

## THE MAN, THE METHOD OR THE HIVE

### A Reply to Samuel Simmins—The Best Hive for Bee-Keeping on This Continent

By J. E. Hand.

In an article in the January number of the C.B.J., Mr. Samuel Simmins of Sussex, England, asks the question, "What is wrong with American and Canadian Bee-keeping?" and then deliberately proceeds to answer the question to his entire satisfaction, as well as to the discomfiture of American bee-keepers. When I say "Americans" I mean Canadians also, for our cousins across the border are just as much Americans as though they were residents of the United States. Mr. Simmins begins with a fusillade of random shots at long range, aimed at American methods, and appliances; later on, he asks for more light upon the subject, and finally winds up a rather desultory argument, with an exhortation in favor of colossal hives as a remedy for existing evils in American methods.

A noticeable feature of the article in question, is its glaring inconsistencies, as well as its lack of sound logic. For instance, he says: "the Langstroth frame is too shallow for wintering in all cold climates, either indoors, or out. It is too shallow for best results in tropical and semi-tropical regions, hence the natural conclusion is, it is too small for the honey season in any locality." Later on, he makes a statement to the effect that the Langstroth frame is nowhere, compared with the 16 by 10 inch frame that he has recommended for more than 30 years. If the above deductions are correct, a vote of thanks is certainly due to Mr. Simmins for pointing out existing errors in American methods and appliances. But, to investigate. The dimensions of the Langstroth frame are

9 $\frac{1}{8}$ " by 17 $\frac{7}{8}$ ", and it contains 157.70 square inches of surface; while the Simmins frame is 16 by 10 inches, and contains 160 square inches of surface, making a difference of 2.30 square inches in favor of the Simmins frame. Now I am not a little surprised that Mr. Simmins should think even for a moment that a mere matter of 2.30 inches per frame can make all the difference between success and failure in honey production; surely this is straining at a gnat with a vengeance that is new to American bee-keepers.

It is my candid opinion that Mr. Simmins will find it-up hill business to awaken anything like a lively discussion upon the hive question with American bee-keepers, for the very good reason that we have come to recognize the fact that it is the "location, the man, and the method," in the order named, and not the hive, that makes for success in honey production. I would not take the time to reply to the article in question were it not for the knowledge that it will have a tendency to mislead beginners into believing that the hive is the whole thing, and that successful bee-keeping is dependent upon the use of a certain form of hive and frame.

No one can make a greater mistake than to suppose that the kind of hive can have any bearing upon successful honey production, except in so far as economy of manipulation and uniformity are concerned. The idea that a certain form of hive or frame will give vastly superior results in wintering, or in honey production, is no longer given credence by progressive bee-keepers in America; this is another indication of progress, and reform. Bees are no respectors of hives; they have the faculty of adapting themselves to their surroundings to a degree that is truly remarkable, and other things being equal, will store as much honey in one hive as they will in another.

From this point of view that aside from the practical and utility, above mentioned, is practically as good as the queen is given to develop her fertility to capacity during the winter. Whether room is given to the frame at a time, or all whether it is given by shallow divisions, is more convenience, and economy, and will have but upon the honey crop. is looking for tangible improvement in American bee-keeping methods, he magnifying glass to find bee-keeping is in the midst of advancement and reform. the history of the art; it is in bees by selection in breeding the attention of American bee-keepers as never is evident from the fact standing there are scores of bee-keepers scattered over the country whom rear thousands of colonies but few, if any, are able to demand for queens.

To the American honey producer is not so much a question of how to cure a good crop of honey but how to turn it into cash to the producer. Co-operation, wherever possible, is well known to be the correct solution of the market problem, and is rapidly developed in the United States. Another indication of progress, and reform, on the part of American and Canadian bee-keepers is the fact that they are beginning to realize that uniformity of appliances, is of vastly more importance than minor items, choosing to abandon pet hobbies, that have little bearing upon successful bee-keeping, for the sake of doing good to the greatest number.