THE CULTURE OF THE PRUNE.

Considered From a Commercial Standpoint.

An Interesting Paper on the Subject by a Man of Practical Experience.

One of the best papers read at the recent State Convention of Fruit-Growers in this city was that of James E. Gordon of Santa Clara County, his subject being "Prune-Growing, From a Commercial Standpoint." Mr. Gordon said:

In responding to the kind request of your honorable body to furnish a second paper on the above subject, I do so with some reluctance, because, owing to the realization of some of my predictions I have of late been "a looker-on in Venice," and Micawber-like "waiting for something to turn up" that may restore to the business some of its pristine glory.

When I first addressed your body on this subject at your 1892 convention in San Jose I did not realize how widespread the effect of those views, backed by your indorsement, would be; but when I found the address copied "verbatim et literatum" by so many California and Eastern newspapers and magazines, kindly commented on by all, I felt as though my labor had not been in vain. And later on, when told by prominent nurserymen North and South that it was affecting their sales of prune trees to the extent of hundreds of thousands which might otherwise have been planted, it was gratifying to feel that I had been of service to my fellowman.

Four years have elapsed since that time, and a careful perusal of the address then delivered convinced me that the conclusions reached were correct, and are only intensified by the existing conditions of to-day. The advice then given for all to keep out of the business who did not possess all the necessay qualifications to insure success holds good to-day, and I am rejoiced at the assurance that many have taken and profited by the advice.

In spite of the adverse criticism of land-owners, the suggestion that $150 per acre was as high as the business would stand is emphasized by current prices of orchards selling to-day on a basis of $100 per acre, which cost their owners double. In other words, improved orchards nearly ready to bear are selling to-day for just what the bare land was held at five years ago. Land in Santa Clara County that was then selling at $200 per acre can now be had for $100 per acre, and the decline is still more marked in other parts of the State. There are no more $1,000 per acre orchards now; $500 per acre commands the cream of the valley, and while we all know that it is all Grover Cleveland's fault still the fact exists nevertheless. Prune trees were then worth in the nursery $20 per thousand; now $5 per thousand. The Tulare "Times" states that a fine prune orchard of forty acres near Visalia planted in 1892 cost at end of three years $1,868 84, less revenue from crops between trees $381 20, or $1,487 64 net cost, or about $35 per acre. This would make it cost two years hence when in bearing, including cost of land, $100 per acre. For these reasons the mad scramble ceased some years ago, and very few new orchards have been planted since 1892, with the result that there are 6,000,000 growing prune trees to-day as compared to 5,000,000 in 1892, or to make it clearer, while nearly 4,000,000 trees were planted during the four years ending 1892, less than 1,000,000 have been planted since that time, which would indicate that the danger line is passed and a steady conservative future assured. Another encouraging feature is the great falling off in importations of foreign prunes, which at that time were averaging 60,000,000 pounds per annum, having been 300,000,000 for the six years ending December 31, 1891, while since that date for five years ending December, 1896, the importaions have been about 62,000,000, or a little over 12,000,000 pounds per annum.

The prediction that "thousands of acres are being planted in unsuitable locations which in a few years will be producing millions of pounds of inferior fruit, which will bring down our good fruit to a price leaving but a very small margin of profit," has already been realized. In other words, the current price during 1892 was nine cents, while of late three cents has been a good average price. Santa Clara Valley is not responsible for these conditions, because her product unadulterated with those of less favored regions would still command good prices, but the large percentage of small prunes naturally resulting from allowing trees to overbear in a hot climate, and the careless shiftless cultivation incident thereo, has brought about the dreaded result and the word California in this connection now covers a multitude of sins. Already these inferior goods are being shipped to San Jose to be reshipped as Santa Clara products, and it is high time that this traffic be stopped.

Some years ago the writer, while acting as a World's Fair Commissioner for Santa Clara County, originated a design to advertise her leading industry, known as the famous prune horse, it having been one of the features of the World's Fair. The Board of Trade of Santa Clara County has adopted the prune horse as their trademarke, to be placed on all shipments as a guaranty that they are as represented, products of the county, and will be the means of compelling other sections to sail under their own colors. The advice not to dry but to sell green to the nearest dryer has not been followed to any extent for two reasons: First, the natural disposition on the part of the average grower to follow the example of the Southern Pacific Company and get out of the business "all the traffic will bear"; and, second, because the dryers, owing to reverse low prices and other causes, are fast becoming only a memory of better times. These conditions are unfortunate for the reason formerly given, that concentration of the product in as few hands as possible tends to steady and strengthen the market to the advantage of all concerned.

