

Bees and Honey.



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BEE-KEEPERS LOOKING FOR COMPENSATION.

In a paragraph on the first page of the last number of THE RURAL, it is stated that black bees cannot be kept with profit where Italians and Cyprians have been introduced, because the latter are larger and stronger and are therefore more than a match for the blacks; and the writer goes on to state that several instances have occurred where farmers, having fifteen or twenty colonies of blacks, have had their yards cleaned out by the yellow bees, and that those who have suffered in this way are entitled to compensation from the owners of the robbers. With the last proposition I entirely disagree. Robbing is induced in times of scarcity, either by exposing the honey in the yard, or by having queenless or very weak stocks. Even in these robbing can usually be prevented by reducing the entrance so that only a single bee can pass at a time. Where all precautions are neglected, sometimes the whole apiary gets the robbing mania, the strongest stocks attacking each other until dead bees lie thick in front of the hives and many of the best colonies are ruined. The owner of the robbing bees is in this way the greatest sufferer through the bad management of his neighbour; and this state of affairs has happened before ever there was a yellow bee in America.

Dr. Dziertzon says: "Robbing is a bad habit of bees for which those bee-keepers are to blame who give them the opportunity of robbing, by allowing faulty stocks to remain in the apiary, and by not being careful in feeding and in cutting honey-comb out of the hive." Langstroth says: "When the habit is once formed, it is a question whether the bee ever returns to honest courses."

If several farmers have lost fifteen or twenty stocks by robbing, it is clearly their own fault. Some men who call themselves farmers neglect their stock so that their calves die of want in winter, and their cows are so run down in spring that they cannot rise without assistance. It is the same sort of neglect which allows bees to be robbed, only in this case not only does the owner suffer, but his want of care demoralizes the bees of his neighbours, who may be depending on bee-keeping for a living. This is not the only way in which the regular honey-producer suffers from the thriftless owners of fifteen or twenty stocks. A case occurred in which some ten or twelve stocks belonging to a farmer became affected with foul brood. A producer who had a large apiary in the vicinity found that his bees were being contaminated. On tracing the disease to the farmer's bees he found that the owner had

usual, and had sold two or three of the diseased stocks. On being asked to cure what he had left or sell them at a nominal figure to one who would cure them, he positively refused to part with them at less than the full price of good sound colonies.

These are the bee keepers who also break down our honey markets. They are usually too penurious to spend even a dollar for a bee paper, and know nothing of the extent of the crop or of the demand for honey, and have no confidence in the business. The wholesale price for honey in Lindsay has been twelve and one-half cents; but last summer one of those farmers rushed in with his honey before it had time to cool and sold it at ten cents per pound for fear Corneil would stock the market. I went to a neighbouring town recently to sell honey. I learned that one of my neighbours, a farmer owning about twenty stocks, had been there a little while before and had sold direct to consumers at ten cents and to dealers at the same price. After selling about 300 pounds to consumers at twelve and one-half cents in quantities of from ten to fifty pounds, I struck a bargain with a dealer for 900 pounds at eleven cents. My neighbour had only ninety pounds to sell and two or three cents a pound on that quantity was not of much account to him, but I had still on hand a ton and a-half and even one cent a pound would make a difference of \$30 to me.

As to the yellow bees being larger, I never could see much difference; and I am not aware that any test of their comparative strength has ever been made. The yellow bees are certainly more pugnacious in the defence of their hives. A. T. Root says: "A dozen Italians will often defend a hive better than a whole swarm of black bees." The yellow bees are always "on the make," and will work for cents if they cannot get dollars; while the black bees are hanging clustered on the outside of their hives. Professor Cook, speaking of the Italians, says: "They are, in my judgment, less liable to rob other bees. They will find honey when the blacks gather none, and the time for robbing is when there is no gathering. This may explain the above peculiarity." Last fall I bought over fifty stocks of black bees from a farmer, who found he had not time to attend to his bees and at the same time run his farm for all it was worth. I shall place them in the spring in the yard, right amongst my yellow bees, and I have no fears whatever of their being robbed.

In taking the ground I do in the foregoing remarks, I do not desire to discourage farmers from keeping bees. All I ask is that they give their bees the same thoughtful attention which the thrifty farmer gives to the care of his Durham or Jersey stock, and to pay as much attention to the marketing of their honey crop as they do to the marketing of the other products of their farms. There are thousands of tons of honey every year in our country which may be had not merely for the asking but for the taking, and there are thousands of families who never taste a drop of honey from one end of the year to the other, except, perhaps, "just a little for a cold." If bee-keepers in a small way were to look after their bees and their products as they should do, the large producer would have no reason to complain, and the farmer who owns fifteen or twenty stocks would have no occasion to talk of looking for compensation.

S. CORNEIL.

Lindsay, March 16, 1886.

ASKING SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

The question asked ought to be such as that the right answer should be interesting and useful

telligently presented inquiry on almost any matter of bee management will be likely such as many more in somewhat similar circumstances will also desire to have the information sought. In first reading the question it often happens that the reader is at once ready to say. "Now that's just what I wanted to know." Indeed, the right shrewd putting of the inquiry is interesting too, as manifesting the working of other minds on the same problem on which the reader also may have been bewildered, or may have been led to study so as to satisfactorily solve. And if the light obtained by investigation, experiment, etc., may be valuable to those still in the dimness of doubt, bee keepers of large experience assuredly can be generally counted on as remarkably disposed to obey the good injunction "Let your light so shine"—so that there is every encouragement to hope that proper, thoughtful questions will not remain unanswered.

QUESTIONS

by several have been asked in regard to whether or not salt in any form or at any time can be fairly regarded as of any real utility for bees. And if so, then how and when to be administered?

Some bee-keepers express the opinion that bees that have been wintered in bee-houses or cellars will not be as fit for outside next winter as those that have stood outside in the past, and that this also applies to the swarms from such hives? The theory is that they (by inherent tradition) know or estimate from the past winter conditions, and prepare accordingly. Is there anything in this like acclimatizing? If so, should not purchasers take into consideration the antecedents in view of how they purpose wintering?

The *why* and *wherefore* of which way hives should be faced, or whether there is any real advantage in *aspect*, east, west, north or south, or any other point? Some bee-keepers of large experience assert there is not in this a particle of reason for preference. Is there?

COMING QUESTIONS.

1. In what direction as to manipulation are we now to look for next great improvement? (Of course, in reply only opinion, guess or speculation is expected.)

2. In which department is advance most needed? Some think safe wintering the main want; some want greater facilities for taking surplus; others are aiming for a yet improved strain of bees; then pasturage to keep up succession of honey production throughout the early middle and late seasons; and various minor improvements are advocated. Of course, nothing is to be left out that can be fairly regarded as (even only in a small degree) bearing on the comfort, quiet and safety of the "blessed bees," or the accumulation of profitable results to the thoughtful owner. Assuredly we are not yet made perfect. It is a small hive, but has room for improvement; and some very large ones have more ample outlet for advancement.

FOUL BROOD CURE.

DISINFECTING HIVES—THE CAUSE, PREVENTION, AND CURE OF FOUL BROOD.

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DEAR SIR,—In the January number of THE RURAL CANADIAN, Mr. R. W. McDonnell asks me to state whether I take any precaution to disinfect hives in which foul brood has been.

In answer to his question, I must say that I never do, as I do not believe that a dry, empty hive in which foul brood has been ever gave the disease to any hive of bees. But I do know from experience that foul brood is caused by the rotting of *spores* (the germ of the disease) that (in all hives) the