

Soils and Crops

Address communications to Agronomist, 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.

Buying Nursery Stock.

Because of the high cost of nursery stock it seems that plantings have been reduced during the past few years. Many small fruit gardens have not been started. Some orchards have not been filled in where trees have died. Commercial orchards have not expanded as might have been the case if nursery stock had been cheaper.

At least some of the nursery companies are quoting stock at reduced prices. It will now pay the farmer to obtain catalogs and recent price lists and make at least some plans for increased plantings of first-class fruit. It pays to deal with reliable nurserymen who advertise in good farm papers. This is safer than buying of brokers who do not raise their own stock.

Tree agents are often criticized because of the poor quality of their stock. But an agent for a firm of known reliability is worthy of patronage. We should not fail to remember that many beautiful shrubs, profitable berry patches and thrifty orchard trees are growing now on farms where they would never have been planted had it not been for the persistent efforts of some nursery stock agent. Some of the agents may have sold poor varieties. But let us give the good ones a little credit for their work.

Nurserymen as a whole are very honest men who are in the business because they love fruit and flowers and like to deal in such products. They like to give satisfaction and do so in a large majority of cases. They know that their beautiful and expensive catalogs will not bring orders and repeat orders if they have the name of sending out poor quality stock that is not true to name.

Many of the offenses charged against nurserymen are due to carelessness on the part of the buyer. Possibly they may cover and expose the roots of trees so they dry out. Then some of the trees die and it is blamed on the nurseryman. Sometimes the name tags are left on trees until the trees strangle. When live stock get in a young orchard and trim the leaves from young growing trees, it leaves a tax on the strength of those trees and many of them may die.

Trees that are carelessly planted may fall to thrive. Some seasons are more favorable to tree growth than others. The value of nursery stock cannot be determined at the time of sale and this makes the purchase uncertain and gives a chance for future misunderstandings. Several years after trees have been planted the fruit may prove untrue to name. Often this is due to mistakes in the nursery. Sometimes it is the buyer's fault. He may forget what he ordered or forget which trees he planted in a certain plot. He may send only a small order in co-operation with a neighbor. They may divide the trees hurriedly without carefully studying the tags and each grower may plant the wrong variety.

It is difficult to tell the variety of fruit a young tree will produce by the appearance of a young tree and

only experienced fruit growers and nurserymen are able to tell and they might occasionally be mistaken. The inexperienced buyer has to place all trust in the nurseryman at the time of sale and for several years afterward. It is not surprising that a few mistakes occur. It is a wonder that so many buyers of trees have such good luck as they do.

In buying nursery stock it pays to know the varieties of commercial importance which have succeeded in the neighborhood. Do not pick out your nursery stock entirely from the fine pictures that appear in the catalogs. The nurseryman and the experimental station can afford to make variety tests. The farmer can only do it on a very small scale. Even that does not pay unless there is time for experimenting and a deep interest in obtaining first-hand information.

Nursery companies are always presenting new varieties to the public and often wonderful claims are made. Sometimes the new varieties which were so loudly praised ten years ago will seldom be heard of now. It simply means that they didn't make good. But the old standard varieties are still for sale and proving fairly profitable whenever planted. Every once in a while a new fruit proves of unusual value and good enough to partially replace some older variety. Information about such fruits can usually be obtained from the experimental station. They have facilities for knowing how certain fruits are turning out and may be able to tell more about them than the nursery catalogs.

The farmer who expects to order nursery stock of certain new varieties should plan, if possible, to visit a practical grower who already has fruit of that variety in bearing. A very short visit will bring out points about growing, packing and marketing that variety of fruit which will prove useful information.

In the modern nursery every possible effort is made to keep the buds and scions carefully separated. The trees from which they come are carefully marked as to variety. It gives the buyer of nursery stock a large measure of safety. In the future growers may not be sorry if they make a few additional plantings of standard varieties during the coming spring.

Dwarf Apple Trees.

Dwarf apples are O.K. for the man who wants fruit in a hurry. But the trees are more expensive and more trees are needed to the acre. The yield per tree is less than for standard trees, but the acre yield is not so much reduced as you might expect. If dwarf trees are set too low, the scions will throw out roots, and the trees will no longer be dwarfs. You have to keep these roots cut off.

The best proposition is to use dwarf trees for fillers, to bear before the standard trees are old enough. The dwarfs have to be cut out when the other trees begin to crowd them.

The man with a small acreage can well afford to buy dwarfs. I have seen several good-paying orchards.

