

APIARY.

The Apiary.

BEE CULTURE AT THE WORLD'S FAIR.—AWARDS.

That Ontario apiculture should come out of the great Columbian Exposition in most creditable form, like agriculture proper, horticulture, and almost every other Canadian culture, was hardly to be expected, considering its comparative youth and the probable competition, especially from its greatest and nearest neighbor. But it has done that very thing, and thus proved the floral status of Ontario as well as that of its apiarists.

The province has taken no less than seventeen awards in the department I had the honor to represent—two provincial awards on the collection exhibit, and fifteen individual awards. Following is the list:

Allan Pringle, Selby, for the Province of Ontario, award on collection exhibit of 2,500 lbs. of extracted honey. Allen Pringle, for the Province of Ontario, award on collection exhibit of extracted and comb honey. The Gould, Shapley & Muir Co., Brantford, on clover comb honey, 1892; ditto, 1893; ditto on honey extractor; ditto on brood foundation. S. Corneil, Lindsay, on bee smoker. R. McKnight, Owen Sound, on Linden extracted honey. J. B. Hall, Woodstock, on clover comb honey, 1892; ditto, 1893. D. Chalmers, Poole, on thistle extracted honey. Geo. Wood, Monticello, on Linden extracted honey. Abner Pickett, Nassagawaga, on Linden extracted honey. Geo. Harrison & Son, Dungannon, on clover extracted honey. A. E. Sherrington, Walkerton, Linden extracted honey. J. Newton, Thamesford, clover comb honey. J. B. Ocher, Poplar Hill, clover comb honey.

Comparatively and relatively speaking, this is a very large number of awards for Ontario, being more than all other foreign countries combined, and on honey alone more than half as many as the whole of the states combined. Let it be remembered that I had but one exhibit case in which to make the Ontario display, while some of the states had several.

That the above individual exhibits receiving awards were the only meritorious ones is not to be assumed. Many of those left out were doubtless about as good, but the difficulty a judge experiences, no matter how competent and impartial he may be (and I freely predicate both qualities of the American judge, E. Secor), in deciding between numerous samples nearly if not quite alike, is well known to all who have been called upon to perform so difficult and unpleasant a duty. Moreover, as I understand the system carried out here, while the judge might recommend a certain exhibit as being worthy of an award, noting its various points of excellence designated by numbers, the jurors, who ultimately make the award, might select one for the award out of half a dozen exhibits nearly alike but with figures differing a little. While, therefore, the primary responsibility of determining the real character and qualities of the exhibit, and accurately noting the various "points" of excellence or otherwise, devolves on the judge, the ultimate responsibility of making the awards rests with the jury. Some of the exhibitors, knowing the merits of their goods, may feel hurt at being left out, but if there is anything in lots of company they have hundreds and thousands of disappointed ones in Jackson Park and out of it.

The Ontario honey exhibit as a whole was acknowledged by the disinterested and impartial visitor, and even by interested ones, to be superior. The press acknowledged it—even the American press—of which the Chicago Inter-Ocean, the Chicago Mail and the National Review might be quoted. Even the American bee journals acknowledged it. The Bee Keeper's Review, in its last issue, says: "So far as extracted honey was concerned, Canada made the most attractive showing. Especially was this true in regard to the manner and vessels in which it was shown. There was a great variety of kinds of honey, both liquid and in the candied form, and the sizes and varieties of the glassware were too numerous to mention. Some of the glass jars approached a foot in diameter and two or three feet in height. There was a small lot of comb honey from Mr. Holtermann, I believe." (This is a mistake, it belonged to the Gould Company's exhibit) "that was unexcelled. Some from Mr. Hall was also very fine. The Canada exhibit was under the management of Mr. Allen Pringle, and it is probable that no better man could have been chosen for the work." The Review, which makes these comments, is perhaps the most conservative and careful of the American bee journals, and would hardly give us credit for "the most attractive showing" unless we richly deserved it.

The bee-keepers of Ontario have ample reason to be satisfied with the results of their showing at the World's Fair.



THE STORY.

A Sacrifice.

It was an evening in that fearful winter of 1854-5, memorable for the Crimean war, whose terrible stories of danger, privation and heroism the veterans delight to tell by the fireside at home.

The cold was intense, snow lay thick upon the ground and was still falling noiselessly through the gray and dusky air upon an English camp in the Crimea. A space had been cleared around the tents, and the men were seeking such warmth as was to be obtained around the campfires. It was the eve of battle, as one versed in the ways of wars could tell by the anxious looks on the men's white, unshaven faces. There was none of that reckless bravado of which romancers tell us. The men were silent or spoke only in whispers. Their thoughts were doubtless too oppressive for more loudly spoken words. It was the terrible Russian winter. To-morrow they were to fight, and the air was heavy with prophecies of death.

Sergeant Easterbrook sat there, gazing into the glowing depths of the fire. He was a tall, broad shouldered man, of about 35, but grizzled and unkempt as he now was you would have taken him to be older. Crouching close beside him was little Charlie Hilton, a recruit—almost a boy, indeed, but there was a sort of friendship between these two, for both came from the same village at home, in the garden of England, a quiet little village perched upon a hill, at the foot of which lay the fair wold of Kent.

