

Early Peaches.

BY B. GOTT, ARKONA, ONT.

Perhaps it would be very difficult to instance any of our fine family fruits that have undergone such marked and astonishing improvements within the past quarter of a century as have our peaches. Within our personal memory, being only a few years ago, we were used to expect peaches fit for using only in the latter part of the month of September, or the fore part of October, and our greatest concern in those days, when peaches were mentioned, was to get them before the frosts of autumn came and destroyed them all before they could be gathered. This was the only and great bug-bear to all possibilities in peach culture in those "olden times." "The frost will come and destroy the fruit and we can never ripen them." So said the inhabitants, and so Canada was at once pronounced to be a region of frost and snow, and totally unsuitable for peach culture in any particular, excepting a small, sour, hard variety called frost-peach, that was actually benefited by the experiment. But these times have passed, and so have the frost and the snows (meaning, of course, of this season, as our autumns are now known to be much longer than formerly), and likewise, in many cases, our fathers and our mothers who have fought the battle of life through all obstacles. A better period has dawned upon us, their children. At the present moment peach growing in Ontario is not a doubtful adventure, but rather an established fact, and is abundantly realized by hundreds of our people in all parts of our fruitful and prosperous country. We are not, as our fathers were, content with the small, sour, thick-skinned, large-stoned and undesirable things they were accustomed to call peaches to be palmed on us for the beautiful, large, rich, luscious and desirable fruit we understand by that suggestive appellation, carrying with it, as it does to us, such a wealth of pure animal enjoyment.

THE RAGE

in peach production has been altogether in the direction of earliness; and if by any means this very desirable feature can be combined with otherwise tolerably good qualities, as size, good flavor, good color, &c., that fruit was immediately trumpeted over the country as the peach *par excellence*, and a ready distribution was hastily made. These extra early, superior peaches have so multiplied upon our attention of late that we now have them not by ones or twos, but by dozens, and I might say scores, every new addition to the list claiming to be a few days earlier than its predecessors. The strides made in this direction are simply astonishing to even the most sanguine cultivators of the peach in this country. Step by step we have encroached upon the season, until we are not now obliged to wait until the first of October or the first of September, or more surprising still, not even to the first of August for ripe and luscious peaches; but in the midst of our beautiful summer months, along with the strawberry and the delicate raspberry, we have those ruby treasures of Pomona ready for our crates and our palates. Thus the peach season, a season so full of happy and joyous remembrances, is extended and prolonged for several weeks longer than formerly.

Upon the advent of the variety called

HALE'S EARLY

some fifteen years ago, in one of the States of the American Union (Ohio), the greatest excitement prevailed, and a most decided step onward was taken in the history of American peach culture. Hale's Early was a good peach and a decided acquisition to the list, a mile-stone on the road to progress. Even yet, where it does well, it still holds its character for value and usefulness, but

(and to most serious questions there is a but) it was reported to be badly subject to rot, that fell destroyer of all fruit excellence. However, when Amsden's June (a variety originated in Carthage, Mo., U. S., in 1872), was announced to the peach-growing public, all others were actually surpassed for earliness, and for the present effectually left in the distance. This variety ripened its fine fruit this season on our own grounds here on the 23rd of July; only think of this for Canadian peach growing, and be astonished! Not long, however, was this variety to stand unchallenged. Early Alexander, originated at Mt. Pulaski, Ill., U. S., soon followed. This fine, very early peach, said by some to be identical with Amsden's, is, I think, somewhat earlier and somewhat larger, and ripened its fruit on our own grounds here on the 20th of July. This experience in early peach growing so totally upsets all our previous notions on the subject that we can scarcely realize the fact of its actual existence amongst us. Messrs. Ellwanger & Barry, of Rochester, N. Y., whose determined energy in this direction is so well and favorably known amongst the fruit growing public of this country and the United States, have now a peach that, upon their own testimony, has by far outstripped Amsden's, both in point of quality and time of ripening. In 1878 the first specimen ripened July 14th, or ten days before Amsden's this season, and measured ten inches in circumference. This very early and promising new variety they have chosen to call Waterloo, after the place of origination. It is said to be a seedling raised in Waterloo, N. Y., by a Mr. Henry Lisk, of that place. It is large in size, round and of a pale whitish green in the shade; the flesh is of a greenish white color, with an abundance of sweet vinous juice, and adheres considerably to the stone like Amsden's and Alexander. It is noticed that most of those very early peaches are Clings. H. M. Engle & Son, of Marietta, Pa., have originated several fine new early peaches, some of the best of which they have called Downing, Saunders, Wilder, &c., and are said to be much like Amsden's in size and quality, and are ripe at about the same season. Mr. Abraham High, a few years ago, originated

