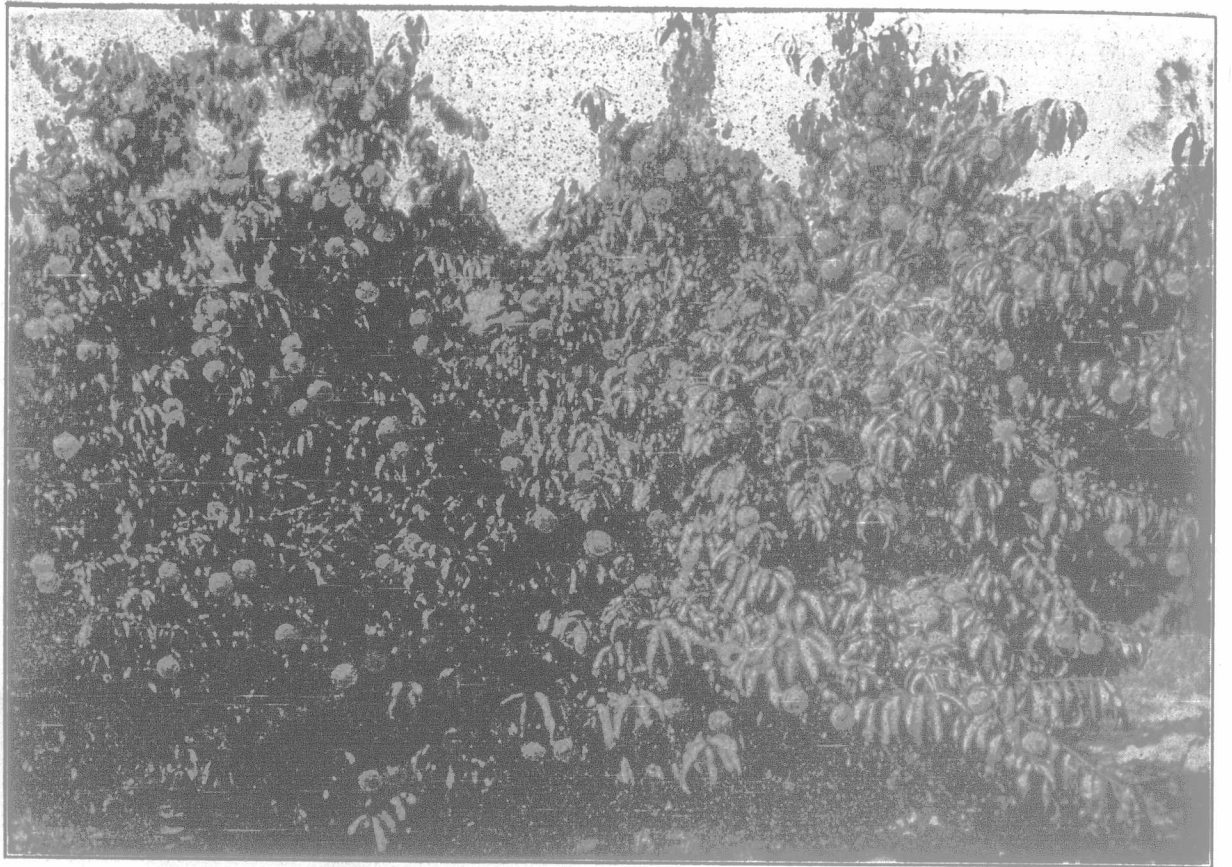


The Forest Peach Harvest.

