

OPEN LETTERS.

SMALL TREES vs. BIG TREES.

DEAR EDITOR,—I take pleasure in sending you the enclosed clipping written by Mr. T. C. Robinson, of Owen Sound. His true reasoning is in accordance with nature and botany, and also quite agrees with my little experience of the last four or five years planting of trees.

SMALL TREES BEST.

"When a man wants an apple tree, he wants a big one." I suppose this is true of every customer who orders, unless he has had considerable experience. We all like to realize on an investment as soon as possible; and the very look of a big tree makes a man think he is so much nearer the large luscious fruit than if he set out something about the size of a good raspberry bush. I wonder if it is any use trying to combat this intuitive idea. Let me try. My friend of the BIG TREE, you know, of course, that it is not mere *timber* that produces the fruit; but both *timber* and *fruit* depend on the *roots*. Now here is a little tree, with stem as thick as your finger and eighteen inches long, to examine beside your *favorite*. Now what difference do you see in the roots of the two? No nurseryman living can afford the time to dig up large stock so thoroughly as to save the full length of the roots, at ordinary prices. No, a man at each side quickly thrusts the spade down about a foot from the trunk, then *pry, twist, shake*, and there is your BIG TREE with a few prongy big roots, but the main mass of fine fibrous feeding roots left behind in the nursery! Now look up and down the fine showy trunk; notice what an expanse of *bark*, and consider that unless that bark is kept moist *all summer* by sap coming down from the leaves, it becomes *hid-bound*, and the tree is apt to die. Now see on your fine branches how many many buds there are. Recollect that each bud will try to make a new leaf-covered branch, and that each leaf will evaporate moisture and help to pump your tree dry, and then ask yourself how those few prongy roots are ever going to manage to send out enough small feeding roots to support the enormous demand for sap, by the time the hot dry weather rushes down upon us. Is it any wonder some trees die every year? Isn't it a great wonder so many live—though stunted and sickly?

"But now look at my modest *little tree* that was scorned before; see on the short stem, with so few buds and so small an expanse of bark, there is not one-tenth the *demand* for sap

that there is in your BIG TREE; while down below, the roots had not time to grow beyond the spade-stroke, and so the fine feeding-fibres are right here ready for business, so that there is capacity for furnishing immediately *ten times the supply* of sap that there is in your BIG TREE. As a consequence, of course, the *little tree is far more certain to live and will be very apt to outgrow the other, and come into bearing first*. Now add to all this the lower price of the small stock, and what is your conclusion?"

And I beg to add that small young trees have, specially to our very cold climate, the great advantage to be more easily winter protected; just before hard frost, bend them carefully, for fear of breaking, to the ground, putting a stone or a piece of wood on the head to keep it there; then throw over a few branches of evergreen or some such stuff to gather snow. Then in the spring they are all right and fresh, and get more easily used to our rough climate.—L. PASCHE. *Bryson, P. Q.*

CATALPA SPECIOSA.

Editor Canadian Horticulturist.

SIR,—In the issue of your valuable serial for November of the present year, L. H. Kirkly condemns the *Catalpa speciosa* as specially liable, on account of the large size of its foliage, to be broken down and ruined by the wind.

I have grown and observed this tree for many years, and have suffered more or less in the manner he describes. My trees are near the bluffs, on the east shore of Lake Michigan, and fully exposed to the strong winds from the lake, which occasionally nearly destroy the foliage, not of the *Catalpa* only, but even of the peach and of exposed forest trees, especially in early autumn.

I have several *Catalpas* in cultivated ground, which make strong annual growths and which have suffered more or less seriously in the manner described. I have also a much greater number standing in ground not under tillage, which have made moderate, healthy, annual growths, and not one of which has lost a branch from this cause. It seems a pity that so beautiful and vigorous a tree, for ornamental purposes, should be condemned and cast aside, if, indeed, so easy a remedy as mere neglect shall suffice to render it acceptable.—Very respectfully, T. T. LYON.