

AGRICULTURE.

RUFUS RUSTIC'S PROGRESS.

The fortuitous circumstance of the chair having afforded Miss Chartres some cosy comfort, she announced her intention to follow on to ascertain whether its appropriate design would, on judicious inspection, prove meritorious.

The approach to the grounds was occupied by a motley crowd, conveyances of every conceivable pattern characteristic of a general turn-out, were striving for precedence. The singular strains of an approaching band of music excited our attention, and stayed further progress.

An urchin in the crowd sang out to his chum—

"I say Tim, that's hail columbe they are playing, ain't it."

"No sir-re," said an elderly person close by, with some decision, "it is Richard Wagner's grand crash in D flat, and if you don't shut up your potato trap, I'll give you hail columbe," and he appeared to be quite in earnest.

"How funny," remarked Miss Chartres, "that music sounds quite operative. I should have gone away with the impression that it was the 'First Rose of Summer,' but for that earnest old man, and I thought of the 'Briny,' and the 'Rips of Grand Manan.'"

Waiting for the crowd to thin off, and the band to arrange the order of procession to the grounds, an opportunity was afforded for a short talk with Mr. Robert Waddle, of nursery fame, from "Shad Town"; he had several varieties entered for competition; was quite sanguine of receiving first honours, as he had indirectly learned that home-grown nursery stock was feebly represented.

"What," exclaims Miss Chartres, with slight emphasis, "does he mean 'olive branches,' real 'arboreals,' then, of course, his expectations will be crowned."

"It's young apple trees, he refers to, I remarked," the inception stock of an orchard."

"Ah, yes," how stupid of me not to comprehend, that music dazed me, and mentioning nursery stock, leads me to think of aunt Jones's children, she speaks of them as so much 'nursery stock.' Uncle Jim styles them his chimpanzees, real arboreals, they are everlastingly in the trees. He says they begin at the bloom the first thing, lugging it off for bouquets and church decorations, and hanging on to them as long as a red cheek remains to be got at."

I remarked to Mr. Waddle that his reputation as a pomologist had obtained some notoriety, and I would be glad of some of his experience in the management of apple trees.

"Thank you, I'm off, good bye."

"Hold on, I said, don't fly your jib yet, the truth won't hurt you; let that crowd get out of the way, and in the mean time, tell us about the *coloptera* that plays hooky with the trees."

He went on to say, that he found, in his experience, one of the most important things connected with the orchard is to be able to know and control the insect tribe that infest our trees. The most dangerous, and one that requires the closest looking after, is the apple-tree-lover. This insect flies at night, and is very destructive to apple trees. The quince is also laid under contribution. The female deposits one egg in a place, generally low down on the stem of the tree; this hatches and enters the tissue of the bark, where it feeds for some time, a footless grub; as it increases in size, it burrows deeper and upwards until it reaches the sap wood, pursuing a lateral zigzag course, severing the connection between the upper and lower sections of the sap wood. To remedy the evil, it is necessary to inspect the bark of young trees during the summer, to discover any castings thrown out by the insect, or discoloured and depressed portions of the bark. If such indications are observed, cut into them, and get at the insect. If it has penetrated the solid wood, follow it up with a flexible probe, kill it, if possible, otherwise the chances are that it will kill the tree. Prevention is better than cure. As a prevention, coat the stem of the tree from the limbs down to the ground with a wash of clay, ashes and salt, dissolve as much salt as water will hold in solution, mix clay to the consistency of thin wash with the brine, add sufficient wood ashes to bring it to the consistency of thick cream, apply with a brush or mop two coats, or sufficient to protect the bark from all insect depredations. To be efficacious, it should be applied in May, or as soon as the insect tribe is on the move. I have found it beneficial to dust trees with ashes, it is preferable to scraping the rough surface, retains the ash, the polish is leached out by the rains, and finds its way into secret places of shelter for insects; a bag or pocket, made out of coarse strainer cloth, that will hold a half-peck, attached to the end of a stick, will be the safest application. Common salt is beneficial as a manure, especially on light porous soils in good condition; it is fatal to insects that seek shelter in the ground; coarse salt is preferable to fine, it dissolves more slowly. There is a diversity of opinion among farmers in regard to the management of fruit trees,—when and how to prune them, the varieties to grow for market, whether successive culture, varied, or no cultivation. These adverse views are embarrassing to the beginner. I am not sure, but my views are at variance with most fruit-growers. I am in favour of close planting, it affords protection while the trees are young. Remove as space is required; large stock is required. Large stock is in demand, but scarce; people can't afford now to labor ten to fifteen years to get a paying orchard; mulch with any material that will be suitable; mulch heavily, 3 to 4 feet out from the tree, regulate the growth with the mulch, if too rapid, remove to admit air and light. Mulching has a tendency to harbour insects, a sprinkling of mild lime will disperse them; the growth should be moderate, excessive growth is liable to winter-kill, smooth bark trees are injured when frozen, by what is known as sun-scald; if not protected, the influence of the sun thaws and expands the bark, it becomes detached from the wood, and never unites—result, an un-

sightly patch of bare wood. A remedy may be had in securing a spruce bough to the south side, or any cheap material that will divert the rays of the sun from the stem, (prune, to regulate required form, with the knife, don't neglect until a saw and an axe are brought into requisition). It is not only the insect tribes that we, as fruit-growers, desire to know and control, but the parasitic fungi in their various forms that affect our cultivated plants, their habits and life history, and the means, if any, whereby to guard against their ravages. At present we are groping in the dark, and our experience is only speculative impressions. We have some knowledge of the phenomenon of light, and its influence on vegetable physiology. We have had also a beautiful illustration of the work done by the energy of the sun throughout the month of October, in the increased growth and brilliancy of colouring to the ungathered fruit.

At this stage of the discourse, Mr. Waddle requested to be excused, as he had an appointment with a gentleman who was approaching, and who was introduced as Mr. Im Cornwall, of Liverpool, England. Mr. C. was on his way from St. John, N. B., to Halifax, and had arranged to take in the Exhibition.

Before separating, Miss Chartres prevailed on the two gentlemen to meet at the restaurant at sharp 3, to compare notes with her over chicken salad and pumpkin pie.

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