

Northern Chinese, and extends considerably southward of it. Its introduction into Texas was the practical beginning of Texas peach-culture. The South Chinese race extends a little below the region of the Spanish, being most valuable below the line of greatest success of the latter. This race comprises numerous choice varieties, and it is believed that it is the material from

which to expect extra-early varieties for the south. The Peen To race occupies the extreme southern portion of the Southern Chinese range, and extends still below it, where no other peaches are known to exist. It is not to be seriously doubted that it will thrive in a tropical climate side by side with the banana, orange, etc.—G. ONDERDONK.

## COMMENTS BY READERS.

[One idea often suggests another. Here is a page in which all readers are invited to express themselves regarding any matter that has recently appeared in these columns. If you think you know better regarding some point than the writer of some recent article, or if you think you can forcibly confirm or add to some present or late statement in these columns, the Editor would be glad to hear from you. Many such contributions would be welcome each month.]

**The Rascally Seedsmen Again.**—Be merciful, "Mary Gaines"! (Page 681). You don't tell us what the seeds were or the treatment they received. Few men in America have raised as many different kinds of plants from seeds as I have done; and these seeds were obtained by purchase or exchange, or were the donations of friends, and a large number of them were of my own saving. And I long ago learned enough about raising plants from seed to know that in many cases the seedsmen's seeds were as good as my own saved, and that often to myself alone were to be attributed the causes of failure in the seeds to grow.—W. F.

**Helenium Autumnale.**—True, as your correspondent (page 683) says, this plant is an autumn glory. In September, in good moist garden land, you can look for clumps of it six to eight feet high, a golden-capped pillar of bloom. But it needs a stout stake, and it needs it in time. Fine for certain effects and uses as a garden plant, but rejected for cut-flowers. The dwarf form of it is somewhat earlier-blooming than the other, and is more fitted for garden borders.

**Growing the Prizetaker Onion.**—(Page 700). The seed, though obtained from headquarters, was quite badly mixed, perhaps one-fifth of the onions being either red or white, and often quite flat. I sowed an ounce of seed early, in hotbed, and three ounces in the center of a bed of three-fourths of an acre of rich black land. Those transplanted grew large and generally ripened, though there was some tendency to thick-necks or scallions. The seed sown in drills gave a good stand of onions, that were, when pulled in October, three-fourths thick-necked, not exactly scallions, but with bulbs only partly formed, and of no value for market. My one trial would seem to indicate: first, that the Prizetaker requires a long season and favorable circumstances for its perfection; second, that when so situated it yields two or three times as much as standard varieties; third, that it is of fine quality, mild and tender, and will sell for perhaps 50 per cent. more than ordinary onions.—S. W. GIBSON, *Mich.*

**Girdling for Fruit.**—Those girdled trees in the November number (page 705) reminded me of our seedling crab-apple. This was girdled intentionally. Last spring I noticed it was not dead, and so I had it chopped around

again. To my surprise it soon put out leaves, and was covered with beautiful blossoms. I watched in vain to see it wither and drop its leaves. The last of August my brother came here, and said, "That tree that I killed two years ago is full of apples."—ADELE.

**"My Cellar Work-Table,"** in November number, inspires me to tell of my own, which I think without a rival. It is simply the cellar story of a bay-window, with a brick wall across, of convenient height for potting plants, filled in at bottom with charcoal, and then with potting-soil to a level. It is finished in front with a heavy slab on which to work, and which serves to keep the brick in place. It is furnished with a drain, and also receives the water from the cemented basin of the window above. We designed it as a winter garden for oleander, orange, roses, ivies, etc., which are either planted directly into it or stood on top of the earth, as preferred. There are three windows, and the place is conveniently supplied with fresh earth from outside. I find it desirable for potting plants, as well as a lovely winter garden for anything needing light and rest. The walls are cemented, and make a pretty background for ivies and taller roses, which hold their buds and bloom all winter. It also affords a suitable place for hanging-baskets, and can be made a thing of beauty as well as use.—S. A. PLEAS.

**Improved Vegetable Varieties.**—(Page 681). Of new and meritorious vegetables we may mention Livingston's Favorite, Beauty and Perfection, and Atlantic Prize tomatoes. Among winter squashes, Pike's Peak is very good, but the dull slate color is against it. Early Puritan, Empire State and Everett are good potatoes. All-Head cabbage is considered an acquisition. As a rule, market-gardeners find it safe to plant mostly of old well-tried varieties of vegetables, which need not be named here.—E. MORDEN, *Ontario, Canada.*

**Natural Devices for Cross-Fertilization.**—\*In the December number (page 772) you quote an article from *Popular Science News*, under the above heading. Text and illustrations refer to the stamens, the withered stigmas, etc., etc., explaining the devices to secure a cross. The best point escapes notice. At the annual

\**Am. Jour. Science*, p. 308, 1876, "Sensitive Stigmas as an aid to cross-fertilization of flowers," by Prof. W. J. BEAL.



meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Detroit in 1876, I showed that the two broad, flat stigmas of trumpet creeper, martynia, bladderwort, and several species of mimulus, were curved apart in fresh flowers. On a warm day, as an insect crowds into the flower the stigmas are touched before the anthers are reached. After a few seconds, while the insects "sips the water" below, the two stigmas approach each other, and mutually and completely cover the portion which is sensitive to pollen. As the insect backs out of the flower, no pollen can be left on the stigma of the same flower. I then anticipated, and have since seen, that the same state of things exist, in pinquicula, and in species of catalpa or bignonia. —W. J. BEAL.

