

Issued
Each Week

FARM AND DAIRY

RURAL HOME

Only \$1.00
a Year

Vol. XXIX.

FOR WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 8, 1910.

No. 49

CAN A WOMAN RUN AN APIARY? SHE CAN!*

Ethel Robson, Middlesex Co., Ont.

Experiences of one who has Demonstrated by Actual, Profitable Experience that Bee Keeping is Admirably Adapted to be work for Women—Hives, Swarms and does all work without assistance of men.

It was as the result of no well-considered planning that I became a bee-keeper; it was one of those things which just happened. As long as I can remember we have kept a few colonies of bees at home. I took no part in their management but have vivid recollections of wild rushes after father when the bees were swarming; then about 10 years ago father purchased some 65 colonies, with the intention of making bee-keeping our main work. For two seasons we were fairly successful, then a succession of hard winters coupled with poor management sadly depleted our stock until in the spring of 1907 we were reduced to 18 colonies, only three of these being in good condition.

During these years I helped with the bees in the summer and attended school in Toronto in the winter. I left school, ardent to make the world a little better. The world was perhaps wiser than I and not particularly appreciative of my efforts. So somewhat discouraged I undertook to build up our apiary and bring it back to a paying basis; partly because nothing better offered worth leaving home for, partly because I wanted some money, and partly because I wanted to prove that I really was good.

LAUNCHED AS A BEE-KEEPER

And thus I found myself launched as a bee-keeper. My equipment consisted of a little general knowledge of bees, 18 weak colonies, a good honey house and extractor; and a cumbersome quantity of supplies equal to running about 150 colonies. I have kept no account since beginning the work so will have to trust to my memory; the figures which I give are only approximately correct.

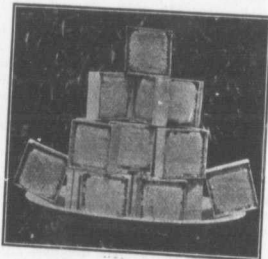
I must not forget to mention a visit paid during that first summer to the apiary of Mr. John McEwan, of Blandeboys, when Mr. McEwan very kindly gave me much good advice and encouragement. That first summer I was able to about double my bees, but only had a small quantity of honey, my spring count, 1908 was 30; honey crop, 1,000 lbs.; colonies put away for winter, 45; spring count, 1909, 40 colonies; honey harvested, 3,000 lbs.; put away for winter, 56. The spring of the present year opened brightly, only one colony had died during the winter. The unusually early in March brought the bees out to sap their vitality. Fruit bloom and dandelion was cold and wet and they failed to fill up with brood as in other years. Then the clover already hurt by the frost came on long before the bees were ready for it. Then I knew that the bright hopes would have to be put away for another year.

The baswood was unusually good and saved

*Part of an address delivered by Miss Robson recently before the annual convention of the Ontario Beekeepers' Association. Other extracts from the address will be published in Farm and Dairy from time to time.

the situation somewhat, but even so I was only able to secure about 1,000 lbs. of honey. I had set my heart on increasing to 100 colonies but when it came time to pack up for winter I had to double down to about 85 in order to make them strong enough for I have found as I suppose every one else finds that there is no profit in wintering weak colonies. As the clover was practically ended the first stress in July my new colonies had very little stress and the old ones were unusually light a large part of my honey was eaten up in buying sugar for winter stores.

Altogether it would seem to be rather a discouraging year. Nevertheless, I feel letter satisfied with the results than in any previous year. Up to this time my efforts had been more or less tentative, now I begin to feel myself master of the situation. I have had practical experience in increasing, in keeping down, in doubling, in queen-rearing, and in moving



A Toothsome, Ready-selling Article of Diet

Honey, particularly that in the comb, is one of the most wholesome of foods. It should be produced on every farm. The bees, aside from gathering the honey, thereby greatly increasing the yields of seed and the set of fruit.

bees, and feel that I am now in a fair way to go on towards success.

And now that I have told you thus briefly what I have done, what are some of the lessons to be learned? When I speak of keeping bees to those who know little about them, they almost invariably exclaim, "But how do you manage them? Do you have them yourself?" We all know that the days of pan-rolling and tree-linging are at an end and swarming can be reduced to an almost negligible factor. The greatest objection to the work from a woman's standpoint is the heavy lifting. Unless a woman is fairly strong it would be impossible for her to go into bee-keeping on a large scale and do the work herself. Two women can work together with advantage. My sister sometimes helps me and then we have no difficulty in lifting the heaviest hives.

Aside from the heavy lifting there is no work about a bee yard which a woman of ordinary intelligence ought not to be able to accomplish as well as a man. Indeed, for the constant watchfulness and the close attention to detail she ought to be specially fitted, and on these two factors success largely hinges.

SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES

Now for some of the advantages for women in bee-keeping. In the first place, unlike poultry-keeping, the work can be all done in the fine weather; in fact, has to be done then. It is healthful, taking her into the open air and keeping her in touch with the great world of nature. It gives a good margin of time for other pursuits unless during the busiest season in the summer, and all the winters are free. It gives a good profit for a small outlay of money, the chief capital required being brains and perseverance; and most important of all, it is interesting, even absorbing. Can you imagine anything more suggestive of peace and contentment than to stand in the midst of a bee yard, the sun beating down warmly, the air heavy with the perfume of blossoms, sunshine glinting on flashing wings, and all about you rising to a subdued roar, the steady hum of bees? Oh, then it is indeed we know how goodly a thing it is to be alive!

BEE-KEEPING ON A SMALLER SCALE

For the woman who does not wish to go into bee-keeping on a large scale it can yet be made, in most localities, a means of considerably augmenting the household income, especially desirable where there are a number of girls in the family, besides furnishing the table with a delicious and wholesome sweet. I have in mind two friends who keep from ten to a dozen hives of bees, which on an average net them about \$100 a year. They winter out them about the packing around the hives all summer, thus saving themselves much heavy lifting.

We are living in a period of wonderful development: our country is alive as never before. If the women of Ontario would take their place in the building up of the country they must become practical, well-trained and efficient, and that they may compete with men, but that they may be able to understand their generation and grasp its great ideal, that they may be worthy to bear and train a race meet for the unparalleled heritage of this Canada of ours.

Nova Scotia is well adapted by nature for dairying, but we need to give more particular attention to dairying, that is make a speciality of dairying, give it more attention and more study. We also need a better class of dairy cattle—cows bred for milk and butter production. There has been a great improvement in this respect in the last few years. The general establishment of butter and cheese factories all over the country in this province would be a boon to dairying. Very little butter should be made in the farm home. It can be made more cheaply and generally better in a factory.—C. H. Black, Cumberland Co., N.S.