Convenient Sanding Block.

It is impossible to use a piece of sandpaper efficiently with the hand, or to use it in connection with a block and attempt to keep it in place by hand. Shop workers will therefore welcome the sanding block suggested.

A slot is simply chiseled out in an ordinary block of convenient size and a strip of lath or wood is fitted into it. Sandpaper is then wrapped about the block with the free ends extending into the slot and the strip is screwed in place in the slot. This will draw the paper taut and a perfect sanding block will be the result. The sandpaper can be changed when necessary. For sandpapering floors, a handle may be hinged to such a block.

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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

FERRURY 27TH

Rewards of Faithfulness, St. Matt. 25: 14-30. Golden Text—St. Matt. 25: 23.

Time and Place—Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 29; Mount of Olives.
Connecting Links—The Parable of the Talents is part of the same discourse as that of the Ten Virgins whose teaching it supplements. There is work to be done in the time of waiting for Christ's return, and even the least talented are responsible for the use of their powers and opportunities.

V. 14. Four; links the lesson with V. 13, which describes the suddenness and unexpectedness of Christ's coming. We are now to be told of something that will happen when He comes. The kingdom of heaven; literally, "it is." The parable pictures the way in which the Lord, when He comes again, will deal with his servants. Travelling into a far country; about to go abroad, perhaps on some trading enterprise. Travelling was difficult in those days; and it was necessary, therefore, to entrust someone with the management of his money. Called his own servants; slaves, personally his absolute property, so that whatever they made was necessarily his. So Jesus Himself would soon depart for heaven, leaving His disciples to spread the gospel for the saving of the world. Henceforth they would not see Him with the bodily eye, though He would still really be with them. Delivered; not as their property, but as trust to be used for their own advantage. His goods; his capital. He "gave his money" amongst carefully selected servants (that is, slaves); with the idea that they would do their best to increase it. This was not usual in the ancient East.

V. 15. Five talents . . . two . . . one. The talent was a weight, not a coin. A talent of silver was worth \$1,200. Several abilities. The master judged each slave's capacity, and entrusted him with means proportionately. All, however, were regarded as trustworthy, and more or less capable. Even one talent was a very considerable sum at a time when the average day's wage was about 17c. Took his journey. This ends the account of the owner's action.

II. Trading, 16-18.

Vs. 16-18. Straightway (Rev. Ver.) in the Authorized Version placed in v. 15. The word denotes the zeal of the trader. He lost no time in seeking opportunities to increase his master's money. One per cent. increase. The trading must have extended over a long time if this gain was legitimate. The man with two talents was equally industrious and equally successful. Dugged in the earth; a common way in ancient times of keeping money safely. Hid his lord's money. He was not dishonest, but indolent and timid. His action was safe, but not profitable. The owner could have hid the money for himself.

V. 18. The Reckoning, 19-30.
V. 19. A long time. Since the parable deals with the Lord's coming, the expression implies that it will be delayed for a long time. In the story of the parable a long delay was necessary to give time for the trading to accomplish its results. Reckoneth with them; has a reckoning or settlement with them, that master and servant may each receive the stipulated share of the profits.
Vs. 20, 21. Five talents . . . five more. "The first servant gives his report; bringing five and five, he presents them to the owner." Behold; as if inviting the owner to satisfy himself by counting. He does not praise himself but lets the facts speak for him. Well done. The master bestows the well merited praise. Good; highly efficient and morally deserving of praise. Faithful; loyal to his trust, to the interests of his master. Over a few things; few compared with what were about to be entrusted to him. Ruler over many things. Faithfulness in the use of our opportunities, whether large or small, results in more and larger opportunities. Enter . . . joy of thy lord. The joy which the lord possesses, the spiritual joy of the realized kingdom, the climax of blessedness.

V. 23. Well done. The second servant receives precisely the same praise and reward as the first. His abilities were not so great, but his goodness (devotion) and fidelity were equal to those of the first servant. He was not responsible to his master for his native endowments, or lack of endowments, but for a diligent and faithful use of his opportunities. He, too, receives promotion. Note, in the case of the two faithful servants, that the diligent use of natural abilities increases those abilities, and thus brings fitness for higher, nobler service.
Vs. 24, 25. Came and said. He anticipated his lord's condemnation. An hard man; an inhuman-tyrant, grasping, selfish, actuated wholly by self-interest and using his advantage to squeeze the utmost possible out of others. The falseness of this stands out after the words to the other two servants. Reaping where thou hast not sown; taking a selfish advantage of the toil of others. Gathering where thou hast not strawed; that is, scattered with the fan as on an Eastern threshing floor. The produce of his servant's labor he takes for himself. All work, no pay. The master is a robber, enriching himself at the expense of others. I was afraid. His fear was that he might lose the talent if he traded with it. Thou hast that is thine. He forgot that the earning power of the talent, as well as the talent, belonged to the master.

