

BEE-KEEPING.

AN EXTRACT FROM A PAPER READ BY W.
D. BLACK, ESQ., OF TRURO, BEFORE
THE CUMBERLAND FARMERS'
INSTITUTE.

There are very many people in the rural districts of Canada, amongst the farmers and others, who could keep a few colonies of bees to their own advantage and that of their neighbors. They would thus be benefitting themselves by producing honey for their own use, and benefit their neighbors by securing fertilization to their fields of clover and orchards of fruit. As to who ought to engage in bee-keeping and who may engage in it, are questions which each individual has the natural right to decide for himself, so long as he keeps within the moral and civil law.

Any person who is cautious, observing and prompt to do whatever the needs of the business require, with no thought of delay, may make apiculture a specialty with almost certain prospects of success, provided he is not afraid of a few stings and takes an interest in his bees. I would advise no one of a nervous temperament to attempt bee-keeping, as a person must move cautiously in the bees' company. One must not become discouraged at a season's failure or a slight misfortune.

There are about twenty kinds of bees, five of which are suitable for America, namely: German, or black bee, Ligurian, or Italian, Syrian, Cyprian and the Carnolian. The first two are the principal kinds kept here; the latter of which has a longer tongue, and is marked by three bright yellow girdles on the base of the abdomen.

The queen is the mother of the entire colony. She is about one inch long, double the size of a working bee, and with a long tapering abdomen. Her sole duty is to lay eggs, of which, in the busy season, she lays two or three thousand per day. It is highly essential that each hive has a well-bred laying queen; a poor one indicates a poor colony. If desired, a queen of an improved variety can be introduced into the hive and the old one removed, and in twenty-one days her progeny will appear, after which the original bees will disappear.

Fifty years ago the only hives were sections of hollow logs, boxes of various dimensions, and straw "shops." The movable frame hive was invented in 1850 and revolutionized bee-keeping. With this hive each frame can be taken out and examined, the queens can be

easily found, weak colonies can be strengthened by exchanging an empty comb for one full of brood and honey from a strong hive. Swarms can be controlled or made at pleasure by dividing. Drone combs can be contracted and worker increased. Then, with the aid of the extractor, one can get three times the amount of honey, as the comb is not destroyed after the honey is thrown out, but is put back to be refilled by the bees. As it takes fifteen to twenty pounds of honey to secrete a pound of wax, it will be seen that a great saving is effected by using this style of hive and the extractor.

The white clover is the principal honey producing plant in Nova Scotia. Buckwheat is a great honey plant, but the honey is of poor quality. The first honey the season is obtained from the willow, sugar maple, dandelion, and later the Alsike and other clovers. I have had a single hive bring in ten pounds in one day, and over one hundred pounds in a season, from clover. After the clover there is no honey produced until the golden rod and other fall flowers come. In establishing an apiary, choose one with plenty of clover near, and where the owner can have his eye on it.

Bees, when filled with honey, may be handled without fear of them stinging, and to bring this about, a little smoke is blown in the hive. If stung, get the sting out as soon as possible with the back of a knife, and puff some smoke on the wound, which will obscure the venom. If the pain be severe, moisten with ammonia or soda water. Their enemies in the animal kingdom are the king-birds, toads, skunks, ants, bee-moths, wasps, spiders and mice.

I prefer extracted to comb honey. The cost is a little more at the outset, but a beginner will soon get into the way of raising the former, it being a less complicated process than the latter. With the use of the extracts we can get nearly double the amount of honey than in combs. The surest way to winter bees is to use a double walled hive, but it does not always afford sufficient protection in our winters. If kept in a building, the temperature should be about 45 degrees.

Troublesome collar galls may be prevented to a great extent by taking the harness off at noon during the hot days, and rubbing down the heated shoulders with cold water. It will take but a few minutes and will be a humane and grateful act.

INTERFERING.

This is a habit that few horses fail to contract, and one that is as damaging to a horse's value as to his appearance and utility. It is one, however, that to a greater extent than is generally believed can be encouraged or curtailed by the treatment of the animal, while being trained to harness, and afterward. A colt has not that thorough control over his limbs that an animal of mature years has; they are more awkward, their limbs are more pliable, the muscles do not act with regularity and accuracy, and when put in harness their whole attention is centered in the bit, which is causing no little irritation in the mouth. This causes them to neglect their limbs, and in turning they either calk themselves or interfere. It is a singular fact that after once striking, they will continue to wound the fetlock although it may be bleeding and causing considerable pain, which ends in the thickening of the skin and a permanent blemish.

Probably the best place to train a colt is on the farm. Moderately hard, steady and slow work will have a tendency to diminish any unnecessary show of life and spirit, and the slow pace will enable him to exercise his limbs more freely and avoid injuring himself. Excessive fatigue, caused by too hard and continuous work will render a horse careless of his feet and liable to interfere, although when in good condition and not overworked he would never touch. Some horses by a peculiar conformation of the limbs are predisposed to striking and nothing will remedy the trouble except special shoeing, which has a tendency to alter the relative position of the bones of the joint, and probably cause lameness, or by using an effective style of boot.

Colts should not be shod too early. It is needless to fasten a shoe weighing several ounces on his feet until there are signs of much wear, which will not be serious unless driven continually on hard roads or stony fields. If the hoofs are kept well rounded in front and shortened to their normal length by the rasp, no breaking will occur under moderately heavy work. When shod, the shoes will cause interfering if too heavy, wide or extending far behind the heels. They should not remain on long enough to allow the hoof to become too long or broad, or to allow the clinches to become loose and form a projecting lance to cut the flesh of the opposite fetlock.

Nearly every blacksmith has a method of preventing interfering, but we have found that the best way is to keep the horse in proper condition, not overworking or driving him, and having the hoof short, narrow and smooth, setting level, and a shoe as light as is consistent with strength. If a protective boot be used, a light elastic and soft one is best, made of India rubber which is unaffected by either water or mud.