

OUR OWN APIARY.

The Comb-Foundation Swindle.

OCCASIONALLY we have had complaints in reference to badly made comb foundation and sometimes a case of adulterated wax in foundation, but the almost wholesale operations that are being carried on now by some party or parties deserves special attention. Every day brings us samples and complaints of comb foundation made from parafine or cerasin, and occasionally a mixture of bees wax in it but in the majority of cases there is little or no bees wax mixed with it but simply pure parafine or cerasin or both. Now, it seems to us quite impossible for any person accustomed to handle wax to use such quantities of adulterated trash as must have been used in this case, and send it out to the public without *knowing* what they are doing. Neither parafine or cerasin melts at the same temperature as bees-wax, but at a much lower one than bees-wax. The sheeting and running it through the foundation mill is quite different from bees-wax. A few years ago when bees-wax was high like it was this year, an Eastern firm sent us a large quantity of cerasin for bees-wax, but the weighing and inspecting clerks had no difficulty in detecting it; in fact, we question whether it would be possible for the slightest adulteration to pass the inspection of our foreman in this department, as he has been over ten years with us. Many of the samples of parafine and cerasin foundation sent us might be very easily detected by the parties receiving it before they even place it in their hives. In the first place; it has little or no smell of bees-wax; by taking a lamp and placing it under a cup of water getting a thin piece of pasteboard if wood is not convenient slightly longer than the width of the cup, having it pressed down into the water, say one inch, and one inch above the water, then with the thermometer in the water you can tell just what temperature you have, and screw your lamp up or down to give you the desired temperature you want, or if you have no thermometer convenient simply dip of the beeswax and a little

of the spurious comb in the cup. You will soon see by raising the temperature gradually that the parafine or cerasin will melt and stand on the top of the water while the bees wax is only just starting. This is a very simple and easy way of testing the two kinds in the same dish of water, but care must be taken just as it shows signs of melting to lower the blaze in the lamp so there is less heat going up around the tin in order to prevent raising the temperature of the water above the necessary temperature for melting the parafine or cerasin; then, again by breaking off a little piece of the comb-foundation and putting it in the palm of your hand and with the point of your thumb pressing on it tightly and by rubbing the hand up and down the friction will cause it to become soft and indicate the odor. When you smell it you will find an almost entire absence of odor in the parafine and cerasin, which in contrast to the strong smell of bees-wax will indicate at once the spurious from the pure, or if there is any grease in the bees-wax this is a very quick and easy way of detecting it, as the greasy odor omitted by the friction with rubbing it is very apparent. Now, parafine and cerasin instead of becoming tough and pliable like bees-wax, becomes very brittle and scaly, especially the parafine which sometimes becomes just like parafine scales. No doubt many have seen them. Then, again, in looking at the comb foundation closely you will be able to detect it in another way. It has whitish specks all through it, perhaps they might be properly called air spaces in the foundation, or spots where the wax is not thoroughly melted together. In running bees wax too cold through the foundation mill it sometimes shows this slightly. We believe, from the number of complaints there has been hundreds of pounds of this adulterated stuff placed on the market. Years ago we tested foundation made from parafine or cerasin, and every other substance that we could get, in very closely wired frames. If the hives were kept cool it partially prevented melting down in the brood chamber, but sections built from it would fall out in hot weather, and is always stretching, and never reliable. The bees will work at it as readily, and