

PRACTICAL BEE-KEEPING.

BY D. A. JONES.

PAPER VII.

SPRING MANAGEMENT.

ON the bee-keeper's management of his hives in spring when the colonies are brought out of winter quarters, hinges in a great measure his summer's success. A colony properly cared for in the vernal season is the colony which is strong in bees at the commencement of the honey flow, the colony which makes profitable returns.

The three important points to be observed are,

- 1st. Abundance of heat in the hive;
- 2nd. Abundance of stores;
- 3rd. A good laying queen. If not more than one year old the better.

As soon as the bees have had a purifying flight after being set upon their summer stands each hive should be carefully examined, all the dead bees and accumulations should be cleaned off the bottom board, the entrance regulated according to strength of colony, the empty frames removed, those containing stores crowded up to about an inch and a quarter of each other, only as many frames being left as can be well covered, if necessary adding frames of sealed stores or feeding as mentioned below. See that the division board fits snugly, put a good cushion of chaff on top with the edges and corners carefully tucked in, and then *leave them severely alone* for some time.

Those in need of nursing and attention should be examined, say once a week until the honey flow commences, and should any be found with a surplus of pollen or honey the combs may be exchanged with others in want.

SPREADING BROOD.

Do not spread your brood early in the season, and note whether the drone brood, if any is in the hive, is on the outside of the frames furthest from the brood nest, for that is where you want to see it. Drones are not desired until such time as young queens can be hatched.

DRONE-LAYING QUEENS.

It is not an uncommon thing for queens to die in fall or winter, and the bees to have other queens raised in their stead. Unable to obtain a flight even were there available drones, such queens being unfecundated are drone layers. Examine all colonies closely to see that the queens are good, and if one of these unfertile sovereigns is found, she must be destroyed and the colony treated as given in another paragraph dealing with doubling up colonies.

AS TO STORES.

Too much care cannot be taken to see that there is an abundance of stores, as two colonies of equal strength, one with plenty of stores, the other light, if examined later in the season will show the greatest difference. Number one with plenty will brood much faster and be far stronger. Scarcity of stores checks brood-rearing and ensures weak colonies at the commencement of the honey gathering. Few fully realize the quantity of stores consumed in the spring during brood-rearing. Some may open their hives and find a few pounds of stores in the combs, close them up and imagine they are all right. These stores may be consumed in less than a week, and in the height of the brooding season the ordinary consumption of stores by a colony amounts to several pounds a day. Colonies which appear to have plenty of stores at the time of examination may be found in a few days to have none. In this condition the bees will commence removing the food from the larvæ, biting holes in the same and as a last resort will suck out the contents. Colonies thus brought to want scarcely recover during the entire season; they appear to become discouraged and disorganized and lose all their vim and vigor. Those that have some stores and appear to be doing moderately well would do far better with a little surplus. They seem to realize that without a fresh supply starvation will soon be