Like apples of gold in pictures of silver, peaches have added lustre and fame to Forest. People will tell you sometimes that peaches and apples have put Forest on the map of Old Ontario, but this thrifty farming district was on the map of the producing area long ago also for fine cereal and root crops, and still finer beef cattle and other products. Peaches supply the golden halo. Luscious within, crimson on gold without, peaches represent about the acme of achievement in fruit culture. The beauty-loving traveller used to exclaim, "See Naples and die!" but "The Farmer's Advocate" is disposed to remark, "See the Lambton peach plantations and live." Beautiful in the pink blossom of spring, they attain their real glory at the harvest time. If you have not seen them you have one of the treats of life in store. And like the truly great Forest is modest about them. Artists in the composition of their pictures usually put the chief figures in the central foreground. As the railway train rolls into the town, one would hardly suspect the peach orchards unless at car loading times. They do not obtrude themselves, but come upon you as a delightful surprise, as the auto-car or buggy makes a turn along some quiet street or road. You suddenly find yourself in a plantation of five, fifteen or twenty acres and about half a mile northeast of the town, skirted to windward with a natural bush lies a block of about 400 acres, belonging to different parties, of as shapely and vigorous trees, chiefly young and coming into bearing, as the writer ever saw anywhere. The apparently perfect healthiness of the bark and foliage impresses one first, and then the size and perfection of the fruit in form and color. Some of the plantations had been sprayed as a preventive of leaf curl, but evidence there was none either of insect or bacterial troubles. The value of judicious pruning in developing shape and vigor of growth were apparent. Many of the Elbertas were just about ripe in these and other orchards, and the accompanying photogravure shows a couple of them over three inches in diameter, just as the limb was cut from the tree. Actual sampling tells the story of choice quality, and subsequently in going through several baskets taken from two-year-old trees, the happy characteristic was disclosed that the fruit was even better at the bottom than the top. This is the Forest standard. As the fruit matures the trees are usually picked over every day or so, and basketed for shipment. In these orchards the chief varieties were Crawford, Elberta, St. John, Fitzgerald and Golden Drop. So luxuriant is the growth that in the Van Valkenburg and McLean orchard of some sixteen acres, just southwest of the town, outer limbs of the four-year-old trees, which had been set diagonally eighteen feet apart, were already interlacing, and fruit-bearing limbs weighted to the ground. In some of the plantations the peaches are set as fillers, between rows of standard sorts of apples, so that in a few years when the former have passed the limit of profitable peach production, the apples will be in their prime, and, in the meantime, fresh lots will have been planted to peaches. In one plantation,



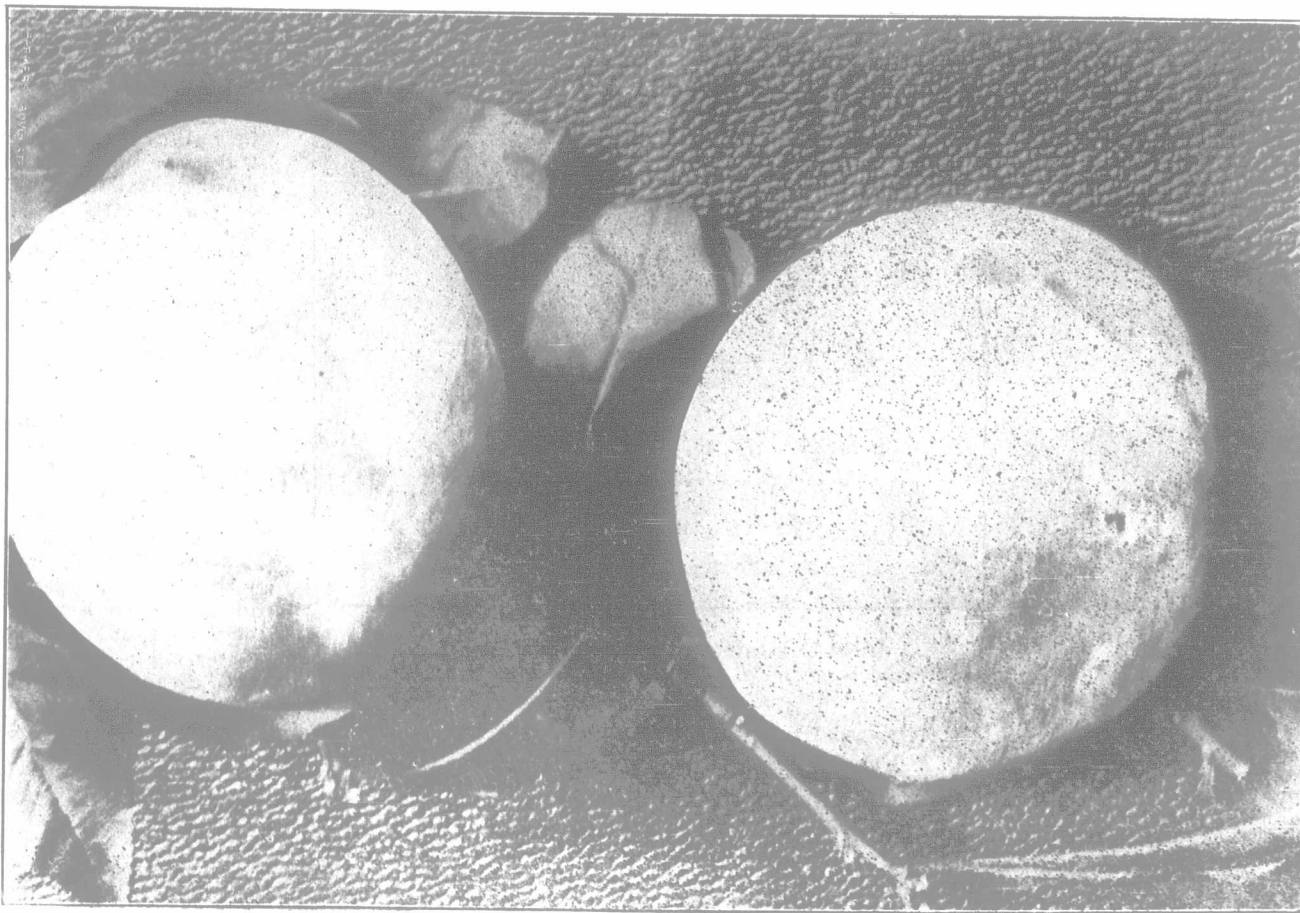
Mature Tree at Picking Time in Forest, Ont., Peach Orchard.