If we had strong firms at the various prune centers able to handle and pay for the crop as soon as it was ready to pick the grower would get a better price and be saved the time, risk and expense of doing his own curing and marketing, and if it were known that certain firms held a hundred or more carloads each the occupation of the oily-tongued solicitor of consignments would be gone, and the business put on a paying basis. Foreseeing the condition that the business was drifting into, the writer in connection with a few other public-spirited growers met in San Jose in 1892 and organized what is known as the "Santa Clara Fruit Exchange."

So long as each individual grower thinks he must do his own drying, the wisest course he can pursue is to bring his product to this or similar exchanges which have since been organized in other sections, get such cash advances as he may need and await his account sales. Some years they may be prompt, others slow, but always sure, and in the long run will average as well or better than individual effort. There are some things nearly every grower has to learn for himself, and one of them is the fallacy of consignments. They are so universally disastrous in their results that no better application could be found of the adage that "a fool and his money are soon parted." If you will be your own salesman at least insist on making your sales for cash f. o. b. You expect cash in dealing with your neighbors; then why not with strangers? And why not f. o. b., so as to avoid future controversy and the inevitable rebates that ensue when the goods get out of your control on any other terms? The time has now come when it is a "survival of the fittest," and not only the curing and marketing, but proper cultivation demands our best efforts. With prunes at 3 cents per pound, only the grower of large ones can survive; the grower of small ones must certainly fail. Formerly the same price was paid for green prunes to all alike, a manifest injustice to careful growers, which the writer tried to overcome by buying according to grades at corresponding prices, but he was ahead of the times. It is now being done to some extent, and must soon be the universal rule—the sooner the better, as it will drive the grower of small prunes out of the business. In order to grow large prunes continuously two things are particularly necessary—pruning and fertilizing.

The writer's advice to continue pruning after the trees began to bear caused considerable adverse criticism, which was to be expected. The words used were as follows: "Don't get rattled on the subject of pruning, which has proven a most prolific breeder of crank — no two alike." Prune, prune when the trees are young, prune when they are old; never, of course, to excess, but until you have a stout, stocky trunk, capable of sustaining large crops without bending or splitting. Then keep on pruning and you will never regret it. A magnificent tree with its branches sprawling all over the ground, splitting and cracking under its load, is a scene too shiftless and degrading to dwell on. The experience of later years has but served to intensify that feeling. No grower disputes the necessity of severely thinning peaches and apricots by hand, but it is generally conceded that it is not practicable to thin prunes in the same way. I am not so sure of that, because, even if it cost 1 cent per pound to thin, it would pay on account of the enhanced price of the product. The same result is obtained by constant and judicious pruning, and trees must be pruned every year to continue bearing good fruit. The shiftless growers who are so lazy as to allow their trees to go unpruned, with their limbs sprawling all over the ground, and consequent splitting of trunks, must expect to have their future crops ruined, the fertility of the soil exhausted, and a depreciated and unsalable orchard on their hands.

It is almost as important to fertilize thoroughly after the crops begin to bear, as an average crop of prunes takes out of the soil about six pounds of potash, nearly four pounds of phosphoric acid and about one-half pound of nitrogen, or nearly 4 per cent. of the entire crop. One-half of this is potash, which must be returned through the medium of commercial fertilizers rather than by manure, or you cannot raise big prunes. Unpruned and unfertilized orchards do sometimes bear heavy crops, but it is their dying effort; like a chicken with its head cut off, it does not last long. Small prunes are no credit to the grower and no use to the consumer, and should either be sold to the distillery to make brandy, which is the very worst possible use they could be put to, or used to fatten hogs, for which purpose they are worth more than the current price of 1 to 1½ cents.

The suggestion in my former address of the possibility of prunes ever being used for hog feed was considered novel and amusing, but it has been tried since then in various parts of the State with gratifying results. As hog feed they were found to be equal to barley, ton for ton, and an acre of barley will average 2,500 pounds, while an acre of prunes will average 10,000 to 12,000 pounds. Hogs fed on clover and prunes will produce hams the rival of Westphalia or any in the world, and will sell for double the price of ordinary.

