

Notes and Pickings.

—D. W. HEISE.

Here I am again, Mr. Editor. Having just completed my labours of harvesting a honey crop which reached the handsome average of less than eight pounds per colony, spring count, I have just breath enough left to say "I am alive." Perhaps after an absence of some months from the C. B. J., I may also have enough energy and "dutch wit" left to chronicle a few Notes and do a little Picking.

The question has often been asked in the Bee Journals, "how many colonies will overstock my locality?" I think a goodly number of us have very convincing evidence this year, that only a very few colonies have badly over-tocked quite a number of localities, and thus it will always be when honey plants fail to secrete nectar.

During that extended conversation which took place between E. R. Root and S. A. Niver, as reported in Gleanings, Mr. Niver made the bold assertion, that he could produce three sections with a row of empty cells around the outside, to one filled solid to the wood. He, however, afterwards qualified that assertion by saying "nearly three." Pretty large difference, "eh"?

This has been the first "off year" for bee-keepers in this locality since I have been in the business. Just why we should be so unsuccessful in securing a surplus crop, I am somewhat at a loss to know, although I am aware of some conditions that contribute largely towards our light crop. In the very first place a large percentage of bees were badly crippled with wintering on honey dew, and therefore were not in a condition to make the best of even a poor flow in the earlier part of the season, in the next place, the clovers (our main stay) were badly winter killed, and what little did survive failed for some reason unknown to me to secrete nectar very lavishly. This being past, our hopes were left hanging on the basswood, which promised well, and although when the time arrived it bloomed profusely, and though we had frequent refreshing showers both before and after the time of bloom, yet it failed to furnish much honey, and the majority of the supers were left

on the hives untouched. There was one condition prevalent throughout the whole season, which I think is responsible more than anything else for the inability of the honey plant to fulfill its mission; I refer to "cool nights." Very few evenings indeed, but one would feel more comfortable with his coat on than with it off, and could endure being pretty well blanketed after retiring for the night.

Some who read the above may conclude that I am somewhat down in the mouth regarding the business? Not at all, dear friends! I have enough honey to supply my home trade, and I expect to realize a fair price for it. The bees are placing themselves in pretty fair condition for the winter, therefore I am not feeling badly. While I am ready to confess that my enthusiasm is not up to such a high pitch as it sometimes reaches in a prosperous season, yet I have every confidence in the bee, and I am longing for another of those seasons when a 'feller' is forced to get down to solid work in order to provide sufficient storing capacity, and remove a large surplus crop, especially in only part of his time can be given to his bees. Never mind if it does cause the beads of perspiration to trickle down over your eyes, (particularly if you wear glasses). Never mind if you are repeatedly called from your noonday meal to hive and take care of swarms, and not having the privilege of completing that meal until "tea time." All this donates prosperity in the apiary, and is much to be preferred to a season like the present one, when the Apiarist enters into all his management and manipulations with his bees in a half hearted sort of a way, realizing as he does, that much of his labours must be in vain in the bee yard. Give me the old fashioned honey seasons, with plenty of work, plenty of sweat, will endure the "back aches" if necessary, but beyond all, plenty of honey, and consequently much more money. See?

Doctor Miller, G. M. Doolittle and E. R. Root, are in an animated discussion, in which hair splitting is resorted to in order to define the true color of imported Italian bees. Nonsense, brethren, what care the majority of honey producers whether their bees are yellow, black, maroon, chestnut, the color of leather (which is legion) or golden, or what not so long as the gentle, good defenders, not excessive swarmers and come up to the good standard generally, but above all 'roll up the honey.' That's what the most of us are