

The Apiary.

"Miller Traps," "Comb Guides," and "Condensers."

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—In THE CANADA FARMER for January 15th, I find an article, under the above caption, from the pen of J. H. Thomas, of Brooklyn. Believing that the introduction of the People's Bee-Hive to the public had something to do with the prompting of these enquiries, and having given considerable study to these "fixings," I beg a portion of your valuable space to reply to the article. Mr. T. sets out with the sweeping assertion that these and all other kindred "fixings" are worse than useless." We will lay this statement by the side of similar ones which we often hear in reference to moveable combs, &c., by those who have not tested their utility, and look further for proof. If the millers are so "unceremoniously ejected" by the bees upon their entrance into a hive, how is it that they manage to dispossess about ten per cent. of the bees in the country? The truth is, their superior agility enables them to leave their eggs in the strongest stocks. The larva, in my miller attachment, do not "find their way into the combs," but "feed upon the chippings of the comb that fall into the trap." Since they there find all the conditions necessary for their growth, with the additional favourable condition of being unmolested by the bees, it is "unphilosophical" that they should leave it for a place of danger. It is likewise contrary to my experience. How is that during last summer I did not find a single grub in the combs of my apiary; but being present on one occasion, when Mr. (L. C.) T. opened a Thomas hive, I assisted in extracting a number of grubs from the comb. I give my "trap" the credit, since there were plenty of millers present, as the worms I destroyed in the trap abundantly testified. The sum of Mr. T.'s argument is, that "not one bee-keeper in fifty, or a hundred," would pass around once a week or fortnight and destroy the worms. The objection is certainly very flimsy, and would apply with tenfold force to moveable frames, as the trouble of removing them, and the liability of being stung, render it, to the uninitiated, a formidable operation. It is not one-tenth part the trouble to destroy the worms in my hive that it is in others, with this very important difference:—In the Thomas and other hives, they are killed after they have spun their webs in, and feasted upon the combs, until dislodged by the bees, or bee-master; but in the People's Hive they have troubled neither bees nor combs. The statements in regard to the invention, disease, revival, &c., of the wire-cloth bottom are untrue; but as this does not affect the utility of the concern, I will not notice it further. Mr. T.'s quotation from Langstroth does not prove his statement immediately preceding it. The fact that Langstroth attacked a miller trap to his hive is proof that he believed that those who had sufficient interest in bee-keeping to purchase improved hives, and use the moveable frames, would use the miller trap also. Quinby says:—"Lay some pieces of refuse comb near the entrance to induce the miller to deposit her eggs there, instead of upon the combs inside."—*American Agriculturist*, August, 1860. Again, "put some pieces of comb under the swarms; the moth will be deceived, and lay her eggs there, when the worms are easily destroyed."—*American Agriculturist*, July, 1863. In opposition to this, we have Mr. T.'s assertion that miller traps are of no use "in cr attached to a hive." He prefers to have the worms hatch among the bees, that in case the bee-keeper neglects his duty, the bees will be "likely" to "destroy" them. My experience is that, having got them from the combs, the bees seldom pay further attention to them. The instinct of the bee teaches it not to use its sting on an enemy when there is a prospect of disposing of it without; and since, according to Quinby, the grub "has a skin which the bee cannot pierce with its sting," we have Thomas versus Quinby again. Sometimes the bees carry them out, but generally allow them to "wind up" in the cor-

ners of the hive, under the edges or in some convenient place outside. Says Quinby:—"He gormandized upon the combs until satisfied before he left them, and is glad to get away from the bees anyhow. A place for a cocoon is easily found" (p. 170), "and a moth perfected ten feet from a hive is just as able to deposit 500 eggs in your hive, as if she had never left it" (p. 166.)

In regard to comb guides, Mr. T. makes a number of assertions, spices it with a little ridicule, and serves that up to your readers, in lieu of argument. He says:—"In a hive properly constructed, the combs will be built straight without the guides." If this is true, without exception, a properly constructed hive is a thing of the future. Four authors, in my possession, bear me out in the assertion. I do not except even the Thomas hive, with the celebrated wedge-shaped top piece, he "talks about" so much, and threatens with prosecution those who use it without his license, though it was in use before he even conceived the idea of getting up a hive. I am prepared to furnish the proof to these statements, when called upon to do so. As Kidder uses a guide, I will not quote him; as interested testimony, *pro* or *con*, cannot be relied upon. The agents of the Shaker Society, near Albany, state that one of the "decided advantages" which the Kidder hive secures, is "the ability to force the bees to build straight combs—all worker comb, which, in the opinion of some apiarians, is worth more every year, per swarm, than the cost of the hive." A bee-keeper at the London Fair had used the Kidder guide, and considered it a valuable acquisition, but regarded mine as superior to it.

Mr. T.'s description of a Condenser does not answer to mine very well, and as to its "creating a dampness," I "can't see it." My object was to dispose of dampness by condensing it, and carrying it from the hive. This it does. I have, after a cold snap, by collecting it, secured a gill or more of water. But since a condenser is so "unphilosophical and unsound," we would expect Mr. T. to ring its death knell. He says:—"Would we not think that person was not *compos mentis* who, instead of ventilating his sleeping apartment, should provide it with a condenser? Certainly. What then? I should likewise regard that person as *non compos mentis*, who, for this reason, should reject a condenser in a bee-hive. In a hive the exhaling mass occupies about a sixth of the space, the condensed exhalations often shutting them from their stores, causing the starvation of the colony, or melting and dripping upon them, they are chilled to death. Will Mr. T. please trace the analogy in the case of the occupant of a sleeping apartment. In conclusion, Mr. Editor, should I in the course of my experiments find that any of my "improvements in bee-hives" are "unphilosophical" and disapproved by "leading apiarians," I will not only imitate Mr. T. in discarding it myself, but will also cease to represent it as such to others. A. N. HENRY.