Quite a controversy has arisen during the last two years as to the best method of curing prunes, and advocates of lye dipping and of the patent pricking machines have each made good use of the press in maintaining their position. The writer expressed his views quite forcibly in favor of the lye-dipping process in a brief paper read before your 1894 convention, and after a careful perusal of all the articles published in defense of the patent prickers he sees no reason to change his views expressed at the time they were introduced. The statement that shipping in sacks was a "device of the devil, concocted in Chicago," coupled with an earnest plea to ship only in boxes under the grower's brand, was treated at the time as an eccentricity. Everybody was shipping in sacks, which became filthy almost before delivery at the railroad depot, owing to the juice exuding and gathering the dust. Many of them rotted and tore, caused no end of reclamations, while the absence of brands enabled unscrupulous dealers to mix the poorest with the best.

The dissatisfaction was so great that a radical change had to be made. Last year a large proportion of the crop was boxed, and this year a larger proportion than ever. Every wholesale shipper and every exchange should have a trade mark with which to brand all their boxes, after seeing them carefully and honestly packed, and when this becomes the rule we may expect a very decided improvement in the present condition of the business. The writer has always considered this a matter of such vital importance that his temporary withdrawal from active participation in the business is largely due to this cause.

Every food product of any real merit produced in the East or Europe is packed in attractive boxes with labels and wrappers that are veritable works of art. Then why should such luscious fruit as a well-cured prune be shoveled into sacks like potatoes? The prune business has so far been an absolute gamble, one year's experience being no guide to the next. Our careless methods of shipping have been largely responsible for this, as buyers could not be induced to buy a "pig in the poke," but a uniform system of shipping in boxes under guaranteed trade marks will do more to solve the problem of overproduction and proper distribution than any other one factor in the business.

"BRYAN'S GREAT VICTORY."

How Can He be Convinced of His Defeat?

The following from the Marysville "Appeal" contains a great deal of valuable information:

In his speeches since election day Mr. Bryan has frequently claimed that though not elected, he won a substantial victory in the late contest. An exchange has been examining into this matter and submits the following figures:

Population—States carried by McKinley 43,650,260. States carried by Bryan 18,971,974.

Assessed Property Values—States carried by McKinley $20,770,538,000. States carried by Bryan $4,500,000,000.

Workmen Employed—States carried by McKinley 4,069,413. States carried by Bryan 636,561.

Annual Wages Paid—States carried by McKinley $1,991,504,043. States carried by Bryan $273,890,544.

Percentage of Illiterates—States carried by McKinley 3.7. States carried by Bryan 14.8.

Summarizing the above figures it appears that States having nearly 75 per cent. of the population of the country, 80 per cent. of the property, 90 per cent of the wage earners, paying annually 60 per cent. of the wages voted for McKinley, while States containing less than 30 per cent. of the population and 13 per cent. of the wage earners voted for Bryan. The illiteracy is still more convincing and decisive of the right and wrong of this question. The percentage of illiteracy in the Bryan States is four times that in the McKinley States.

All the great manufacturing States were carried by the Republicans as well as all the great agricultural States, except Missouri and Kansas, together with the greatest mining commonwealth. Such is Mr. Bryan's victory. What treatment will be required to make him and his supporters feel that they have been defeated? They began a campaign of extravagant assertions and claims and ended it with the votes of a few States that not many people will claim should tontrol this country.

THE FINANCIAL STRINGENCY.

Comptroller Eckles Has Something to Say About It.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8.—Comptroller of the Currency Eckels has considerable to say in his annual report about financial stringency and congestion, and he makes remedial suggestions of interest. Various amendments to the National Bank Act looking to giving relief are proposed by the Comptroller, among them the following:

That in places having a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants national banks shall be permitted, under regulations to be made by the Comptroller of the Currency and approved by the Secretary of the Treasury, to be organized, with a capital stock of not less than $25,000, and with a corresponding reduction in the amount of bonds required to be deposited with the Treasurer of the United States. That national banks be permitted, under such regulations and restrictions as shall be made by the Comptroller of the Currency and approved by the Secretary of the Treasury, to establish branch banks in towns and villages where no national banks are established, and where the population does not exceed 1,000 inhabitants; such branch banks to have the right to receive deposits, make loans and discounts, and buy and sell exchange, but in no case to be permitted to issue circulating notes other than of the parent bank.

