, we have none that require more delicate handling, and in consequence at prevailing prices there is little or no profit in handling them."

Capt. Emory was one of the first unfortunate orchardists in Maryland to have the San Jose scale introduced on his place. The pest came with lot of 260 pear trees which he purchased in New Jersey. He said he noticed at the time that there was something wrong with the trees and at once wrote the nurserymen. The advent of the San Jose scale was then unknown. He subsequently was visited by an expert from the Entomological Department of the United States Agricultural Department, who pronounced the trouble the San Jose scale. During the interim it had spread to other trees, but through the assistance of the Agricultural Department and the State Entomologist he succeeded in keeping the pest under control. This was not accomplished, however, until the experimenters had tried various combination emulsions which killed trees, scale and all. In fact, Mr. Emory's orchards have been used te test new "sure things" until he has concluded that forbearance has ceased to be a virtue, as many of the remedies applied are more dangerous than the scale

Capt. Emory's experience has been that pear trees in orchards cannot be made profitable, considering yield and size of fruit, for more than 30 or 35 years. At one time he had 20,000 pear trees in his orchards. He has made a personal study of the habits and requirements of the different varieties. He finds that while some trees require little pruning, others require considerable cutting back. Trees of some varieties are rank and gross feeders, and if fertilized are liable to blight very seriously. "Thorough acquaintance," says the Captain, "with the varieties is necessary to know the most opportune time to pick the pears for ripening for shipping and caring for them until they are ready for shipping."

He has a house especially for the storing of pears to condition them for shipping. In past seasons he has shipped over 30,000 baskets of pears from the home farm. Many of the first-planted trees have been dug up, having outlived their usefulness.

Captain Emory has only a few thousand peach trees on his home farm, but has extensive orchards on other farms. On the home place among those left are some blocks of thrifty peach trees 16 to 18 years old, in excellent bearing, of Crawford's early and late, Reeves, Mountain Rose, Yellow Rare Ripe and Smock. These trees are in excellent condition and conclusively disprove the theory that the life of budded peach trees is not over seven or eight years. On another large farm Captain Emory is making a specialty of peaches, growing all the leading varieties. On this same farm he has some 2,000 choice bearing pear trees.

Captain Emory's residence is a colonial house, with a broad, deep porch extending across in front, supported by massive pillars. A magnificent view of the Chester river is had from the porch, showing Chestertown and the surrounding country. The Captain sits in his spacious library before a large old-fashioned fireplace, unmindful of coal strikes or scarcity of coal. There is something in the blazing log fire that seems to be thoroughly in keeping with his genial welcome to visitors As side issues Captain Emory has several things that well illustrate his success and thoroughness in doing things. His acres of asparagus are as noted for results as his fruit growing. He is an enthusiastic apiarist and delights in looking after his bees. He is an old-time poultry fancier and has a poultry house built after his own planning, that is admirably arranged. He takes pride in his Jersey cattle and visitors have palatable proof that the Jersey cream and peaches that find their way to his table are genuine and unsurpassed.

He is a firm believer in liberal "feeding" and thorough cultivation of every crop he grows. His crops plainly show their response to his treatment.

He is always delighted to give any information he can about fruit and fruit growing. He has a very pleasant way in the fruit season of illustrating his talks with real fruits, which give his listeners a chance to test the object-lessons. There is always a peach basket out on the spacious porch full of delicious ripe peaches or pears. The artist caught him explaining the difference in the characteristic types of two fine varieties of peaches to some lady visitors.

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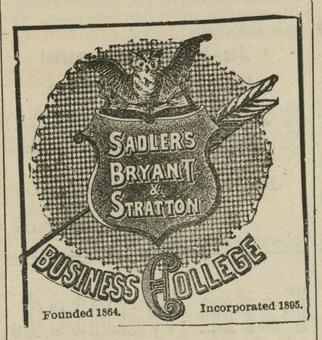

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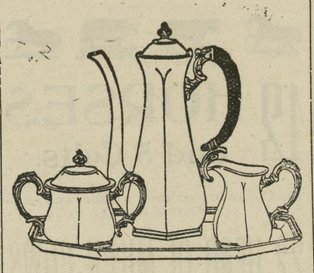

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