

5. Do you think it likely, "after allowing for working expenses," that the average income from 150 hives would fall below £57¹/₂ per annum?—Simpleton, Staffs, August 28.

[Before giving our opinion on the questions enumerated above, we deem it necessary to say that our uniform rule is to endeavor to dissuade persons from engaging in the occupation of bee-keeping in this country as a sole means of obtaining a livelihood. From this rule it is not our intention to depart. There is, however, in the details furnished by our correspondent much to cause us to think favourably of the position as presented above. In the first place, he is giving up present employment from necessity, not choice. Second, he possesses the great advantage of eleven years' experience as a bee-keeper, and a full knowledge of the locality in which he resides as a honey district. Third, the prospective average is based on what he has already secured in the past, and the price of his produce is fixed at a much lower rate than he obtains at present. Fourth, he understands poultry-keeping and proposes to add it to the business, besides "filling up spare time in winter at other things." Fifth, the income expected is a modest one, and he possesses sufficient capital to enable him to secure the best terms for all he requires, and would thus start under the most favourable conditions.

All this tends to clear the way for a plain reply to the several questions:—1. Yes, 150 stocks would be better and safer if divided into fifties and located two or three miles apart for several reasons, but mainly in case of disease breaking out. We do not know of any one in this country who keeps so many as 150 hives, though several have over 100. 2. So much would depend on reason for queen-rearing and safely dividing for increase, at the rate proposed that we could promise no "certainty" in the matter.

Besides, in the case of making a business of bee-keeping it would be best to start with more than eleven stocks. 3. Yes, 30 lb. per hive is not at all an extravagant average to count on, and for good honey 5d. is a very low price, especially when considering that a portion would be sold retail. 4. No. In the busy season some help would be required, particularly in the way of having a handy person to watch for and hive swarms at out-apiaries. 5. As we have said, the prospects of realising £50 per annum under the circumstances detailed above are, in our opinion, quite likely of fulfilment, but in the whole business it depends as much upon the capacity and aptitude of the individual as upon anything else for making it pay.—Eds.]

A New Honey-Plant.

A plant that will pay land rent in honey alone has long been wanted. Figwort, the spider plant and many others have been tried and found wanting. At present German bee-keepers are very enthusiastic over a new forage and honey plant, which it may be worth while to give a trial on, this side of the water. A few seeds of this plant were sown this season by bee-keepers in this country, and their experience with it will be gratefully received by this department. The American Bee Journal has the following to say concerning the plant:—"It seems that a scientist named Wagner of Munich, Germany, has been at work for the past 30 yrs., crossing and improving, and from a bitter weed has developed a succulent forage plant unusually rich in sugar and relished by all kinds of stock. The illustration of plant shows its resemblance to the sweet-pea, to which it is closely related. The roots are said to penetrate the hardest, driest and rockiest soils, reaching to the depth of 10 or 20 feet.