

FRUIT PROSPECTS AND THE STORAGE OF APPLES.—With me Pear and Plum trees are making a grand show for flower. Some of them are rather dangerously forward, but this spell of cold weather, by keeping the fruit lads back, may possibly be the means of saving them. In this country our prospects of either fruit or no fruit entirely depends on the severity and frequency of frosts during the flowering season. My Apples, which were stored in a cool, dry cellar, have kept splendidly, and I believe a cellar is the very best place for storing them. I know Apples are often placed upon the wooden floors of a garret, especially by farmers who have no proper fruit-room, and where they soon get withered; but many fruit-rooms that I have seen filled belonging to even good gardens were little better calculated to keep fruit in good condition than is the farmer's garret. *W. M., Berkswell, February 27.*

"THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY."—The remarks of "A Fellow" upon the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, in your issue of March 4, move me to leave for once the ranks of the "quiescent" Fellows, for whom he claims to speak. Very probably many Fellows, especially those able to frequently attend the shows of the Society, find themselves amply repaid for the value of their subscriptions by other privileges, and leave their *Journals* unread. If so, they lose much, and the depth of their horticultural interest stands condemned by their neglect. Fellows with a genuine vital interest in horticulture and all that concerns plants are the most worthy of consideration, and they will not be amongst those whose numbers of the "Journal are put on one side and never looked into." Even those whose interest is not sufficiently great to lead them to study the more scientific papers can read the table of contents and select what is to their taste. The various articles are naturally of unequal value, but they are all worth careful reading, and they are not long. Much of the "Extracts from the Proceedings of the Society," &c., are not of a kind to be read through, but are valuable for reference. With regard to the question of cut or uncut edges, uncut seem to me more in keeping with the character of the publication. "Busy people" will "manage to read" about any subject in which they are really in earnest, and if that subject be plants they will find a mine of delight in the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*. *M. I. W.*

— "A Fellow," see p. 138, is well within his rights in criticising the *Journal*. His first complaint is as to the issue of the parts in an uncut state, because "a few are permitted to dominate the Council," and suggests "that the labour in cutting the leaves is too great for busy people to undertake." One can scarcely believe there are such lazy people in existence. It must be too much trouble for them to cut a Rose-bud, or pour water into a flower-pot. I had an uncut copy before me when I read the Fellow's remarks; I sent for a bread-knife and deliberately cut all the leaves in seventeen minutes. I hope more than "one in a thousand" of the Fellows think it a pleasure to cut the leaves of their copies. If the copies were sent out "guillotined," to use "A Fellow's" elegant expression, the Council would be designated barbarians by hundreds of Fellows, and our worthy Editor would have a bad half-hour at the annual meeting. If some of the Fellows know nothing about books, they need not let everybody know it. The December issue of the *Journal* is full of varied and useful information. Goodness only knows what "A Fellow" would like to cut out! Perhaps he would begin with Dr. Cooke's excellent papers on "Pests of the Shrubbery;" but even Fellows who do not grow shrubs must be grateful to the veteran who is giving us the result of sixty years' labour. Again, who can write so well upon Himalayan Rhododendrons as Sir John Llewelyn, who grows them so well in his own garden? A new writer comes next, Mr. W. T. Hindmarsh, and his paper is so interesting that, like little Oliver Twist, we "want some more." Are there any of us who are not grateful to M. Viviani-Morel for his careful paper on the genus *Rosa*? Mr. Leake's papers on the Indigo-

plant must be of immense value to those interested in the valuable dye obtained from it; and it all adds to our universal stock of knowledge. In fact I have looked through the papers, and have no complaint to make of any of them. Reviews of books and short notes are useful and interesting. I have all the Society's publications, from the first volume of the *Transactions*, published in 1812, until the present time, and do not hesitate to assert that none of the publications in the past is equal to the *Journal* now being sent out. There is no need to go into the matter of cost; the Council can be entrusted with that. There are three parts in the present issue, and only one part more will be required for the supply of one year. One editor is enough, and I for one sincerely trust that the Rev. William Wilks may long be spared to continue the work in the future he has done so well in the past. I fear if such editors as "A Fellow" were to have any share in the work of cutting down the papers and "guillotining" the leaves of the parts before they were sent out, stormy scenes would follow, and one might safely predict that the present gratifying access of Fellows would not continue; but there will always be a few who cannot talk well alone, and must needs find something to talk about, or to ventilate their supposed grievances in the horticultural Press. *Jas. Douglas.*

MANURE FOR PEACH-TREES.—On p. 139 "A Reader" stated that when the fruits have been gathered no more manure should be given to Peach-trees. There is no doubt that trees are greatly benefited by watering with diluted manure-water after the fruit has been gathered, also in the winter months should they require watering. I think the practice of watering with manure-water and washing-in with clear water, or *vice versa*, is not a good one, it being then most difficult to estimate the amount and strength of the manure-water each tree receives. The most satisfactory way is to dilute, say, 6 gallons of manure-water with 30 gallons clear water, using it stronger or weaker at discretion. *J. S. Higgins, Rug Gardens, Corwen, Wales.*

