

Read at the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Bee-Keepers' Association.

DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED IN MARKETING COMB HONEY.

On a former occasion I read you a paper on the production of the above article and followed with a few remarks as to the advisability of producing it in the most marketable and attractive shape possible. And as several seasons have passed since and having had some additional experience in both producing and marketing it, I have thought it in place to give you the benefit of my further knowledge in this direction.

First of all I might mention, that the harvesting of good marketable comb honey (and no other kind is worthy of the name) is a special branch of apiculture, and one requiring more close attention than the securing of a crop of the extracted article.

Those having their doubts in regard to this statement will soon find out the truth of this assertion, as I already know for a fact, that some, who in the past have accepted this hint with the proverbial "grain of salt," have already realized by the past season's experience, that "all is not gold that glitters." Especially those who may have prepared on an extensive scale for a trial of what appeared to them easily accomplished.

The individual apiarist's interests are what I have most at heart and I trust that nothing that I may state or write will cause any one to think otherwise, in fact so far from desiring to deter my brother bee-keepers from this particular line of apiculture, I rather incline to the opinion, or conviction that it would be a blessing, at least in some particular instances, if less extracted, and more comb honey were produced, as the former is now at rock bottom prices, with the appearance of it being soon produced at a loss to those engaged therein.

Be this as it may, I would at the same time caution all present from going from one extreme to the other as there is a happy medium between the two, which common sense, and the market must in your own particular case decide for yourself. My primary caution therefore, would be that none who cannot bestow some judgment, patience and the requisite amount of time and labor for raising comb honey, such as already described, would in most instances coming under my observation do better in the extracted honey line, especially if they can succeed at present prices.

As successful wintering, favorable springs and good flows of nectar, coupled

with having the requisite numbers of *gleaners* at the proper time, has much more to do with success in this case, than in securing honey in the liquid form, for it is beyond a doubt that every pursuit is fraught with ups and downs, good and bad seasons as with any other occupation which one may choose, either from the love of following it, or from the inevitable force of circumstances. Secondly; it is quite certain that with a sufficient quantity of the extracting combs, so that through tiering up may be prevented, in order that too frequent extracting is not done, before the honey is perfectly ripened, a first-class article of extracted honey can be produced in the hands of any one who has but a slight knowledge of apiculture, and said article will sell without detriment to the purchaser, consumer, producer or his brother bee-keeper. This, however, is not the case with respect to comb honey, as from samples, which it has been my privilege to see exhibited in the windows, and on the counters of some stores in cities and towns in Ontario, especially of late years and more particularly this fall, is anything but encouraging to the apiarist, yes even detrimental to the pursuit, and I may add nothing short of a disgrace to apiculture in its present stage of actual or supposed advancement.

It is an unpleasant fact to be compelled to face, but none the less true, that there are those to-day who have in the past sold large quantities of comb honey, who positively refuse now to handle it, others again say the comb honey business appears to be going to the dogs, if indeed it has not already gone there. This latter statement in one instance came from one who had a supply exhibited in his window, and the thought at once arose in my mind that if he was taking the most effectual and expeditious means of succeeding in his purpose, as it presented the appearance of having been worried by a half dozen canines, which had finally given up the contract in disgust, reminding one to some extent of the ruins of an ancient city that through apathy or want of enthusiasm on the part of its former occupants had nothing but its walls standing to remind us of what the interior once contained. But jesting aside, no doubt some will say "a good article will always command a good price" and while this is true to a certain extent, my experience of late, as well as what I have learned from others, does not always prove it so. It is not so easy running up hill as it is to run down, therefore it behoves us all to make a united effort to in future produce a better and a larger quantity of our product, put up in such an attractive and