

Marketing Honey—Sense of Smell in Bees, Etc.

THE financial success of the bee-keeper depends very much on his tact and ability in selling his product. Some can handle bees successfully and produce a good crop of both bees and honey, but cannot sell either to advantage. Others are good salesmen, but poor producers. A few can produce and sell successfully, and with equal facility. To one of the latter it is amusing as well as annoying to note the methods of marketing practised by some bee-keepers, and to observe the diverse and dubious samples of honey on a town market, or hawkstered about from door to door. Crushed bees, larvae, bee bread, old comb containing candied and liquid honey, in one conglomerate, unsavory mass, forming some of the samples or examples of what is brought to market and called honey (?) by some of the old fashioned bee-keepers, who still adhere to the "old box hives," and "take them up" in the fall with fire and brimstone. Then, when certain of the colonies die in the winter or spring from disease or other cause, the remains in the hive are cut out and cut up, and dished up in old tin pans or rickety tin pails, and taken away to market. Or, if it is not taken away as comb honey (save that mark), it is duly converted into "strained" honey, and this is the way it is done.—The aforesaid jumble of delicacies is cut up and squeezed, and then tied up in a cloth and squeezed, then hung up by the stove to warm, after which it is squeezed again, with something under to catch the composition as it oozes out, and so on till all the nectar, and juices, and secretions, and fluids, and excretions are squeezed out of the bag and its contents. That, then is dubbed "strained" honey, and taken to market and sold at two-pence to six-pence a pound to either innocent or penurious victims, who go home to feast on "bread and butter and honey!" Well, "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." When the apiarist, who uses "excluder zinc" to get the clean, pure comb honey, and the extractor to get the clean pure liquid, sees this sort of thing he naturally feels both amused and disgusted. However, the consumer will soon come to understand the difference between pure extracted honey and the stuff called "strained" honey, and between the beautiful section comb honey, with not even a trace of bee bread in it, and the medley of bees, pollen and honey above described.

In the successful marketing of honey much depends upon the manner in which it is put up and presented to the eye of the purchaser. With taste, and judgment in putting up, and

fair business tact in disposing, no bee-keeper need have honey left on his hands, no matter how much he produces.

Owing to the scarcity of the crop the past two or three seasons, both in Europe and America, and the scarcity of small fruits this season, the demand for honey is good, and the market satisfactory. Producers need not therefore be in any hurry this season to sacrifice their product by forced or premature sales at unremunerative figures.

THE FASTIDIOUS BEE.

The honey bee has a fine taste and a very discriminating sense of smell; she resents the malodorous and all uncleanliness; she goes further than this, and sometimes rejects as offensive what the most fastidious ones of us are unable to perceive as such.

In much handling of bees they have given me some lessons. The relations between us are generally of the most amicable kind, but once in a while there is a break. Sometimes one side is to blame and sometimes the other. Here is a case where this and not the other side was to blame:—I noticed that the "pets" were irritable and disposed to sting at a certain time every day during honey yield, when usually they are very docile. Casting about for a cause I soon discovered it. It so happened that I had occasion to empty the whey from the milk can after its return from the cheese factory for a few days while working in the bee yard and handling the bees. I soon noticed that it was just after returning to the yard from this work that the bees manifested their pugnacity. I concluded that the drop or two of whey I might have got on my hands was offensive to them, and accordingly paid tribute to them by always washing my hands of the drop of whey belonging to them; the effect was magical; they resumed their usual amiability, and peace was restored.

During the past summer, a few miles off at a neighboring apiary, a team of horses hitched to a milk wagon with whey on board were tied up some distance from the bee yard; they were at once attacked by the bees in large numbers, and were stung nearly to death before they could be rescued.

I handling bees in my yard, with thousands round about in peaceable condition, I have known them to drive off certain persons who would come in, and who proved offensive to them—perhaps laboring men who were freely perspiring and neglected personal cleanliness—while others were unobtruded.

The above article from the pen of Allen Pringle appears in the February