Vs. 27, 28. Wicked; inefficient, useless and also morally blameworthy. Slothful; the real explanation of his conduct; he was unwilling to exert himself. Thou oughtest . . . exchangers; bankers who not only exchanged money, but received it on deposit, paying interest and guaranteeing repayment of capital. The servant had not acted like one who really believed what he said about his master. With

literally, "with offspring." It is a figurative word for interest or multiplication. Banking was a very ancient occupation. The talent from him a gift which is not used passes from its possessor. This is true in the physical, commercial, intellectual and moral sphere. Unto him which hath ten. The energetic worker secures the chances that are lost by the idle.

Vs. 29, 30. Every one that hath . . . shall have abundance. This is the law of the "multiplying power of capital." It holds in religion as well as in business. Unprofitable servant; that is, useless. There is no place in this world, or in the kingdom, for the useless man; his place is in the outer darkness. And the man who neglects his opportunities in any realm—business, letters, religion—soon finds himself "out of it" in the outer darkness.

Application.

The parable of the talents was meant to encourage those who were slenderly endowed, not to lose heart because the kingdom was delayed. While this was its general purpose, a number of other suggestions lie on the surface.

1. There is inequality of endowment, or, what Paul calls "diversity of gifts." The danger of people who talk much about "democracy" is that they overlook this fact, and the necessity of specially qualified leadership. Even Gorky has turned against Lenin and Trotsky in Russia, because they have slaughtered so many of the intellectual leaders of the nation. They want to reduce all to a dead level. This is the fallacy of much present day agitation also. The facts are as indicated in the parable—a great variety of endowment. One has the gifts of Lloyd George, the other of Enoch, the other of the obscure, but worthy school teacher in a Ruthenian settlement in the West.

2. Although there is diversity of gifts there is the same reward for faithfulness. The condemnation of the "lord" was the same—further responsibility. This has been called by one writer, the "law of increasing returns." Just as we save money by thrift, and interest becomes compounded, so our knowledge and faith grow by being used.

3. We hold everything in trust. No man can say, "I can do as I like with my own wealth, my own voice, or strength." We owe all we have to the world, and God entrusts us with it; we are stewards in business, education, politics, as well as in religion.

4. The temptation of the poorly equipped man is to evade responsibility and do nothing on the plea that he is utterly insignificant. The eye is a small member of the body, but if it is blinded, what a difference is made to all of life! The folk who have only "one talent" and do not improve it, or regard it as a sacred trust, are like the drones among the bees. It is said that the working bees have to feed the drones, but when the summer season is closing they turn them out of the hive to die, or else imprison them or sting them to death. They are cast into the outer darkness. Because they would not work, they must perish.

5. The unused talent was taken from the faithless employee. In like manner, any gift which we refuse to exercise will droop and starve and finally die.

C Poultry

A cellar is usually considered the best location for an incubator. But any vacant room will be satisfactory if it has some ventilation and the family will co-operate by walking quietly about the house and not banging doors. Incubator thermometers often require so much observation that it takes many trips down the cellar stairs to keep the machine regulated. Many poultrymen and women have avoided that work and brought out good hatches by running the incubator in the kitchen.

Of course, an incubator cannot be located near a stove as the temperature of the outside air will have a direct influence on the air in the machine. In some homes when an incubator has been in the kitchen they have discontinued using the kitchen stove for three weeks and used an oil stove for cooking. Then the house is heated by a furnace or stoves in another room and it is possible to keep the kitchen heat uniform enough so that the incubator can be fairly well regulated.

Buyers of hatching egg boxes can save money by purchasing them in quantities and ordering early so shipment can be by freight. Nothing is gained trying to ship hatching eggs without proper packages. It takes too much time to make home-made packages and the breakage will be large if they are made wrong. One setting of eggs sells for enough to buy about a dozen or more packages and it takes only a few minutes to pack and address a commercial container.

Never try to hatch eggs that have been chilled. It is a waste of eggs and time. When saving eggs for hatching they must be gathered frequently and stored where they will not be too cold nor too hot. A temperature of about fifty degrees Fahrenheit seems the most satisfactory. Even then eggs for hatching should be stored no longer than necessary as the fresher the eggs the better they are apt to hatch.