"Sergeant," the recruit whispered, "if anything should happen to me to-morrow—"

"Why, you talk just like the old hands!"

"Well, why not? There's as much chance of my getting potted as anyone else."

"Are you afraid?"

"Afraid? No! Are you?"

"Yes," the elder man answered, with a sad, quiet smile.

"I don't believe there can be a man living who does not fear death—aye, the bravest of them; it goes along with the fear of God!"

"But if anything should happen to me," Charlie persisted.

"Oh, you'll be all right, youngster."

"It is not because I am a youngster that I am any safer. Those confounded Russians don't pick out whom they'll hit. I want you to promise me, sergeant, that when all is done to-morrow, if you should find me—if you should find me among the dead—you will take this letter that is inside my jacket. The other fellows might laugh if they knew, and she would not like it. But you know her. We are to be married if I come safe out of this. If I don't, I think she would like to know that I fell with my face to the enemy."

"You say I know her. May I ask who she is?"

"Yes, I don't mind telling you. It is Mary Ashford."

"Mary! The daughter of Farmer Ashford?"

"Yes."

Then there was a dead silence between them, during which, as the flickering firelight danced upon his features, any one who had been watching him would have read a world of unspoken thoughts upon the sergeant's face—a short but pathetic history of human woe. Such an observer would have read his secret, would have understood that Noel Easterbrook loved Mary Ashford too. That he had imagined and hoped that his love might some day be requited, until these words came to dispel his dream—words spoken in all innocence, but which pierced his heart as fatally as could have done a Cossack's lance thrust.

It was Hilton who first broke the silence.

"You have not answered me, sergeant," he said. "Won't you promise me what I asked you?"

"Yes," Easterbrook replied in a quiet, subdued tone, which betrayed no emotion. "I will do it, if this little service if you should require it, and if I am in a position to perform it."

"Thank you so much. And you will take the letter back to her?"

"Yes," with some hesitation. "I will take it back to her if I live."

At this moment an officer came among them, and the soldiers rose and saluted. "To go forward and reconnoiter the enemy's outposts. The duty may be a dangerous one."

"I'll go, if you please, captain," Sergeant Easterbrook said, stepping forward.

"Very well. Take three men with you."

"I'll come with you," said young Hilton.

"No, not you, youngster," the sergeant exclaimed hastily.

"Let me go, since he has volunteered," rejoined the captain, who was a strict disciplinarian. "Let the lad learn his duty. It is just this sort of daring pluck which upholds the honor of the union jack!"

Easterbrook was silenced, since he must needs yield to his superior officer, and a few minutes later the sergeant, Hilton and two other soldiers were passing over the snowclad plain, their muskets upon their shoulders, flitting like four shadows in the twilight out of the British camp.

Not a word was spoken. Everything depended upon silence and discretion. The snow was falling fast now and obliterated the men's footsteps as they walked on. The country was bleak and open. There were only a few trees here and there, which tossed their great bare branches in the wintry wind like giants writhing to be free from some spell.

After they had marched for nearly an hour they approached a frozen stream, and on a hillock upon the opposite bank could dimly discern the fires of the Russian camp, half hidden by their outworks. They crossed the river, and then halting Sergeant Easterbrook spoke for the first time.

"My men," he said, "in case anything should happen to one or other of us we must all keep our eyes open and watch what we can see, so as to report at headquarters to-night."

Then he turned, and again they went on silently. Easterbrook, with his quiet reserve and firm but kindly manners, was very popular with his squad and never found the slightest difficulty in enforcing implicit obedience.

Soon they were creeping stealthily along right under the very fortifications of the enemy, noting the direction of the lines and each point either of strength or of weakness, so far as it was possible to observe them in the gathering gloom. At last they turned a corner and found themselves suddenly right beneath a tall figure in a long cloak and furry shako, posted on the top of the redoubt just above them and thrown out in bold relief by the glow of the campfire not many yards behind it. Our friends were very still and cautious in their movements, but one of them, by the gleam of his bayonet probably, betrayed himself to the Russian sentinel as he peered down into the gloom, for the latter spoke some words in his own tongue, challenging them to declare themselves.

"Confound it!" muttered Sergeant Easterbrook half aloud, "we have ventured too far—right into the lion's den—we must turn tail, boys, and run for our very lives till we are out of gunshot. That is the best sort of courage that we can show now."

They accordingly all four turned and ran at full speed, for since their object was to obtain information there was no real bravery in staying to face the foe. But they had already gone

too far in their eagerness to determine the position of the enemy's lines, and no sooner had they turned to flee than the sharp report of a musket was heard behind them. The sentinel had aroused his comrades, and a moment later a volley of balls was whistling through the night air past the little English squad.

"Oh, this is terrible!" young Hilton said breathlessly as he ran. "If we should fall like this, sergeant—to be shot from behind—I had rather go back and face them."