— Replying to a note by "Reader" on p. 139 of the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, I may say that I afford Peach and Nectarine trees, whether growing under glass or out-of-doors, root waterings with farmyard manure-water at intervals during the resting period. This practice is followed with the best possible results, and there is not the least injury done to root fibres, although it is only when the manure-water is above its usual strength that we dilute it. I advised that the trees should be examined because of the dryness of the season, which rendered it imperative that the borders should be examined before the trees came into flower. Manure-water at this time would add much strength to the flowers and vigour to the young fruits. A practical man would not give strong stimulants to an actively growing tree which has become dry at the roots, but at this season of the year there is no risk by doing so. At the same time no one would apply stimulants to a vigorous tree which had not a prospective crop. Manure-water is rich in nitrogen, and that from the stable contains almost double as much as does liquid-manure from the farm-yard. Nitrogen in some form or other is essential to Peach and Nectarine trees, and I have not yet found it to excite the trees to make growth too early. On chalky soils and soils containing sufficient lime, if a dressing of freshly-made wood ashes be applied in the autumn to provide potash, no more suitable manure than liquid from the farm-yard or stable can be found. "A Reader" states that no manure should be given the trees after the crop has been gathered, but I say, on the contrary, that a tree whose vigour has been reduced by perfecting a crop of fruit needs manure to help it to build up and perfect the buds, and render it in a condition for yielding a good crop in the following season. Trees so treated, I believe, yield superior results, but varieties which ripen their fruits late in September should not be treated so liberally afterwards. Apart from the many commercial fertilisers which I use, the following combinations of my own compounding have proved very beneficial. They

are applied to the trees four times at least during the season. A mixture of nitrate of soda and superphosphate was followed by a crop similar in all respects to that obtained after using superphosphate and muriate of potash. Nitrate of soda should be used on light sandy loams, and sulphate of ammonia on heavy or retentive soils. The above manures containing potash encourage the formation of fruit-buds, but a certain amount of nitrogenous manure must be added to promote growth, without which bud-formation could not take place. The best all-round fertiliser for Peaches and Nectarines I have yet mixed is one of muriate of potash, superphosphate, and sulphate of ammonia. If "A Reader" will call here he will see that the strength and quantity of flowers the trees now carry, and the size and quality of the fruit that will ripen later, perfectly justify my practice. *W. H. Clarke, Aston Rowant Gardens, Oxon.*

CONTINENTAL LABELS.—In answer to the enquiry on p. 144, I may say that in five nurseries in Germany, Holland, and Belgium where I was employed some years ago, yellow ochre mixed with linseed-oil into a thin paint was used for colouring wooden labels. *Walter Inguersen.*

CUCUMBERS.—It would be interesting to know the importance Mr. Owen Thomas attributes to the fertilisation of the Cucumber in the production of saleable fruit; compared with that of using sulphur as a prevention for "spot," considering the sulphur proved effective? *G. H. H. W.*

AGAVE AMERICANA CAUSING SKIN IRRITATION [see also p. 158 for note on Daffodils causing similar irritation—in both cases from raphides. Ed.].—In the *Gardeners' Chronicle* for January 20, p. 14, there was an article on "Skin Irritation," caused by the incautions handling of certain plants such as *Rhus Toxicodendron*, *Primula obconica*, and others. I did not see *Agave americana* mentioned, and it may not be generally known that the sap or juice of this plant causes intense irritation. On January 20 I had to take down two large *Agaves* that had recently flowered on St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall, and as they were too large to be brought through a doorway we had to cut them up, for which purpose a small axe was used, and the sap or juice getting on our hands caused intense irritation. One of my assistants who incautiously rubbed his face and neck with his hand suffered severely for a short time. I may mention the height of one of the flower stems was 2½ feet. The other plant had evidently received an injury in the centre at some time, for instead of throwing up a single flower-stem, it threw up several small flower-stems from the axils of the leaves, and on cutting up this plant I found the centre of be rotting. *W. J. P.*

SPICE APPLE.—I herewith send specimens of an Apple, known locally as Spice Apple, which I presume comes from D'Arcy Spice. It is of good flavour, and has been fit for use since Christmas, but is just now going past its best. The variety appears to be little known, but in good seasons bears heavy crops on a standard tree in the orchard here. Wellington, or Dumelow's Seedling, has been good this year from standard trees in the same orchard, and the fruits are in good condition at the present time; I enclose specimens. The highly-coloured Apple sent herewith sells well in the market early in the season; the flavour is poor, but the fruits certainly keep well. It is known locally and in Devon as the Bloody Butcher. Norfolk Beefing is in good condition still, and is also of splendid colour. *Geo. A. Head, Kingsdon Manor Gardens, Taunton.* [The fruits first mentioned by our correspondent are of the true Spice Apple described in Hogg's *Fruit Manual*, not D'Arcy Spice, the fruits of which will keep good much longer. The Dumelow's Seedling fruits are as fresh in appearance as when gathered, whilst those of Bloody Butcher are as useless, owing to their wretched flavour, as they are handsome. Ed.]

EARLY PEACHES.—As I wrote to the *Gardeners' Chronicle* some two or three years since giving my experience of the earliness of the Alexander Peach, I should like to say a few more words in its favour. I have grown this variety for many years past,