In support of his recommendation for the establishment of branch banks, the Comptroller says: "The construction placed upon the National Bank Act as now in force by the Supreme Court precludes the establishing and maintaining of branch banks under it, and he continues: "The permitting of branch banks would be the forming of agencies through which a better trade distribution of currency could and would be made." And further on in his report he remarks that "the time must come when the banks shall be such agencies of distribution of loanable capital as will make credit everywhere equally available to the extent to which those seeking it are justly entitled. So, too, must a point be finally reached when banks shall issue all the credit currency of the country, and stand wholly responsible, instead of the Government, for its redemption in gold coin whenever and in whatever quantities presented."

Further on in his report the Comptroller says: "A policy in finance wrong in principle never becomes right in practice. The truth of the statement is fully illustrated by the course of the legal tender treasury issues of the United States. They have been always a disturbing element in business, and their current redemption a continuing weakness and anxiety to the treasury."

He recommends 'that legislation by Congress, based upon safe and prudent lines, having in view the gradual payment and cancellation of the credit currency now maintained by the Government, and the issuance hereafter of all of such currency through the banks, with full responsibility therefor placed upon them, should be had at the very earliest practicable moment. The results which would follow such enactments would be beneficial, and neither would monopoly be created nor favor shown thereby."

REV. DeWITT TALMAGE.

His Engagement to a Sing Sing Lady Announced.

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—In Sing Sing to-day the engagement of Miss Susie Mangan, of that village, to the Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage of Washington, was announced. Miss Mangan is a daughter of Daniel D. Mangam, who is reputed to be a millionaire.

Daniel G. Mangam, Jr., brother of the future Mrs. Talmage, two years ago married Dr. Talmage's daughter. This will make Miss Mangam, after her marriage, the stepmother of her sister-in-law, and step-mother-in-law to her own brother. Dr. Talmage will be his own daughter's brother-in-law. The date of the wedding is not yet made known.

Real Estate Transfers.

The following transfers have been recorded since last report:

Estate Phoebe Brundage to distribution—South half of southeast quarter of section 29, north three-quarters of northeast quarter of section 32, township 6 north, range 5 east, 32 feet of east 64 feet of lot 3, M and N, Nineteenth and Twentieth streets.

Fannie K. Cross to John C. Scroggs—West half of lot 7, L and M, Eighteenth and Nineteenth streets.

Rebecca, William, L. B. and B. F. Cummings to Mary Keema—Piece of land in esection 7, township 5 north, range 5 east.

E. K. Alsip and R. T. Devlin to Mary R. McConnell—Lot 15, block 33, Oak Park.

Margaret, Thomas Michael and Margaret Cook to Adam Warner—59 acres in survey 784.

J. C. and Alexander Scroggs and wives to Margaret D. Merrill—East half of lot 3, L and M, Eighteenth and Nineteenth streets.

Mary T., John C. and Alexander Scroggs to Sarah Jane Scroggs—West half of lot 7, L and M, Eighteenth and Nineteenth streets.

Why Is It.

If catarrh is a blood disease, as some claim, that physicians frequently advise change of air and climate to those suffering? Catarrh is a climatic affection, and nothing but a local remedy or a change of climate will cure it. Ely's Cream Balm is so efficient as to do away with the necessity of leaving home and friends, causing instant relief and is a real cure of catarrh.

To Cure a Cold in One Day

Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure. 25c.

Finest ground concave and convex lenses, mounted in solid nickel frames, $2 50. Gold eye glass frames, $3. F. de Wolfe Hennah, Masonic Temple. *

A new laundry bag for handkerchiefs and small pieces is of blue linen with the top lined with white. On the right side of the bag is worked an empire torch, held at the base by a bow knot with floating ends. The design is worked with embroidery floss in chain stitch.

SEND THE WEEKLY UNION TO YOUR friends in the East.

FREE BUTTONS!

AN ELEGANT BUTTON FREE with each package of

SWEET CAPORAL CIGARETTES

AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A COLLECTION OF BUTTONS WITHOUT COST.

Sleep Sleep Sleep Sleep Sleep Sleep Sleep Sleep

Sleep nourishes the body. Sleeplessness robs the body. When the body begins to waste, when losses constantly occur—when this is followed by sleeplessness it is time for you to look to yourself. If you want to stop the drain and sleep like the just you must use the great remedio-treatment Hudyan. This wonderful remedio-treatment is the one grand, certain specific, and it will cure you.

