

Grading Honey.

—G. M. Doolittle

A correspondent writes me saying: "Won't you give us an article in THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL on grading honey, as the time is near at hand when we shall want to prepare our surplus honey for market, if we have any. Tell us what to put in No. 1, what for No. 2, and what for No. 3, making all so plain that a beginner in apiculture need not fail to know how it is done? I am afraid the task assigned me is rather a difficult one, for a system of grading honey which may be pleasing to myself, may not be the one which will please others, but as I know of some other successful beekeepers which are using a plan of grading similar to the one I have adopted. I will do the best I can in telling how I grade honey. Some years ago, Syracuse, N. Y., was the only place in which I sold my honey, the same being bought by one man, at from twenty-five to twenty-eight cents per lb. As here was where I first received instructions as to grading honey, of course I did it in accordance with his wishes, he instructing me to put about a like proportion of different grades of white honey in each crate, as that was the way he preferred it, so this gave him the best results in the end, he said. At this time we used crates holding one hundred or more pounds, so that such grading answered better at that time than it would had the small crates of the present been used, holding only from ten to twenty-five lbs. Later on this man was removed by death. Death and as Syracuse became a poor market for honey, I was obliged to seek a one elsewhere. I tried peddling a little but soon decided that peddling was not my forte, so I began to ship my honey on commission. Calling the shipping crates as I had before been instructed. The parties to whom I consigned my honey soon began to write me saying they could obtain more satisfactory prices for me if I would make at least three grades of my white honey, putting the dark or buckwheat honey as a fourth grade. The next year I tried the plan with a part, and sent the rest as I had heretofore done. The result was as I had been told the grading bringing me quite an advance over the other not so graded. For instance, No. 1 sold at 20c per lb.; No. 2 at 18c; while No. 3 sold at 14c; making an average of a little over 18c a pound. That which was

not graded sold at 16 cents. The reason for this seems to be that two or three sections poor honey in crate has a tendency to disgust people so that they can scarcely see the good honey at all, or the poor sections are used as a "lever" to bring the rate down to that of third grade as nearly as possible; while if all are poor they do not expect to purchase it for less than two-thirds the price of good honey. Again, the contrast between good and poor honey, both being in the same crate, is greater than it is when in separate crates, unless the two are side by side so that one can be compared with the other. Human conception, taken in through the eye, is faulty to certain extent unless the things to be compared are so arranged that the eye can take such things in as a collection, at one glance. For instance, I have a grade of all No. 1 honey in my honey house, or a sample of it, and all the No. 2 in my shop, three rods distant. A purchaser comes along and stops at the shop first. I show him the No. 2 honey. He calls it fine and thinks it compares favorably with any honey he has seen. I now take him to the honey house and show him the No. 1 honey, and nine chances out of ten he will say that he sees little difference in the two lots. Now take some No. 2 and No. 1 and put them side by side and he will say there is quite a difference. Now taking advantage of this fact, and all the lessons of the past, I grade my honey as follows: Every perfect section of nice white honey is placed in crates as No. 1. To be No. 1 the comb must be smoothly and evenly capped over throughout its entire surface, with no discoloration of the comb near the bottom of the section. The section itself must look new and clean, while no cells of bee-bread must be seen while looking through the honey toward the light. No. 2 honey is to be the same as No. 1 except that in it is put all the sections with discolored or soiled combs near the bottom of so discolored or soiled by the bees traveling over them, together with such sections as show a few cells of pollen covered with honey when held up in the light. In No. 3 grade I put all sections having a few unsealed cells at the bottom of the combs, those that by accident or by brace-combs have their surfaces marred a little; all such as may have pollen in them to a sufficient extent exclude them from No. 2 and all that are badly soiled or discolored by the travel of the bees or by the working in of brown wax from the combs in the brood chamber in capping the section honey. If I have any sections in which brood has been reared or that are one third unsealed, they are put up by themselves and go as