

GENERAL.

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The Crops, the Markets and the Bees' Condition.

THE crop in this district, so far as I can learn, is about an average one—here above and there below. As the yield of nectar has been above the average from a superabundant bloom, the question arises, why is there not a larger crop of honey?

Simply because the workers were not present ready for the harvest. The spring was one of the most unpropitious for brood-rearing within my remembrance; and as we are learning more and more about giving the bees plenty stores in the spring, and leaving them alone instead of "spreading brood," and "scraping caps off," and stimulating them with syrup and meal, and sundry other botherations, they now have pretty much their own way in brooding up in the spring. Just what way they may take will depend upon more than one condition. With plenty of stores present, a comfortable domicile, good, young queens will be very apt to go ahead ovipositing, let the weather be what it may. But the case is different with inferior or old queens. They "make haste slowly" in reproducing their kind under adverse weather conditions. And should the stores be deficient, or the house they live in uncomfortable the trouble will be still further aggravated. Indeed, the best young queens, with food, temperature and weather all against them in the spring, will fall far short of what they can do and meeting their owner's expectations. A sound policy would then suggest keeping none but good, young queens over winter, and giving abundance of stores to every colony. Then with proper fixing up in the spring—warm, with room proportionate to size and strength of the colony we may fairly expect excellent results without special "tinkering," even though the weather be unfavorable. That the professional apiarist, as he grows older, does less and less of the "tinkering" referred to, either in spring or at any other time, is certain, while the novice is always dabbling with a thousand botherations. Whether or not it pays during a spring like the past one to stimulate brood-raising by feeding, scraping, spreading, etc., each may decide for himself.

THE MARKETS.

As honey production increases the markets for it are extending. However foreign to the taste honey may be in the large cities among the lower classes, nearly everybody eats honey

now in the towns and country villages, as well as in the rural districts. The change in this respect in a few years is remarkable. Ten to fifteen years ago probably one grocer in a town of two to five thousand inhabitants kept a little honey for sale. It was bought mostly to mix up with some "yarb" for the home medication of sundry juvenile ills, which could be compassed by the simple lotions and potions of domestic practice. It was also bought by a few actually to eat, as a grand luxury. But that is all changed now. Nearly every grocer now keeps honey for sale, but does not keep it long, for it goes out regularly to his weekly customers, as a luxury to some and as a staple to others. On the Saturday night they come in with their kerosene cans, their jars and little tin pails for the weekly supply of light and food, which includes honey. The producer drops in. The grocer says: "That 60 lb. tin is nearly all gone, bring another." But the grocer's customers expect it for 10 cents a pound. That is the popular price. At that price they will buy, but at higher prices but slowly,—that is extracted honey. For comb honey they will pay 12½ cts. freely, but above that buy but little. The few will pay a fancy price for a fancy, choice article.

This local market, like all local markets, is spoiled, demoralized, for a time every year by the "one-horse producers," and by some of larger pretensions. They hurry on to the market with their crop and sell it for what it will bring, which is about 8 cents for clover extracted, and 10 cents for clover comb in sections, and out. Until this is all cleaned out the regular producer finds it up-hill work to wholesale in that market for 10c. for extracted and 13c. for comb. He must sell elsewhere or wait. There seems to be no remedy for this evil, if evil it be. And if we had a remedy of arbitrary suppression we would have no right to apply it—I mean no moral right. Getting down to first principles the matter stands thus: Every man (or woman) has a right to sell his or her product as cheaply as he or she pleases, or to give it away; and every purchaser has the right to buy in the cheapest market without let or hindrance.

THE CONDITION OF THE BEES

for winter, is good at present. Although the brooding was slow and backward in the spring it has been ample and well sustained throughout the whole honey season so far which commenced (that is, the surplus flow) about the 10th of June and has been kept up in this locality till the present (19th Aug.) with but one partial intermission of a few days about the first of August. The buckwheat is now in full bloom and