

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

### Ah--The Weather, Pollen Dearth, and Spring Protection.

 PRESUME bee-keepers are no exception to the rest of mortals, consequently do their share of grumbling at times. This being the case, no one need wonder at Mr. Pringle or any one else sending up an occasional wail; especially when we have such a season as this, for I think there has not been such a one for many years past. As far as this locality is concerned, I can, I think, truthfully say, such a poor season for springing bees cannot be remembered. I, however, at one time was quite jubilant over the prospects of a fine spring, good crops, &c., as the first week in April certainly indicated such expectations. But alas, "The best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft aglee."

As I keep a record yearly, of the first pollen gathered, strength of each colony when first examined, first honey secured, &c., I was, as a matter of course, pleased to find that on the 7th of April, this season, my bees gathered their first natural pollen, being one day earlier than ever before.

"The days of joy are brief,  
Compared to those of sorrow;  
The very thing I least desired,  
Appeared upon the morrow."

Yes, the following day the wind turned to the north, and has succeeded in keeping there ever since, and to make matters worse, the frosts at night have done what the wind failed to do, in regard to retarding brood rearing. Not only have the bees not been able to rear brood, the result of a complete pollen dearth, but the sun also shone so brightly at times, thereby enticing the bees out, when, on account of their impaired vitality, only resulted in the depletion of the colonies in their fruitless attempts to secure the desired article. Consequently, spring dwindling is another of the undesirable benefits we are deriving this season to our heart's content.

Well, what is the remedy for all this? Some will say, don't let your bees fly; yes, close them up entirely on cold, windy days, or shade the entrances so as the sun cannot shine on it, &c.; true, but I know some who pretend to do this, and yet they do not always succeed, as the worry caused the bees often does more harm than good. Again, such advice cannot be acted upon by those having out apiaries, in all cases.

Now, what did you do? may be asked by some. Well, as soon as I found the weather was not what I thought it ought to be for successful springing, I closed all the entrances so that only one or two bees could make their exit

at once, (I always do this in spring), then I saw each colony hold an abundance of stores, and all surplus combs over and above what the bees could cover taken away. I now placed shallow trays in a warm nook in the apiary, filled with a mixture of oat meal and flour, adding a few drops of honey to start the bees working thereon. I also placed two vessels (60 lb. honey tins) filled with water, in the same place, the one containing salt, and the other fresh water, a small hole being cut in each near the bottom, and a piece of cotton cloth inserted in much the same manner a woman would prevent a wash boiler from leaking, (temporarily of course), except that the cloth was put in loosely to allow the water to leak out slowly and run down a board projecting in front of the vessel containing the water, it having grooves cut in it with an axe, so as to afford the bees an opportunity of sipping the water which was warmed by the sun both in the tin and also while running down the board. I may here add, I was unable to discover that the bees showed any preference for the salt, over the fresh water, as both appeared to be visited alike at all times.

During my spare moments I used to sit down near this spot and listen to the merry hum and joyous flitting of the little fellows from the nook to the hives, as well as watching them burrow in the meal, they at times fairly fighting with one another in their haste to get a load. It is almost needless to say, this sort of thing paid for the little time and labor given, besides keeping the bees out of mischief. A Scotch friend dropped in while the bees were most actively at work, and at first seemed amazed, then laughed aloud, and quaintly remarked it was the first time he knew bees fed their young on partridge. Ah, said he, "that is what makes them so thrifty."

You, of course, know I am a great believer in packing all hives, and this I always do with even cellar wintered bees, as I have satisfied myself this is a necessity in my locality, and even if not *always* so, it is best to be on the safe side.

I know of quite a number of instances this spring, that cellar wintered bees have not only suffered severely, but many a colony is now defunct from this neglect, and the owners now beginning to think a little seriously about the matter.

I regret very much at having also to chronicle heavy winter losses in this vicinity the past winter, as follows: 32 colonies out of 45, 30 out of 32, 10 out of 12, &c. I am pleased, however, to be able to say my loss to date is only six, and those were in reality only strong nuclei last