HIGH'S EARLY CANADA

at Jorden, Ont. This nice peach very much resembles Amsden's in every particular, and on our grounds this season we could scarcely tell any difference between them. Briggs' Red May is a seedling from Hale's Early, and was raised by J. W. Briggs, of California, in 1872. It is described as very large and beautiful and "one of the earliest of all peaches." Conkling, a variety of greatest promise, is a most beautiful yellow peach, but unfortunately it is not so early as its early competitors, whose season is not before Aug. 24th. It is a seedling, originated at the town of Parma, N. Y., in the garden of Rev. Mr. Sawyer, but was propagated by E. M. Conkling, of Parma, and it first fruited in the year 1873. It is said to be a large, round and beautiful golden yellow and red marbled peach of excellent quality. Gov. Garland is a new southern peach of great prominence, said to be three or six days earlier than Amsden's. It originated in Bentonville, Arkansas, in 1877, and is well described as excellent and of an exquisite flavor and fragrance. Honeywell is also another very early and excellent new peach. It was raised by John Honeywell, Randolph, Ohio, and is said to ripen its beautiful fruit two or three days before Alexander, but is otherwise very much like Alexander or Amsden's. Harper's Early originated in Kansas, U. S., on the grounds of Samuel Harper, of Guilford, Kansas, and very closely resembles the foregoing in every particular. These promising new varieties, with many others of less notoriety for earliness and profit, are all American and Canadian peaches that stand very high on the catalogues for desirableness. But some of the most astonishing results in this direction have been achieved on the other side of the broad Atlantic in the Old World. Not to mention French and German peaches, we are quite surprised at the peach production of an old English propagator, Mr. Rivers, of Sawbridgeworth, England. This gentleman's celebrated and valuable new peaches are being largely and successfully disseminated and propagated in the entire extent of this country. They are really excellent fruits, and in some prominent points

throw the American new peaches into the shade. We have fruited on our own grounds this season several of those new English peaches, and to our entire satisfaction. Of these the first to ripen fruit with us this season was Early Beatrice, a large sized and truly excellent peach, with a decided and very pleasant plum flavor, perhaps secured to it by some happy cross in fertilization. It was ready with us July 27th, and met a ready acceptance. Early Louise (mark the nobility, the royalty of designation) was the next of Mr. Rivers' early peaches, ready on our grounds August 4th. It was really a beautiful and pleasant fruit, much larger and much better, we think, than Beatrice, and is every way desirable as an amateur or market variety. Hale's Early, ripening at the same time with Early Louise, appears to considerable disadvantage by the side of it. Early Rivers', Early Silver, Rivers' Early York, and Lady Palmerstone we have not fruited, but they are all said to be most desirable and excellent varieties of early and later peaches. They are all the happy product of the ingenuity and skill of this most successful cultivator and lover of the peach. Let us be grateful for these gifts of a generous hand, and plant largely of these new and beautiful peaches for our profit and our personal enjoyment.

Further notes on this subject I must reserve for another occasion.

Agricultural Exhibitions.

This journal has been a strong advocate of these exhibitions. We would like to see them all maintained and improved, if it could be afforded; but it is our impression that they have now become, like our legislatures, too numerous, too cumbersome and too expensive. We are strongly in favor of maintaining the local exhibitions in the townships; they are highly beneficial to the rising generation as well as to the present. The hard toiling women and children cannot afford time or money to attend the great exhibitions. Now within a distance of 120 miles in Ontario we have no less than six of these monster exhibitions to maintain this year, namely, Toronto, Hamilton, Brantford, Walkerton, Guelph and London, besides the township and county exhibitions. Two of these exhibitions monopolize two weeks each. It is evident that they cannot all be required. Now the question arises, which should a farmer attend? We think his first attention should be to his local exhibition, where his wife and family and neighbors can all assemble. If he can afford it, he can go to one or more of the larger ones either in this province, or, what would benefit him more, go to one of our sister Provincial Exhibitions, Nova Scotia, Manitoba or some distant one.

The two great Canadian exhibitions this year will be held in Montreal and Toronto; the two most important in Ontario will be at Toronto and London. The Provincial Exhibition of Ontario, to be held this year in Hamilton, will, we think, be the last of the kind held in Ontario. The Board of Directors have acted so indiscreetly in apparently allowing stockmen, fruit growers and grain growers to be deprived of the honors or money due them, that we think it has now become more of a disgrace than an honor to hold a medal or prize from that Association. This is much to be regretted, as the institution formerly did good service, but its utility has now passed away. Private enterprise, honor and honesty have made the other exhibitions its superiors, and exhibitors have found this out. We do not think the awards of prizes will be paid this year unless the Government gives them more of your money. We know there are some good men on the Board, but the few are not able to cope with the stronger power. This exhibition will be the last in its present form or with its present management. We never take pleasure in going to a funeral. Some people may; if they do, they may enjoy that pleasure in attending the Provincial Exhibition to be held in Hamilton this year.