



"THE GREATEST POSSIBLE GOOD TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE NUMBER."

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OUR OWN APIARY.

SOMETHING MORE ABOUT ROBBERS.

WE have been tiering combination hives up to four stories making exceedingly powerful colonies. When weak or ordinary colonies are attacked by these strong ones they stand a very poor chance of resisting their encroachments. It is our usual custom about the close of the honey flow to select the best sealed drone brood from the colonies producing the best drones, making a number of drone colonies in each apiary, in order that we may have drones until very late in the season, by keeping them queenless. One of the strong colonies to which we referred above attempted to rob one of these drone colonies, and as there were but few workers in it they had not much difficulty, as the drones were of no use to prevent robbing. The entrance of the hive was so arranged that the robbers could not get in, but quarts of them would alight on the edge of the hive and fly around at the entrance. A pail of cold water and a force pump were brought into requisition and in a few minutes there were no signs of the bees which were bothering the hive, they having all returned to their own colony. Fresh robbers which had not been sprayed caused a good deal of trouble, as they kept coming all the time. To prevent this we decided that some action must be taken with the robber colony. We, therefore, placed

some brush over the entrance a foot high or more, leaving it quite open so that the bees could crawl in without much difficulty. On top of the brush we threw some grass and this we sprayed with water. It did not take long to destroy all inclination to rob, as the colony seemed to conclude that the weather had suddenly become cold and damp. Very few bees offered to leave the hive, and those that did pass out through the brush and wet grass had lost the inclination to rob before they got through. Here comes in the curious part of the performance. As the robbers which had been out began to return they were prevented from entering the hive and were killed by the occupants as though they were robbers from a foreign colony attempting to gain entrance there. To prove the matter quite positively we sprinkled them with flour and watched them. Why were these bees destroyed? Was it the different odor that they had received while robbing the drone colony that caused the occupants of the home hive to look upon them as strangers when they returned? Does not the presence of a large number of drones in a colony give rise to the different odor from one wherein the occupants are principally workers? We have been particular to watch what has been going on for days, and we are quite satisfied of the correctness of our statements. We do not know how we could get along without force pumps. They are par excellence for this purpose as well as for many others.