

The Beginner's Page

Department Conducted by E. G. HAND

About Robbers and Robbing.

There is nothing that will give the beginner, or any one else engaged in bee-keeping, more trouble in less time than a bad case of robbing. Where only a few hives of bees are kept there is seldom any danger, unless there be a larger apiary within half a mile or so, but it is well for the beginner to know how to recognize it, when to expect it, and how to deal with it. In the first place, it is comparatively easy to prevent an outbreak of robbing when one knows the habits and inclinations of bees fairly well; and in the second place it is pretty hard to cure a bad case so it will stay cured.

When the honey flows from clover and basswood comes to an end, all the bees which were working so hard at carrying home the nectar are suddenly thrown out of employment, and immediately commence looking about for something to do—for some new source from which to gather nectar, or honey, or anything sweet. An observant person, who knows what he observes, can detect this state of affairs as soon as he approaches his apiary. Whereas, at the height of the honey-flow, the bees were going in and out of the hive in large numbers, wasting no time in standing about, but attending strictly to business, when the flow slackens fewer bees will be seen at work, and there will be more of a tendency to loaf around on the alighting board and the front of the hive. When the hive is opened it will be seen that there are many more bees at home than when

the flow was good, and they will probably be in not so good humor and show more inclination to sting. When the honey-flow stops completely, as it does in many localities in early August, the above symptoms are more pronounced. Very few bees will be at work in the fields, though the hives will be overflowing with them. Though there is nothing to be had from the flowers, there are always a certain number of bees on the wing, looking for the nectar which is no more to be found where they have been gathering it. These bees will be observed nosing around the hives, looking for a chance to get in and secure a load of the honey which they can smell and know is there. They poke all around their neighbors' hives, and fly down close to the entrances, jumping quickly away when the bees on guard on the alighting board try to catch them. Not a great many bees will be seen at this work, but just one here and there. If every hive is well populated, there will be no trouble, for a robber-bee cannot steal honey from a comb protected by the bees that own it—that is, a lone robber cannot, and the would-be robbers travel alone at this stage of the game. But let any honey be left where these prowling bees can get a taste, whether it be in a hive having so few bees that they cannot properly protect their combs, or in a comb left standing outside a hive while the bee-keeper is working at the colony, or in superfluous combs from which the honey has been extracted and just the drippings re-

main, and the first prowling detected honey is it home. The is like a prosing ing camp with immediately there and the bees were were resting are rushing thr for the source c They soon find this time the in full possess transformed fro citizens into pe longer a case of a thousand upon anything though a free get possession, the same effect will crowd into is being preserve means of screen pulp thrown out made from it, o through a board boards where the to get into the e The only thing get to such a sta thing down tight. must have their small that they ca Houses and every is kept must be tight, and kept th colony is being r times be saved by completely, robbers ar cellar or some suc of days, and then t on a new stand, which hive is doig one or two hives ir responsible for most