

Notes and Comments

By J. L. BYER

In Gleanings for December 15 Mr. Allen Latham gives some interesting data relative to amount of stores consumed by colonies wintering outdoors during the months of December, January, February, and March. On December 1st 30 colonies were weighed, and again on April 1st. The result showed the surprisingly low average loss of a little less than 8 pounds per colony. Mr. Latham takes it for granted that outdoor wintering and cellar wintering are on a par with the first of December, and after the first of April in his locality; and hence naturally concludes that there is not the difference in consumption of stores in favour of cellar wintering that has been generally credited to that system. In the opening of his article he wonders how many beekeepers know by actual trial how much their colonies consume during the four months of inactivity. In common I suppose with many others, the writer pleads guilty to not knowing by "actual trial"; and while the average loss of Mr. Latham's colonies is much less than I would have guessed, yet from observation of cellar wintered bees around me, I have never believed there was as much difference in matter of stores consumed as has often been claimed by advocates of cellar wintering. It is interesting to note that these 30 colonies, with the exception of two weak ones, had entrances wide open—one inch deep and thirteen inches wide—all winter long. Editor Root, commenting on this fact, thinks that such a wide

entrance would prove disastrous in more northern localities, and broadly hints that even in Mr. Latham's locality (Norwich, Conn.) still better results would be obtained if smaller entrances were used. Be that as it may, while I have never tried as large entrances as advocated by Mr. Latham, yet I would sooner risk the VERY LARGE entrances than the VERY SMALL ones as advocated by some. With me the latter nearly always spell disaster; and with very strong colonies I would not be afraid of the extra large entrances, provided the colony had abundance of protection over and around the hive. In the same issue of Gleanings friend Bowen of Niagara Falls gives some equally interesting figures relative to the amount of stores that will be added to a hive by feeding a given amount of thin syrup at different periods.

Of syrup made of equal parts of sugar and water a colony was fed 6 lbs. at each feed on the following dates:—Sept. 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, and 17th, in all 42 lbs. of syrup or 21 lbs. sugar. On September 19 the colony weighed 19 lbs. more than on Sept. 6, before any syrup was given. Here, again, I am surprised at the results, as in some colonies, fed in practically the same way this past September, I feel sure the loss was much greater than was the case with Mr Bowen's bees. But as I did not weigh my hives before or after feeding, I have no figures to offer. By way of excuse for such lax methods, would say that my hives are nearly all packed and quite bulky, which makes weighing very difficult. How do I know if they are heavy enough for winter? Simply by

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