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Cures Lost Manhood, Falling Sensations, Nervous Debility, Nervous Exhaustion, Lack of Capacity. Hudyan cures Inflammations, Sexual Neurasthenia, Losses, Failing Powers and Exhaustion of Nerve Force. Hudyan cures Varicocele, Hydrocele and disease brought about by abuses.

You should certainly use the great Hudyan and be vitalized. You can learn all about the great Hudyan—you can have certain proofs of the great Hudyan—by calling or writing for

HUDYAN PROOFS.

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Pimples. Copper-colored spots. Sore mouth. Sore throat. Falling hair. Enlarged lumps. Gladular lumps Skin eruptions. Partial loss of eyebrows. Sore eyes.

When in this condition don't go to hot springs—go to the old doctors of Hudson. You can sometimes arrest the poison in thirty days.

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3-DAY MALARIA CURE

The greatest discovery for malaria, chills and all fevers. The sale of this remedy is simply enormous; every bottle sold has been the means of selling three or four others; it never fails, and will cure the worst cases in three days. Two or three doses removes all symptoms of malaria, such as tired feeling all over, aching knees and elbows, pains in the back, hot and chilly sensations, loss of ambition and appetite, a desire to sleep at all times. Price, 75 cents per bottle.

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EXTRA BIG GIFTS=Free! Free!

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TEAS, COFFEES, SPICES

Extra Big Offer for Christmas.

YOUR CHOICE FREE.

2 Oyster bowls.	1 Honey dish.	2 Decorated tea cups and saucers.
1 Meat dish, 10 inch.	1 Sugar sifter.	1 Fancy bread and butter plate.
2 Egg cups.	1 Covered butter dish.	2 Baking dishes.
6 Fruit saucers.	4 Plain water goblets.	1 Majolica pitcher.
2 Vegetable dishes.	3 Water goblets, banded.	1 Sauce pan.
4 Breakfast plates.	1 Celery stand.	1 Dairy pan, 2 qt.
2 Dinner plates.	4 Dessert dishes.	2 Wash basins.
1 Cream pitcher.	1 Sugar bowl.	2 Japaned cuspidores.
2 Custards, handled.	1 Cake plate.	3 Decorated breakfast plates.
2 Mustard pots.	1 Cake stand.	2 Dish kettles.
2 Oat meal bowls.	2 Rose balls.	1 Coffee pot, 3 qt.
2 Dessert plates.	2 Olive dishes.	1 China sugar and cream set.
1 Decorated sauce boat.	2 China toothpicks.	2 dairy pans, 5 qt.
1 Rebecca tea pot.	1 Shaving mug.	2 Preserving kettles.
1 Cuspidore.	1 Fancy mustard pot.	2 Lip sauce pans.
3 Whisky tumblers.	1 Candlestick.	1 Decorated vegetable dish.
4 Table tumblers.	1 China tea pot stand.	6 Individual butter dishes.
3 Engraved Tumblers.	2 Chocolate cups.	1 Fancy cup and saucer.
4 Champagne tumblers.	1 Coffee cup and saucer.	1 Fancy china oatmeal bowl.
2 Lemonade glasses.	1 fancy vase.	4 Individual salt shakers.
1 Fancy vase.	2 China vases.	2 Covered sauce pans, 3 qt.
2 Bud vases.	1 Bisque vase.	2 Japaned candlesticks.
2 Cream pitchers.	3 Soup plates.	2 Coffee cups and saucers.
2 Spoon holders.	1 Round scallop dish.	2 Decorated fruit plates.
1 Comport, 8 inch.	1 Rinsing pan, 10 qt.	

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Tea, Chocolate and Coffee Cups, Fancy Plates, Berry Dishes 10, 12½, 15, 20, 25, 35, 50, 75c each.

Chocolate, Ice Cream, Berry, Lemonade and Water Sets 50, 65, 75, 85, 1 00, 1 25, 1 50, 1 85, 1 95, 2 25, 2 50 per Set.

China Bisque, Fancy Vases, Figures and Ornaments 10, 12½, 15, 20, 25, 35, 50, 60, 75, 1 00, 1 25 each.

CUSPIDORS.....20, 25, 35, 40, 50, 75c each.

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Trays, Olives, Butters, Plates, Cups, Cream Pitchers, Salads, Placques, 15, 20, 25, 35, 40, 50, 60, 75, 85, 1 00, 1 25, 1 50 each.

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