

* Open Letters. *

Plum Knot Insect.

SIR,—I have read Mr. Gibbs' contribution on the "Black Knot" in your April issue with much interest, and also the reply by Messrs. Craig and Fletcher; and it is much to be regretted there are such differences between practical fruit growers, for such lead to carelessness and indifference on the part of many, which is sure to defeat union of effort in stamping out fruit pests. No doubt Mr. Gibb has been led into an error, and there should be no doubt that his opponents are right.

Of course, we all know it is a subject of great importance to fruit growers in Ontario, causing an annual loss of tens of thousands of dollars; and we are all doing a little—some of us very little—to get rid of the evil.

I will be greatly obliged if Mr. Gibb will kindly send to me, or to you, Mr. Editor, or to any interested entomologist, a few specimens of grub-infested black knots, on which the bark is not ruptured. For myself, I may say that after about forty years' rather intimate acquaintance with this pest, I have failed to find larvae—grubs—in knots in which the bark was not ruptured; and I may also say that, on several occasions, I have kept the disease in check by cutting out the galls (knots) before the rupturing of the bark.

WM. BRODIE, *Toronto.*

SIR,—I see in the March No. a letter signed W. T. D., in which he gives an account of his success in fighting the black knot on his cherries, and was glad to see that it agreed with my own experience. I commenced about five years ago, as my trees were then young, and cut off the knot from the large branches and applied turpentine; the following year I started with the coal oil, which I have used ever since, and last year I applied the coal oil without cutting off, and it seems to kill them, the only difficulty is as the knot is not removed a fresh attack might be mistaken for the old ones, if not looked for carefully. Still, I believe that prevention is better than cure, and that can only be attained by the destruction of the diseased trees; but as the law now stands it is almost a dead letter, as a man does not like to inform against his neighbor and thus get his ill-will, so that the only way to carry out the law will be to appoint a stranger to look after it; say, let the district at first include two or three counties where these fruits are largely grown, and where their services would be appreciated, and gradually extend the area. The Bee-keepers Association succeeded in getting an inspector for foul brood, and it is pretty well stamped out of the Province. Could not the same man take both? This ought, I think, to engage the attention of the Fruit Growers' Association at their summer meeting, as it seems to me that is the only agency by which it can be accomplished, and I have written this to bring it to your notice.

A. J. COLLINS, *Listowel.*

SIR,—I have taken a great deal of interest in the *CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST*, and I find it a very useful publication indeed, and I have been pleased to sound its praises to all I meet who are engaged in fruit growing, believing they can all benefit very much by its perusal. But yet I think we must use caution and consideration in accepting all its contents as infallible. I have been greatly interested these past three years in that pleasant and ennobling branch of industry—fruit growing—and I like to do all I can to further the interests of fruit growers, and I find your journal of signal benefit to me; yet I cannot fully concur with all I read in it without somewhat modifying some of the passages.

I notice on page 81 of the March number, a paragraph headed, "Are Novelties worth their Cost?" Prof. Bailey thinks they are. My experience, gained from careful observation, is that they are worth testing, but I think farmers and those intending planting should either leave them alone or go into them very cautiously and sparingly till they have become older and their good name has become an established fact, when they will always be obtainable at a much reduced price. I have seen a great many cases where fruit tree agents go through the country recommending some new variety of fruit, and selling it largely for a high figure, and the result of such has generally been failure, and the nursery-men and their agents thus acquire a reputation unenviable.

Of course, I think it well for our experimental stations, and those engaged in testing new fruits, to give all such new fruits proper trial, and persons who are actively engaged in fruit growing, who have the time and money to spare, may test them sparingly in their own localities. But I think it a mistake to plant a lot of new varieties before their char-