

place them without ever losing one. In spite of all this I have seen my error, and for the last two years I have adopted an entirely different system.

It is possible that the existing method of reinforcing weak colonies and of changing the queen may succeed in the small apiaries having great honey resources within the extent of flight; but in the larger apiaries, or those which tend in some measure to exceed the resources within their bounds of flight, it is necessary to bear in mind above all the character of the colonies. The tendency to overstocking shows itself, so to say, and notably marks all the defects of the colony.

In any apiary, even the most neglected, it may be observed that whatever happens a certain number of colonies may prove themselves very productive for a series of years. In well observed apiaries these colonies, with more or less variation, reach a proportion of 85 %. These good colonies have scarcely any need of intervention on the part of the apiculturist; to supply empty sections in spring, to raise up the fall sections in autumn, to store away the surplus honey at the proper time, to carefully winter them, seeing at the same time that they are well provided with food; this is all the work that is necessary to give them. They themselves look after all the rest with a regularity, ease, activity and mildness that is admirable. If misfortune happens them during swarming, the loss of the queen after swarming, or a great diminution of population on account of meteoric causes, the invasion of mice, temptations to robbery, etc., etc. The apiarist intervenes and remedies the difficulties and they quickly retake themselves to the work of reparation. The apiarist will lose their product for the coming year or will certainly see it diminished, but invariably they will reimburse him during the following year. They are a superior race of beings; with instincts, habits, an intelligence perfectly adapted to their surroundings; they are the "Benjamins" of mother nature, destined by her to propagate and perfect their species. It is only necessary that the hand of man does not harm them by misunderstanding them.

On the other hand there is always in an apiary, even a well conducted one, a certain number of colonies which, everything considered, gather nothing, or scarcely anything, for the apiarist, and frequently do not gather sufficient for their own use during winter.

If all productive hives from the apiary have been as they ought to have been, carefully wintered, sheltered and well provisioned, in March they will present nothing particular to be observed; but in April we are able to observe that in many hives the inhabitants either remain stationary or increase very slowly, or positively decrease. We cannot give them more sections, but it is frequently necessary to decrease the number. These are the families which do not raise much brood comb, and we can by careful inspection divide them into two unequal categories. To the lesser number belong the colonies which show in a decided manner the cause of their weakness, lack of nourishment, impotent queen, loss of queen, abnormal mortality among the workers, etc. If these families have been productive in former preceding years the apiarist can remedy the defect and rely on a good result. They have not degenerated. They are only the victims of an unfortunate catastrophe; and if this is remedied the colony will recover its vigor sooner or later.

To the greater number belong unfortunately the families in which whatever has happened them, as far as I know we cannot discover the cause of their weakness. The population is less numerous, rather disunited, and the workers are sooner irritated. Honey abounds because it has not been consumed for the raising of brood; the queen, which is frequently a breeding queen, is beautiful; the eggs are well deposited; the brood cells are compact but naturally in proportion to the reduced population. A lack of activity is revealed.

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