

last season was of about equal strength.

I expected to find them quite dark—much darker, indeed, than the common so-called German brown bee. Nothing, however, in their color would have suggested to me the idea that they were not ordinary black bees, nor did they seem much if any different in size from that bee. Of course, there were some bees in the colony with Italian markings: but these were evidently strangers which had intruded themselves upon the Punic, as all the young bees appeared to have the same markings.

When opened the first time, and carefully looked over, the queen was not found. The bees were much agitated, and acted almost precisely like ordinary black bees—racing backward and forward on the bottom-board, and over the sides of the hive. A second search for the queen was equally unsuccessful. This morning June 6, the weather being as favorable as it could be, bright, warm, and calm, with the help of Mr. Spafford, and without any assistance from Earnest Root, who wished me to give my own impressions without any suggestions from him, I carefully examined them again. I gave them sufficient time to fill themselves with honey before the combs were lifted out. The same agitation which I noticed on Saturday, I noticed again—the bees running from one side of the bottom-board to the other, and evidently acting, as nearly as I could judge, much like black bees. We took out the frames and examined them at least three times before we could find the queen. Four years ago, in the apiary of Mr. James Heddon, of Dowagiac, Mich., I saw more than a dozen hives opened, and the queens were found. I should say, in half the time that we spent in finding this one queen. She was noticed near the bottom of a frame, evidently frightened, running around the corners, and seeking in every way to hide herself. In this respect she seemed to me to act like an ordinary black queen. As to the bees, they were not as scary as I have frequently noticed the blacks to be. When a comb was lifted out they did not string out from the bottom of it and drop upon the grass, ready to crawl up my pants, as is so common with the black race.

Now as to the color of the queen. She was not nearly as dark as I expected her to be. I know that I have seen many imported Italian queens darker than she was. On a mere superficial observation one might have declared that we had here nothing but common black bees: but a more thorough examination suggested that they might be a cross of, say, the black with

some other race. The color of the queen might again suggest that the Punic were a cross between the black and the Italian races, as the so-called hybrid Swedish clover resembles in many respects the red and white clover, seeding in the first crop like the white, and sending up many stalks of blossoms, like the red, the size and color of the bloom being a beautiful compromise between the two kinds. Now it is quite supposable that the Punic, so-called, may be a cross between the black and some of the yellow races, and may have been, like the Morgan horse, the starting of a race of bees possessed of uncommon and valuable peculiarities. We know that that Mor an sire so impressed himself upon his progeny that even now, after many generations, there can easily be seen in Morgan horses the type of their great ancestor. The question then arises, How can we decide that this bee is worthy of propagation? It evidently has some of the bad qualities of the black bees, such as its scary nature, and the difficulty of finding the queen. I could not, on so short an observation, decide whether it had the cowardly nature of the black bee: whether in nuclei made of this race we should find them so easily discouraged as to "skedaddle" on the first appearance of adverse circumstances. And, again, it is impossible, from so slight an observation, to know whether, like the black bee, it is a natural-born robber, causing often the most trying difficulties in the management of an apiary. Nor could I tell whether, when an attempt should be made by other bees to rob it, how brave a defense it would make. We all know that the black bee is by nature such a coward that often, when attacked by great forces of its own or other races, like the dog that drops its tail in the fight, and is soon a beaten dog, or the cock that runs, after a few exchanges of blows, it will give up the battle and suffer itself to be robbed of every thing; or even, like the black race, join forces with the robbers; and rob their own hive. If I had only a single warm day which I could spend in observations, I could easily, in ways which I have not time to suggest, decide these points.

Now, as to the conclusion of the whole matter. I would not advise any one to attempt at once to supplant the good races of bees which are in his apiary, with this race; nor would I so condemn it as to say that nearly every enterprising beekeeper ought not at least give it a fair trial. In a single season, if the season is a favorable one for honey, I believe all the disputed points will be settled, and no one would rejoice more than myself if it should prove, like the Morgan horse the progeny of an improved and improving race of bees.

*I should have been much better pleased if Mr. Root had had a single colony of pure black bees.