

casian required. In 1885 he conceived the idea of the instituting a division of pomology in the United States Department of Agriculture, and after its creation in 1886 was called to be its chief. This required his removal from the farm to a residence in Washington, D. C. He planned and organized the pomological division up to Secretary Morton's administration of the Agricultural Department, which closed his connection therewith.

At present Mr. Van Deman is conducting a fruit farm at Parksley, Va. He is still in the prime of life, and with his qualifications and experience has yet his best years and his best work before him.

THE ROCKFORD PLUM.

The following instructive article on the Rockford plum and its value for the northwest was written for the Wisconsin Horticulturist by Prof. E. S. Goff of Madison. It will be of value to all who contemplate engaging in plum culture.

Of all the native plums that I have thus far tested, I have found none of which the quality pleases me so well as the Rockford, and since this variety has proved one of the most productive in our Experiment Station orchard I have been anxious to learn how far it is proving successful elsewhere. I have therefore corresponded with several parties in Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota, who have grown this plum, in order to learn to what extent we may safely recommend it for general planting.

Our orchard contains but a single tree of this plum. This was top-grafted on a Miner sprout in the spring of 1890 with scions kindly furnished by J. S. Harris of La Crescent, Minn. It bore its first crop in 1894, and in 1895, the year that will long be memorable for its severe drought, the Rockford was one of the few varieties in our orchard that matured a crop of fruit. The present season it hangs loaded with fruit, which will mature the latter part of the present month.

In size, the fruit is rather large; in form it is slightly ob-

long, truncate at base, with a distinct suture. The skin is purple, sometimes inclining to orange, often a little speckled, with a very thin bloom; the stem is half an inch long, slender, and set in a decided cavity; the flesh is rich yellow, almost free from the stone, sweet and rich and entirely without astringency or acidity; the stone is oval, bluntly pointed, and very obscurely margined.

Mr. C. G. Patten of Charles City, Ia., who introduced this plum, writes: (June 23, 1896) "Replying to yours of the 18th in reference to the Rockford plum: It is an early and persistent bearer. The plums are small unless properly thinned or the land thoroughly enriched. It is then fair size and really best in quality of all of the well known sorts. The fruit is too small to be popular unless well handled. It has a little tendency to scab, but if not allowed to over-bear the scab is diffused over the surface so that it is scarcely noticeable. When well grown in south Iowa it has been preferred to the Sanford and has sold for \$3.00 per bushel. It originated by accident in this county. I bought the original trees and disseminated it. I have it on sandy soil and on common prairie, and it does fully as well on the sandy land."

Mr. O. M. Lord of Minnesota City, Minn., who has grown the Rockford plum for several years, writes: (June 22, 1896) "I know nothing of the Rockford plum except upon my own grounds. Except some young ones I have only bearing trees that Mr. Patten sent me. One year the plums were large and fine but otherwise they have been small and rotted on the tree. He says this is the only case within his knowledge in which the plums have rotted and that the small size is due to over-bearing. I have top grafted some on stock known to be adapted to my soil, which is sandy, to see if I could get better results, but they have not yet borne. The trees hang full this year but I doubt their success on sandy soil."

J. S. Harris, of La Crescent, Minn., writes: (June 22, 1896) "So far, the Rockford plum has not fulfilled my expectations; is not so well adapted as De Soto or Cheney."

Dewain Cook of Windom, Minn., writes in substance: (July 6, 1896) "Two trees of Rockford plum set spring of 1890

have grown thriftily, but have thus far perfected no fruit. The fruit is very much injured by curculio, but the trees have been free from the disease known as 'plum pockets.' The soil is level black prairie, heavily manured and cultivated. I know nothing of the quality of the fruit, but think the tree too unproductive, and the plums too susceptible to injury from curculio and plum gouger to be profitable for market."

Clarence Wedge of Albert Lea, Minn., writes: (July 5, 1896) "The Rockford has proved with me a very prolific bearer of firm, meaty fruit, rather under the usual size of De Soto; very free from 'pockets;' not inclined to rot, but during each of the three years I have fruited it has been very much injured and disfigured by something like the scab, so much so that I have thought it less valuable than some other kinds. In quality it is very free from the usual defects of the *Americana*, but to my taste lacks sprightliness and character. Its remarkable bearing, firmness, and freedom from astringency of skin are its strong points."

Prof. J. L. Budd, of the Iowa Agricultural College, writes: (June 24, 1896) "The Rockford plum was picked up on the Cedar River by C. G. Patten of Charles City, Iowa. It is supposed to be a native variety but gives some evidence of accidental crossing with the European species. During the two past years it has borne no perfect fruit at Ames. It does not stand drouth well."

Prof. S. B. Green, of the Minnesota Experiment Station, writes: (July 14, 1896) "We have fruited the Rockford plum in a small way and think it a very good variety for table use though small in size. We had it on our open clay soil underlaid with gravel. I have seen it fruiting at several places in this state. It is hardy, a good bearer and a good grower."

R. J. Coe of Ft. Atkinson, Wis., writes: (July 4, 1896) "The Rockford plum with us promises to be very valuable. It is a little earlier than any other variety we have yet fruited, and while it is not very large it is wonderfully productive, so much so, that I have had to stake and tie up the trees this season to prevent breaking. It is of extra quality. Has never shown any sign of disease of any kind."

It would appear from the above testimony that the Rockford plum is less successful in Iowa and Minnesota than in southern Wisconsin, hence we cannot feel safe in recommending it for general planting. Its rather small size will doubtless injure it for market, but those of our members who desire a native plum of superior quality for desert use will do well to try this variety. At our experiment station it has not proved more subject to curculio than other varieties, and I have heard no complaint that it is injured anywhere by "plum pockets."

E. S. Goff.

NOTES FROM A. L. HATCH.

The following items and inquiries will be appreciated by our members as they come from our old time member and co-worker, A. L. Hatch, of Richland county, whose health we are glad to report is better. We hope these inquiries will draw out responses to be published in our August number:

First, Fire Blight.—Worst on Yellow Transparent, Alexander, Titonka, Enormous, Tallman Sweet, McMahan's Bloom, Switzer, Tetofski, and crab apple trees. Least on Duchess, Fameuse, Haas, Utter and McMahan.

Second. It is contagious, blowing from tree to tree by winds.

Third. Trees weakened in any way by lack of culture root pruning or plowing are more subject to it than others.

Fourth. Animal manure seems to induce it.

COMMENTS BY SECRETARY.

First. My orchard same as his, adding Hiberna, Swaree, Avista, Moscow and Bret No. 2 for blighters. For least blight same as his, adding Wolf River, N. W. Greening, Patten's Greening, Peerless, Wealthy, Mary, Gilbert, Malinda apples, and No. Twenty Martha, Minnesota Sweet Russet and Sylvan Sweet crabs.

Second. Yes, it is contagious, and on that account I have discarded entirely eight of the worst blighters above mentioned.