Oshawa, Feb. 9th, 1866.

Honey Bees.

As an instance of the sagacity possessed by honey bees, which amounts to bringing into action reasoning faculties, occurred in our apiary, some fifteen years ago, as follows:

A family of bees were dispossessed by the bee-moth, and we were not aware of it till the hive became full of moth worms and moth-millers. When we discovered the condition of the hive, we found that the bees of the adjoining hive, about a foot from the infested one, had built a wall of propolis—the gluey substance with which they stop up holes and cracks—along the entire side of their hive, which faced the one filled with the moths, about half an inch high and half an inch wide. This wall was built upon the bottom board of the hive, in order to close up the opening, the hive being raised about half an inch all round, resting on blocks at the corners.

It appeared that the bees were sensible of the danger to which they were subjected, and concluded to stop up the open space on the side of the most danger. When we discovered this wall, about 500 bees were at work upon it, it then being nearly finished. We left the invested hive on its stand two days, in order to watch the labours of the bees at the wall, and when we removed the mothly hive, the bees at work on the propolis wall, stopped their labours immediately.

Now, the question is, how did these bees know that such a wall would be a defence, and how did they communicate the object they had in view to each other, so as to produce a concert of action? It must have taken 500 to 1,000 bees 10 or 12 days to do what they did, and the mystery is, by what means, or knowledge, were they led to commence so great a task? It would seem that it was done by nothing short of human foresight and wisdom.—*Rural American*.



Grain Producers versus Grain Dealers.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR, In this age of progress and improvements, when people are laughed at, if they cannot keep up with the times, men write up inventions of all kinds, and insist on us farmers trying them. The best kinds of ploughs, drays, seed, seed-drills, reapers and mowers, the best kinds of stock, and the best way to manage them, the best time to market, are all topics more or less ably discussed. All this is very good, but there is one subject that has had not the attention paid to it that it ought to have. Some measures are necessary to protect us from the avarice of the buyers, especially the grain dealers. When we have toiled hard and battled with wind and weather, and after trying to do our best to raise a good crop and keep up with the times, and have been at a good deal of expense for implements, and at no little pains to bring our grain to market in a fair condition, so as to expect the market price, we are often grievously disappointed. In the small towns and villages, we are entirely at the mercy of a set of hungry, avaricious, commission agents. These wretches usually lay their heads together each morning, and fix the market price for the day. The rate would appear to be regulated by the quantity expected; but if they discover that they have over-estimated the amount, and that grain is arriving somewhat tardily, they put a few cents more on the bushel, when there is no actual rise in the market, well knowing that we will soon hear of it, and snap at the bait. But, like the skilful angler, they are ready to pull whenever they see us nibble, and then when they have a good haul in, down comes the price below the real value, and when there has been no actual fall in the Grain market. This, Sir, is no fancy sketch, but what actually takes place frequently in all our petty town and village markets. The buyers know we cannot help ourselves. When we have brought in a load—many of us a distance of fifteen to twenty miles—we are in a measure compelled to take whatever they offer, because of the lost time, trouble, and expense of drawing it home again—although all the time well aware we have been cheated out of perhaps six or eight dollars. Now, in this way we are unfairly dealt with. I don't think the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty will be our ruin. I am of opinion Canada would be a gainer, and at the same time more independent, by trading more with other nations, than in being so much restricted to one market. But there is one thing I am afraid of—had as we are at present—once the Yankee is shut out of our market, we will be more than ever left to the tender mercies of our commission agents. When they have a less opposition, we may expect them to shave closer still. Do not think I am one of those who would deny a fair profit to all. My motto is fair play—live and let live. All I contend for, is, that we are entitled *any and every day* to the fair market price for our produce. Now, Sir, could not you or some of your long-headed correspondents who write long yarns for THE CANADA FARMER, put us on some co-operative plan whereby we would be able to get justice in this matter? Could not farmers, as well as others, devise some plan, such, for instance, as by joining together and loosening the purse-strings a little, to build a storehouse of our own in the small towns and villages, (in the city, of course competition defies combination,) where we could at any time store our grain if the market price did not suit, until our masters, the grain dealers, came to their senses again? Possibly such a combination might eventually lead to the appointment of an agent of our own in the shipping ports for the transaction of our own business. I do not intend in the meantime to attempt laying down a plan, hoping that some one more qualified will take the subject in hand.

I consider the Farmer the mainstay, yea, the very backbone of Canada. Any man, although he has but one eye, and that but half open, can soon perceive by the lengthened visage and fallen lip of the country storekeeper, that when it is bad times with the farmer, they are the most to feel it. Hoping that you will give this a place in our CANADA FARMER—I say our, for I have a share in it, and have always done what I could to extend its circulation, and would like to see it in the hands of every tiller of the soil in Canada, because it has done much good already, and I expect it will yet accomplish much more.

Yours, &c.,

A PLAIN FARMER.

East Nisouri, Feb. 28, 1866.