March 8, 1903.

Prunes for the People

A Frenchman planted a prune tree out in California in 1870. It was the only prune tree in the state. All the prunes used in the United States at that time came from France. But now as a result of the prune tree that M. Pellar planted California every year ships enormous quantities of prunes not only to France, but to all European countries.

The growth of the prune industry in California all came from Pellar's single tree. It was found that the prune, which is a species of purple plum, throve on the Pacific coast, and that the hot, dry weather of the country brought out its full saccharine qualities. The first orchard was planted in the Santa Clara valley, just south of San Francisco, a region which is now the prune center of the state. It was only ten acres in extent, and began to yield in 1875. In four years the trees produced \$14,000 worth of fruit.

The size of the prune crop in California is so enormous that the most cynical boarder is any boarding house in Chicago would be surprised. In 1901 the state produced 150,000,000 pounds of prunes, and the total crop of the year just passed exceeded that of the preceding year by several thousand tons. If put into ten-ton freight cars the California prune crop of 1902 would fill a train reaching from Chicago to Buffalo.

The American prune has found its way into the European markets for the reason that it is sweeter and pleasanter to the taste than the fruit raised there. The California prune, for instance, is dried wholly out of doors, for the long period of absolutely .rainless weather which prevails in California from July 1 to October 1 permits the drying trays to remain out of doors day and night. The French and other kinds of European prunes are dried in kilns for fear of exposure to rains, and the artificial heat fails to bring out all the rich sugar products of the pulp.

San Jose, the county seat of Santa Clara county, la the chief prune center of Cal-Hornia, and in its mountain-encircled valley there are 3,567,140 hearing prune trees. There are, besides, great orchards of apricot, cherry, peach and clive trees, so that in this one county there are about 5,000,000 fruit trees. Fruit raising is carried on there on such a grand scale that for some orchards of prunes thirty acres are required in the busy season simply as a drying field for the fruit trays.

Train's Little Joke

George Francis Train was congratulated upon the hot-cake-like selling properties of his recently published autobiographical book.

"Yes," said he, "but lots of people want free copies." "Indeed ?"

"Yes; there must be an impression abroad that I am an accommodation Train." -New York Times.







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