

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

Sunshine and Shadow of Bee Culture.

MR. EDITOR,—You have requested me several times to write something for the JOURNAL; but I have never complied with your request excepting once when I sent you a short report. Now, as this is only the second time I have ever written for publication, you will not expect anything wonderful.

Well, to proceed. It is quite a few years (though I am but a young man) since I first became interested in bees. When but a little boy I can remember quite well the interesting times we used to have when my father's bees were swarming. Interesting times, indeed, when we went forth with the music of tin pan, cow bell and dinner horn, with the dog singing an accompaniment, and, to add still greater interest, some few individual representatives of the apiary, not fancying the serenade, would lend the electric influence of (what Josh calls) the business end of the bee to the affair. My father's bees were mostly destroyed by the moths, having been kept in the old box hive. After this, my brother tried a few hives, and though we got some honey, it seemed that the moths were bound to destroy everything.

I now come to the time when I got my first swarm of bees. While on my father's farm in the county of Norfolk, busily engaged in ploughing one beautiful June day, I was surprised to hear a rather peculiar sound, which I at first attributed to the wind; but as it became more distinct, I looked up, and, behold, here was a swarm of bees not ten feet above my head. I stopped my team for an instant to look at them; but wishing to finish the piece I was ploughing by noon, I hastened on, until arriving at the other end of the land I was working on, and perceiving that the bees were about to alight, I stopped my team and watched them till they alighted, when I hastened to the house and got one of the old box hives, and returned and hived them. When night came I carried them to the house. I afterwards made a couple of double-walled moveable frame hives, and transferred them to one of these, and got a nucleus from a lady bee-keeper near by, and put in the other.

The two colonies did not get very strong before winter, and though well protected against the cold, when the following March arrived I only had one colony alive. On the first of April I had two bee hives, a smoker, bee veil and some comb frames for sale. I now come to the fall of 1887, when we left the farm and moved to the village of Acton, in the county of Halton. I had made up my mind previous to leaving the farm, that when I got to Acton I

was going into the bee business. Accordingly when I arrived at Acton I went with my brother to Milton to visit a cousin of mine, Mr. George Laing, who had at that time upwards of one hundred colonies; and, as I afterwards learned to my great delight and satisfaction, had taken 5,000 lbs. of honey from them that season, besides increasing largely. Well, by this time, if not before, I had a pretty good attack of what is commonly known among bee-keepers as the bee fever, which only increased the more when he led me into his bee cellar where 125 colonies were resting composedly, securely sheltered from the blasts of winter. Before going home it was pretty well understood between my cousin and I, that when spring came he would see me back after bees and supplies.

After returning home, my cousin who, by the way, is a shrewd business man, and knew how to bait his hook, sent me a copy or two of our interesting CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL, which only added fuel to the flame which had already been started. When the proverbial merry month of May came round again, it found me more than anxious to see the bees in my own yard. When the 24th came round I had a grand celebration by going to Milton after my bees—ten colonies in all—which I brought up the next morning along with an extractor and 400 lbs honey, can, smoker, extra hive, frames etc. About this time I was about as happy as a young fellow of 18 years could readily be made. Well, I arrived at Acton without any serious difficulty excepting the breaking down of about a half dozen combs, which I was fortunate to get fixed up without even getting stung once that I remember.

Now, if this should meet the eye of any one who may have bee-keeping in prospect, it might lead them to suppose that if I, a perfect greenhorn at bee-keeping, could take a half dozen broken down combs and put them back in the frames and tack them there, therefore the handling of bees without being stung is a very easy thing. Now, do not come to hasty conclusions, I am not through with those half dozen combs yet. I still had to examine them to see when the bees have got them fastened up; and when should I do this, but just at sun down when the bees had stopped flying, and that without bee veil or smoker. And now for the fun, but more for the onlookers than for me. I uncovered the hive, and the bees arranged themselves in rows about three deep along the top of the frames, like a lot of soldiers with their heads up; and I thought they looked so fine—not a bee flew up; so I thought, as they were so quiet and peaceable, I would take out one of those broken combs, which I did, when my