

sent for one hive complete with frames and all, which we used as sample.

As soon as the bees could find any honey and nectar we started to transfer them into the new Langstroth hives, which we had made and all went nicely. The bees liked their new hives, and we liked them still more than the bees did. We did not think of running for comb, but started out for extracted. An extractor was got, which was a Novice's two frame extractor. We also improved our smoking apparatus, by buying a Clarke's Cold Blast smoker, which served us a number of years, when its place was taken by a Bingham, which we liked very much. In 1891 our three colonies increased to five, all went well through the summer, they gathered not so very little honey. All came out in the spring of 1892 in fine condition. One of the swarms of 1891 was given to our neighbor H. B. Hanson, who had started with bees the same year as we did, but they died out for him. From this one hive he has got eighty-nine colonies now. During the summer of 1892, they increased to eleven. All came out in the spring of 1893, and increased during the summer to twenty-seven. In the winter of 1894 we lost three colonies, which I believe was the first bees we had lost in wintering. During the summer of 1894, the twenty-four colonies that were left increased to forty-five, but several swarms strayed away and were not found. I am now coming to the last year, and will try and draw my story to an end, as it is already too long. We lost two colonies in the winter of 1895 and came out in the spring of 1895 with forty-three colonies. They increased during the summer of 1895 to ninety, which were put in the cellar, and were taken out this spring, five colonies were dead, and we have eighty-five colonies left. Our bees gather most of their honey from basswood, which produces the finest honey. I presume that many readers have never seen bees, and do not know how they work, and what they look like. If anybody should like to know how much it costs to keep bees, just take a trip up to our bee yards, and you can see for yourselves. Every question about bees will be answered cheerfully.

NELS & HANS HANSON.

"H'm!" said the man with the inconvenient memory. "The paper says that Miss Footlites swept the house with her charming smile. When I knew her, 18 years ago in Garrity's boarding-house, she used a broom."

## The Season.

The question of rainfall figures to a greater degree with us in Southern California than any other location with which I am acquainted. At this time (April) the precipitation in Solidad canyon and Newhall districts does not vary much from seven inches; some parts of the district named have had more, others less. Now the question comes up, what are we going to be able to do the present season? I have met a few bee-keepers of the "never-say-die" type who still maintain that we are going to make some surplus honey yet this year. My acquaintance with the portion of the state extends over a period of 22 years, and so far, unless we have rains by or (I mean six or eight inches) before February 1, we have never made any surplus honey. The lower portion of Solidad canyon, and in the Newhall district we had only two inches rainfall up to March 2, then we had a series of showers accompanied with snow that brought the fall up to six inches, and last week .75 of an inch more, which is the total for the season. Then the last few days of March and the first of April had a Mojave zephyr dry enough to shatter even a bee-keeper's promise without regard to his honest intentions when such promise was made.

As an indication of my faith in the season I have arranged to scatter my apiaries in five different places to enable the bees to board themselves, piled my supers containing honey in my extracting house to save for use at the end of the season or during the summer as occasion may require. I may as well make our mind now as late on that this is an off year, and turn our energies in the direction of saving ourselves and perfecting our distributing system while we have leisure time. Our failure for marketing honey have so far been selected while a reckless system has been allowed to grow up that has in some districts nearly swamped the bee-keeper, even with his tons of fine honey. The movement lately inaugurated will, if persisted in, any errors made in the beginning (it should creep in) be promptly corrected, give the producers a constant outlet, and prices that will at least be uniform for the entire honey-producing district. Let us look forward to a prosperous year in 1897, and show the world that we have faith in the future, and, like the gentleman, that we have "de san."

Rural Californian.

Thompson, Cal., April 2, 1896.

John G. Carr