**"An Improved Dibber."**—(Page 682.) I don't like the word "improved." You can pad the handle of any dibber. But, padded or not padded, give that tool to a market-gardener, and set him planting cabbages by the thousand with it, and, if, at the end of the first day, he has one good word to say for it, please send him *American Gardening* for a year at my expense, and the dibber to me as a curiosity. —W. F.

**A hearty invitation** is extended (page 683) to the friends of *American Gardening* to visit Editor Long's home, at La Salle-on-the-Niagara. Go, every one of you who can. I have already been there, and I not only got a hearty welcome, but fared well and was mightily interested in his plantations and experiments. —W. F.

**Remarkable Tenacity of Life.**—(Page 758.) Prof. W. H. Ragan's article on the tenacity of life of the Scotch pine, mentions a case where the bark had been completely girdled, without seriously interfering with the aftergrowth and development of the tree above the space girdled. In Lincoln Park, Chicago, there is a Scotch pine that was accidentally girdled some years ago, which would answer in its description that described in Prof. Ragan's article. —W. C. EGAN.

**Improvement in Vegetable Varieties.**—(Page 681.) I have cultivated Henderson's Bush Lima ever since it was introduced, and have been trying my best to learn to like them, but find it impossible. I think they are no more to be compared to King of the Garden or Dreer's Improved, than an ear of field-corn is to an ear of Honey or Stowell's Evergreen. We have used Henderson's Lima, both in the green and dry state, and find them entirely lacking in the rich buttery flavor of the best pole Lima. The size also is against them; they are so small, both in pod and bean, that it is quite a task to gather them. I think the "coming bean" is Burpee's New Bush Lima. I purchased a packet last spring, but had the misfortune to have one plant destroyed by cut-worms in the early stage of its growth. The other three grew and bore an abundant crop of large, full-sized beans. I secured 436 perfect beans from my three plants, and all will be planted next year. They should be planted, one bean in a place, and at least two feet apart, three feet between

rows. I find it pays, in planting Limas, to stick them with the fingers eye down. Limas are very tender when coming up, and if the ground is baked or packed with heavy rains, it is almost impossible for them to push their way through the hard soil if they are planted on their sides.

The American Wonder Pea is the favorite here, being early, productive and of excellent quality. No other dwarf pea is grown in my garden.

The Japanese Wineberry fruited (or at least *tried* to) this season, and it is the most utterly worthless novelty I have ever had on my place.

If we would only look around us at home with eyes wide open, we might often find something of as much or more practical value than anything that can be purchased of the dealers. A few years ago some blackberry bushes sprang up by the fence, beside the cornfield. While walking near there, I found them loaded with such berries as I had never seen or tasted before. I now have two rows of these berries in my garden, and consider them far ahead of any berries I have ever before cultivated.

I do not think much of the Crandall Currant. My three-year-old bush has had good cultivation, but never bore half a dozen currants. —L. E. LIPPINCOTT, III.

**Laing's Begonias at the World's Fair.**—(Page 684.) Glad to know they are coming. Laing has got the stuff—there is no better. But he will have to exert himself most vigorously if he expects to have a walk-over. We are not now dependent on Europe for Air tuberous-rooted begonias, and Mr. Laing knows it. His son opened his eyes in amazement on a Long Island farm this autumn, when he stood in the midst of a field of 20,000 begonias, of as good a strain as one might expect to find at Forest Hills. But send your best begonias, Mr. Laing, for, as yet, they lead the world. And more than all, come yourself, John Laing. Come—see this broad land of liberty, whence shackles freely flow to thee. Come where old friends shall meet thee, and thousands new shall greet thee. —W. F.

**Bedding-Plants in the Buffalo Parks.**—That's right. You do need them, and should have them. But the trouble all along has been, the city wouldn't pay for them. All cities that have a display of bedding-plants in their parks pay specially for the show. There is an impression abroad that Superintendent McMillan is opposed to the use of bedding-plants in public parks, but this is a mistake; he favors their legitimate use, but is opposed to their abuse. The whole show, in the way of hardy or tender plants, depends on the liberality of the city, and not on the superintendent. Give to Mr. McMillan the means, and I am satisfied no man in the country can put them to better use. But where it is needful to depend for the requisite funds on city officials, it is not surprising that there should be difficulty in obtaining money for artistic floral or foliage displays. —WM. FALCONER.