RASPBERRY AND BLACKBERRY CULTURE.

By C. H. HAMILTON, Fond du Lac County, Wis.

-third Paper-

Berries and the Farmer.—In a country where 40 to 50 bushels of corn is nothing great to boast of, it is not singular that a few beets, onions, cabbages, a little lettuce and sweet corn, all indifferently attended to, make up the kitchen garden of the average Western farmer. Yet his wife and children are as fond of fruits as any other man's family. You will see them, when the season for wild raspberries and blackberries comes, roaming the meadows and prairies in quest of the early fruit. Anybody can raise beans, but berries, which are quite as docile under culture, are regarded with distrust. By many, these provisions for family living are regarded as rather small business, unworthy of serious attention, or as a silly disposition to be over-nice in self-indulgence.

Fruit Raising Elevating.—The care and cultivation of small fruits is calculated to awaken the best qualities of the mind. The work is instructive, pure and elevating in every way. The enjoyment of these fruits upon the table is elevating. Their beauty and flavor awaken pleasing emotions. They are provided by a bountiful creator, to minister not only to our pleasure, but to our health as well. They come to us at that particular season of the year when the human system seems to require just what they are able to impart. They come just at the right time, and are made to suit the season. There should be, and may be, fruit in every home, not merely in scanty supply, but in abundance; yet there are thousands of families that go without. The trouble, small as it is, seems too much for them.

Preparation of the Soil.—In the culture of the raspberry and blackberry, there is no particular difference in the preparation of the soil. Do not be afraid to apply a liberal coating of manure, and give a thorough and deep plowing. Pulverize the soil with the harrow, for the labor bestowed in its preparation is not work thrown away.

Planting.—Plant your raspberries in rows, seven feet between the rows, the plants two feet apart in the row. Procure good, healthy plants and, in planting, the roots must be spread and placed as near as possible in the way in which they grew. Cover the crown of the plant two inches deep, pressing the earth firmly around it.

Care.—The main care which your plants will need the first season is thorough cultivation, and that is not only to be done thoroughly, but often, with the cultivator and the hoe. The growth will not be as strong the first year as the second. The second year, as well as succeeding years, not only thorough cultivation is necessary, but care, that your bushes do not grow too high. Pinch the tops off all canes as soon as 18 to 20 inches high. After that let the laterals grow at will. In spring cut laterals back to within 12 to 15
inches of main cane. Remove all the old wood as soon as the fruit is gathered, and burn the same.

Possibilities.—While other industries of the state have made great advancement, and a feeling of pride has sprung up among our farmers, as they have compared notes with each other and seen the possibilities which lie before them; while our agriculturists are rejoicing in the changes which have been made, and are likely to be made, along the line of farming, can not we as horticulturists see great possibilities yet to be obtained in our line?

Small Fruits Improved.—While there have been great changes in our modes of cultivation, what great changes have been wrought in our lists of small fruits of recent introduction! Now we have that large and mammoth black raspberry, the Gregg, the almost iron-clad Souhegan, which ripens its fruit early and abundantly, and that strong and vigorous grower, the Ohio, which has proved so profitable for evaporating. Along with these are valuable kinds of red raspberries, which, with the blacks, give us a succession of fruits.

Laying Down.—Blackberries can be raised successfully and profitably with a small amount of labor. Protection by laying them down (for protection is a great barrier in the minds of many) may easily be accomplished by removing the earth from the side to which you wish to bend down your plant, and a small amount of earth from the side and under the crown of the plant to make room for it to sink into; thus you are enabled to bend the roots and not the canes, and, by having the plants in rows 7 feet by 3 feet in the row, they are near enough together so that when laid down, one rests partly upon the other and is easily covered. Two men in a day and a half or three days will cover and protect one acre, or in other words, insure you a regular yearly crop of from 140 to 175 bushels of this delicious fruit.

Eternal Vigilance.—But in the care and cultivation of these fruits, as well as with the strawberry, the dewberry currants, gooseberries and grapes, all which add to the pleasure and profit of the small fruit grower, do not forget to exercise a vast amount of Thos. Jefferson's price of Liberty—eternal vigilance.

Discussion.

Mr. J. M. Smith.—Would you cut the Greggs down as low as you say?

Mr. Hamilton.—Yes, I would clip them down to a foot and a half; that will raise them to the height of four or six inches.

Mr. True.—How many plants would you advise an ordinary man to plant?

Mr. Hamilton.—I think fifty blackberries will keep the average Wisconsin family supplied.

Mr. True.—What is the average Wisconsin family?

Mr. Hamilton.—From four to thirteen.

Mr. True.—What kind of blackberries do you recommend?

Mr. Hamilton.—The kind that is cultivated in my section is the Ancient Briton, and for dry weather, for all purposes, there is no better variety. The Snyder is somewhat earlier and is planted quite extensively.

Mr. Hoxie.—The Ancient Briton in some parts of the state is called the Wisconsin Blackberry; the two are identical.