

MANAGEMENT FOR FEW UNFINISHED SECTIONS.

(By G.M. Doolittle, Onondaga Co. N.Y.)

How to manage our bees so as to secure the greatest yield of comb honey, is a question of great importance to all those who are engaged in producing such honey for market, but comb honey is of little value unless pretty nearly, or fully sealed over, so that how to manage our bees so as to have few uncapped sections in the fall is a question of more vital importance perhaps, than the one we have been in the habit of regarding as the greatest. For years I was troubled with having from one-fourth to one-third of the combs in the sections not fully sealed at the close of the honey harvest, which was salable only at a reduced price; but of late years I do not have as many as formerly.

After experimenting for some years in this matter, I became convinced that the cause of the trouble was in giving the bees too many sections; and especially conducive to this was the plan of tiering up sections late in the season. Many, yes, very many, times, years ago, I spoiled a promise of an abundant yield of honey by tiering up four or five days before the honey harvest closed. To tier up sections profitably, requires considerable tact, and especially do we want to have a thorough knowledge of the honey resources of the field we occupy.

It seems to me that there has been too much injudicious talk during the past regarding not allowing the bees, under any circumstances, to cluster on the outside of the hive, the idea being generally conveyed that, when bees thus cluster out, they need more room. To my mind it depends upon when this clustering out occurs, whether more room is needed or not; and for this reason I said 'injudicious talk.' If the clustering out occurs at the

commencement or the height of the honey harvest, then more room should be given; while, if at the later part of the honey harvest, or in a time of honey dearth, no more is needed, for more room at this time results in the one case of many unfinished sections, and in the other in an absolute waste of time in enlarging the hive. Allow me to illustrate:

During some seasons we have but very few days of honey secretion, and that often after the flowers which produce the nectar are rather past their prime. At such times we often do not have on the hive more than one-half the capacity which we would use in a good season, and for this reason the bees begin to be crowded out. Hoping that the weather may continue good, and that the flowers will secrete nectar during the rest of the time that they are in bloom, we double the room for our colonies, only to have it turn bad weather again, thus giving us only partly filled sections in the fall, while had we left them as they were, and not have been stampeded at the sight of a few bees hanging out on the front of the hive, all would have been finished.

I well recollect one such season, when, in time of basswood bloom, we had bad weather up to the middle of the same. At this time I had on the hives about one-half of the surplus room generally used, when, all at once, the yield of honey became abundant, and the bees began to crowd out. Hoping that the weather might remain good I doubled the capacity of a few hives. The result was that the bees immediately took possession of the empty sections, while the weather turned unfavorable again, and when the season was over I did not secure half as many finished sections from these colonies as I did from those which were allowed to remain as they were.

Again very often after basswood bloom has failed, there comes on very