The young fellow doubtless fondly imagined that the eyes of all Europe were upon him individually, and had not yet come to learn that so many men must go down like corn before the reaper's scythe, only to be regarded at headquarters as so many casualties. He still thought that to peril life and limb in other men's quarrels was glory.

"You must not go back," the sergeant answered, with a strange mixture of gentleness and authority. "I could not allow you to do that. Every man's life that is out here belongs to his country, and no one has a right to risk it rashly. They are only firing wild—don't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid—I—my God! I believe I'm hit!"

The sergeant, notwithstanding his experience, had indeed been mistaken. He knew that the Russian soldiers could not have taken accurate aim in the dark, but he did not allow for the fatalities of chance—those terrible chances which govern the world's history. Hilton said he had been struck, and Noel Easterbrook could also feel that a bullet had entered his body, but still they both kept on bravely as long as they could. Here in the cold, silent night the lust of battle was not upon them, there was only the mute desire of wounded beasts which would fain be at rest away from their pursuers.

They had now crossed the frozen stream and were safe from further danger. By this time the weather had changed. The wind had driven the snowclouds away, and from a steady, blue sky the moon was shedding her silvery light upon the four Englishmen struggling over the white Crimean plain. They were still a long way from their own camp—probably three long, weary miles and more but they were now in safety. Sergeant Easterbrook called out, "Halt!" and the others noted with alarm the faint voice in which he spoke the word. His fictitious energy had given way at last, and with a stifled groan he sank down at the foot of a great, black, gnarled tree. Young Hilton's wound was also overmastering his strength, and the next moment his form, too, was lying in an inert mass upon the snowy ground.

"What is the matter, sergeant?" one of the other soldiers asked feelingly. "I did not know you had been hit."

"Hit—yes, Dawes—here in the left side—it was foolhardy of me to have ventured so far into their lines—and there is the poor lad. Oh, Dawes, I am done for!"

"No, no; do not say that, sergeant. We will carry you back to camp all right between us, won't we, Ryan? You will be out of to-morrow's fun, that is all."

"To-morrow! Yes; there will be no to-morrow for me."

"Nonsense! You will be sent to the rear, that is all. The old sawbones will put you straight in no time. See, we will carry you as gently as a nurse. Come on; give us your hand, Ryan."

"No," Easterbrook answered in a feeble but decisive tone. "Leave me."

"Leave you? We'll see you hanged first!" Ryan said with rough good nature.

"Look at the youngster—he is wounded too. You surely don't think of leaving him behind."

"Well, we're not going to leave you anyway. We can come back for him."

"And find him dead!"

"We must take our chances of that. These are not times to pick and choose what we do. Come on, Ryan."

"No, I say. Take young Hilton back to camp and leave me."

"No!"

But Sergeant Easterbrook, with a supreme effort, now rose to his feet, and supporting himself by the trunk of the tree said in a stern tone of authority:

"Are you commanding this squad or am I? I say I will be obeyed! Take up the lad and carry him back to camp!"

They yielded to the force of discipline, which is so strong as to become nearly an instinct, and raised the half-conscious form of Charlie Hilton. The latter understood only dimly what was going on, or he himself would have been the first to protest against his friend's heroic sacrifice.

"Goodbye, Charlie," the sergeant said. "I shan't be able to keep my promise to you, but when you get back to England tell Mary Ashford that I, Noel Easterbrook, did my poor little best to send you safe home to her."

And as the two soldiers, with their burden, walked silently and sadly away over the white desert plain, Noel Easterbrook sank again heavily upon the ground and rolled over once—sank this time never to rise or speak again.

Charlie Hilton returned safe home to be united to Mary Ashford, and there is a tender place in both hearts for that silent hero, whose bones are whitening in the Russian Chersonese—the man who met his death to save her pain, for it was, indeed, to send her lover back to her that the brave sergeant had thus courted his doom.

—Exchange.

Christmas.

The heart is cold indeed that does not feel a glow of love at the very mention of Christmas, the season of good feeling, good deeds, good-will and peace, and the month of December is the month of all the year the busiest and the most profitably employed, for brightness of a very special sort animates us in all we do, and the little gifts made at odd minutes and costing but a trifle are harbingers of that love we should show each other, and outward tokens of peace and good-will. Christmas is essentially a children's festival, but old is the man or woman who will not feel better, whether he takes part or only looks on at these festivities. The young people of the household have it in their power to make it the brightest day of the year for friends and relatives if they so determine, while mother looks well to the gastronomic part, for a good dinner is part of the day. Perhaps a feast for Church or Sunday School will be on the order book also, but there will be plenty for all if a little forethought is exercised, and what a happy, tired lot of young people at night! Think kind thoughts, do kind acts, make a resolution to do only kind acts, and when the day is ended you will feel you have not lived this day unprofitably.

Mamma, reprimanding her three-year-old son who is flagrantly disregarding table etiquette: "If we were at another table, I should be so ashamed of you I should not know where to hide my head." Young Diogenes, not at all abashed: "You could put it under the table."

Auntie: "So you took your first dancing lesson to-day? Did you find it difficult?" Wee nephew: "No, auntie. It's easy enough. All you have to do is to keep turning round and wiping your feet."