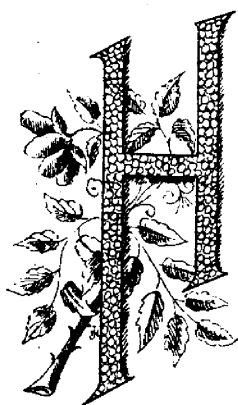


* The Apiary *

HINTS TO AMATEUR BEE-KEEPERS.—I.



HAVING been a constant reader of the *HORTICULTURIST* since its initial number was sent out, I have noted with pleasure its steady improvement, until now it is a credit to the editor, the publisher, and the Society whose organ it is. I am satisfied of the wisdom of devoting a portion of its columns to bee-keeping, because of the intimate relationship that exists between bees and fruit, if for no other reason; and I trust this "new departure" will be favorably received and worthily maintained. It should be borne in mind, however, that it is a different thing to write on bee-keeping for a journal specially devoted to apiculture from treating the same subject in a horticultural paper. In the one case the writer addresses himself to an audience fully conversant with the practice and principles of the science, whilst in the other he speaks to people, a majority of whom are novices in the business. To be interesting and instructive, his treatment of the subject in hand must be regulated by the capacity of those for whom he writes to comprehend and appreciate what he says. Under existing circumstances, I think your correspondents should mainly confine themselves to discussing the initial steps in bee-keeping, and the primary principles of apiculture. Debatable points may profitably be kept in the background until first principles are exhausted and a desire for further knowledge manifests itself.

If there be any avocation to which bee-keeping may be profitably added, it is fruit growing. Farmers should keep bees, but not become bee-keepers in the ordinary sense of the term. They should keep bees to supply their families with an abundance of honey throughout the year. Beyond this, as a general rule, it will not pay them to go. The reasons for this are obvious enough; but those reasons do not apply to the professional orchardist. He can prosecute the business with as little inconvenience and as little tax upon his time as any one. The nature of his business confines him to the vicinity where his bees will be kept. In the season he will be on hand to capture and hive swarms as they issue, and then resume his work. He can harvest his honey without interfering much with his other duties. This is usually done after small fruit is marketed and before the harvesting of larger fruit begins. Then he has a good deal of spare time in winter, a part of which may be devoted to hive-making and other appliances used in the business of bee-keeping. As a rule, he will make a better bee-keeper than the farmer, because he is more accustomed to attend to details in small things, which counts not a little in the successful management of bees.