three years old next spring, eight out of ten trees were bearing choice fruit.

With peaches in prospect, "back to the land" becomes an attractive proposition to sagacious townsmen. J. D. Livingston, Manager of the Molson's Bank and J. N. Gordon, Manager of the Standard Bank, have been interested themselves in fruit culture, and Dr. H. N. McCordic found time and doubtless a most wholesome relaxation from practice in the culture of his beautiful ten-acre peach orchard. E. A. Rawlings, naturally a devotee of horticulture, relinquished the drug business, and the splendid appearance and fruitage of "Forest Ridge Fruit Farm" attests the wisdom of the change. In passing along the plantation, the last of a tomato crop, mostly Chalk's Early Jewel, grown between the rows of peach trees, was in sight giving a yield, Mr. Rawlings states, as high as 400 bushels to the acre. Beginning with \$10.00 a bushel for the very early and fancy ones, returns tapered down to the canning factory basis of about 30 cents, making, however, a profitable average. The local canning factory (Dominion Canners) by the way, absorbs large quantities of peas, corn, tomatoes and other vegetables and fruit grown in the district. The fruit industry has brought into existence a large and growing basket factory. Looking about the town itself, which by the way possesses a fine Carnegie Library and is establishing a municipal

electric plant, one receives the impression that the residential grounds and gardens are hardly equal yet to the high standard of what has been accomplished by the peach growers. Near the Rawlings' plantation was the ten-acre orchard of G. S. Walker, and what is known as "The Miles Farm" of some seventy acres with twenty acres in peaches, sold lately to J. Martin, of Hyde Park. Anything more handsome and healthy than the already bearing trees in the plantation it would not be easy to conceive. In the M. J. Sadler orchard of some fifteen acres, many of the earlier sorts had been harvested, but the Golden Drop trees bore amazing loads of peaches. It was a matter of regret that the writer was unable to see the large orchards of G. M. Van Valkenburg, Freeman Armitage, Ed. Horner, Archie Donald, Mathew Smith, Sid. Stewardson, John Stewardson, Jas. Moody, Albert Hare, R. Stutt, C. Rawlings, Blake Rawlings, John Clark, and Mrs. Goverlock, and other splendid plantations some distance easterly from the town. We were fortunate in reaching the Johnson Bros. orchard, though the heaviest of the crop, amounting to about 9,000 eleven-quart baskets had been shipped, while 3,000 or 4,000 baskets were yet to go, making a total of approximately 13,000 eleven-quart baskets. In addition to sorts before named, some Smocks, a late variety, are grown. In one twelve-acre orchard they have about 1,000 trees in bearing, and five acres not yet in bearing. The season extends from the middle of August to the middle of October, but, the peaches of choicest quality are obtained about mid-season. Trees come into bearing about the fourth year, and continue to bear profitably for about twelve to fifteen years, after which the alternate rows of apples come into bearing. From one six-year-old tree this season the heavy yield of twenty-seven eleven-quart baskets was gathered. Six-year-old Crawfords would probably average about seventeen baskets per tree. Elbertas better than that, and Yellow St. Johns ten baskets. Many of the limbs were simply lying on the ground, and some trees split in two with the enormous weight of fruit, which was the sight of a lifetime. In the Johnson orchard early intertillage, cover crops for the summer, and occasional application of barnyard manure is in substance the soil treatment, with one spraying of home-made lime sulphur, one to ten, before the leaves are out. Continuous cultivation is kept up among the trees until about July 1st, after which it stops in order to let the trees harden well for winter.

The crop has gone chiefly to Sarnia, Stratford, Montreal, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Detroit, Cleveland, and other Western Ontario points, realizing about 40 to 50 cents f. o. b. at Forest. These orchards lie in a valley well sheltered from Lake Huron by a strip of natural bush. In this favored locality are also other peach orchards, ranging from seven to twenty acres, owned by Wm. Fraser, Hy. Totten, Walter Raw-



Elberta Peaches, Actual Size.