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When your grocer sells you a package of Red Rose Tea (Crimson Label) at 30 cents he makes a little less profit than if he sold you a package of cheaper tea. The extra price is all in the quality.

JACK'S HEIFER

It surely was hard, writes a correspondent, that Jack's heifer should be killed, too, when the railway had paid us so small a part of the value of all the other stock that it had killed before. In the spring we had lost a handsome colt that had seemed certain to grow into a handsome horse. Forty dollars was all the railway gave us for the colt, and while our claim was pending it had killed a promising young cow. But all other losses were as nothing compared with the loss of Jack's heifer.

Poor little Jack, his grief was pitiful. I thought and thought about the matter. At last, more because I wanted to give the children something to do than because I expected any favorable result, I told them to go down to the hawthorn tree and write to the president of the railway; perhaps he would see that Jack got something like the value of the dead heifer. So off they went, Fannie taking the paper and the pencil, Helen silent and sorrowful, and little Bob, scarcely understanding what it all meant, walking beside Jack. That was election day in town, and we were all so busy that I forgot about the letter. I was startled, therefore, when the children said that they had written and mailed it. They showed me a copy of it. It read: "Dear Mr. President. Won't you please make the railway pay me for my cow that the train has just killed? Oh, but she was a beauty, and I wouldn't have taken a thousand dollars for her. This was how I got her. When I was a little boy I had \$2.50 that I had earned one way and another; so I bought a pig with it; she was a daisy, too. One would eat anything you'd give her, for we tried her on everything—even on burnt ginger cake. When she got to be well grown, what do you think she did? She went and ate up a whole flock of little turkeys and was about to begin on the old hen; but father caught her at it and said she must surely die. It was just about hog-killing time; so he gave me \$15.00. I forgave; to say she had some little pigs of her own. Anyway, they killed her. When I got my \$15.00—oh, but I forgot; I never got it in money, for father said I had better have some more stock. So he gave me the nicest heifer ever laid your eyes on. She was a real Jersey, and we called her Step-and-fetch-it, because she could step round so lively. We children fed her every day till she was as fat as butter. So after a while she got to be most a cow, and the railway ran over her. Now, Mr. President, please excuse this long letter. And, Mr. President, won't you make

your railway pay me for my cow? My father's name is John C. Case.

"Your affectionate friend, "Jack C. Case.
"P.S. We children all saw it. She jumped up in the air at least twenty feet, and when she came down she was dead. We saved her horns."
"What a letter to send to the president of a railway!" I thought with a gasp. I did not tell my husband. What was the use? We should probably never hear of it again.

But two weeks afterwards we stopped at the post office on the way to prayer meeting and got one letter that so aroused my husband's curiosity that he felt obliged to open it on the church steps.

"What does this mean?" he asked. I picked up from the steps a slip of paper that he had dropped, and my husband read part of the letter aloud: "Dear Mr. Case. In consequence of a very interesting letter received from your son and read at a meeting of the board, we have decided to pay you a larger sum than is customary for the loss of your Jersey heifer."
The slip of paper that I had picked up was a cheque for \$75.00 payable to our Jack!

Seven Tractor Reasons.

There are many advantages in the use of a farm tractor.

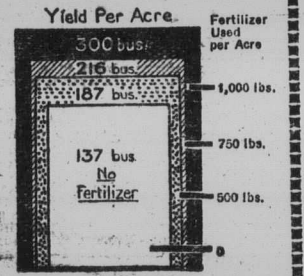
1. It does work when it should be done.
2. The tractor only consumes what it does work.
3. The number of teams may be reduced.
4. One man handles more horse-power.
5. It will do belt work; saves man labor.
6. It will work any length of time on the hottest day.
7. Tractors are adapted in size to any sized farm, etc.

The great disadvantage in the use of the tractor is the lack of competent operators.

How about the herd boy? Get him out in a good-sized yard, away from the rest of the herd. Remember he is half of the breeding-power of the herd, and that his influence on the profits for the year amounts to more than that of any one sow.

These are just the days when the government bulletins are interesting. A man I know who is around among other farmers a good deal says he seldom sees a government bulletin in one of these homes. And yet, there are many bulletins, all full of good suggestions, to be had simply by writing to the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. Write and ask for a list of government publications for farmers, and then make selections from the titles given.

Here is What Stanley Merrill, Lambeth, got from Fertilizing Potatoes



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