

Hints For Beginners

R. F. HOLTERMANN.

In an experience covering more than twenty years a striking feature to me of the bee-keeping business is the fact that the bee-keeping of a great many is short lived. True there are many names to be found on the list of bee-keepers who were there when I began in 1881, men who have been and are engaged in bee-keeping today; men who have made a living out of bee-keeping exclusively and who have even brought up a family and given them an education quite the equal of the average farmer. Yet with all there are too many changes, too many who engage in it for a time and then fail or become discouraged. Why? To wisely engage in and succeed in any enterprise one must sit down and count the cost. What are the difficulties to be overcome? Can I overcome them and how? Many a man who might have succeeded in an undertaking had he been prepared, has failed for lack of forethought and that preparation. The individual, the country and the bee-keeping is none the better off for money invested and then lost in bee-keeping, unless we except the value bees are for the polonization of blossoms. Since man fell and that decree has gone out "by the sweat of thy brow," no one can produce good fruit without battling against difficulties resisting natural tendencies. Bee-keeping is no exception. Bee-Keeping is a business and application, skill, thought and enterprise will in it be rewarded, this is the specialists safeguard; the sooner we realize this

the sooner bee-keeping will be placed upon a business footing. Whilst there may be some hindred from engaging in bee-keeping, there will be a larger number successful in it and the general average quality of honey put upon the market will be better, there will be less of selling honey below the cost of production and our markets will be improved.

There is of necessity much that must be left unsaid for want of space. One of the first points which meets the beginner is, "shall I produce comb or extracted honey?" A great many rush into the production of comb honey thinking that it will be less care and that it requires less experience. Such action is the first step towards probable failure and clearly shows that the individual has not "counted the cost." In the production of comb honey colonies must be strong at the beginning of the honey flow. When that flow is likely to begin and end must be known to the successful comb honey producer, and this requires years of experience and careful observation. I have known hundreds of cases where sections, foundation and supers have been bought and put upon the hive where there was not the least hope of securing any more honey. The hive must be very clean, with old comb a good color of honey cannot be secured. The fact that bees are far more likely to swarm when run for comb honey alone puts comb honey production out of the reach of the novice and this excessive swarming lays the foundation for queenless colonies, weak swarms and deficient stores for winter and accompanying loss.

The comb honey when any is secured is in such a shape that it cannot be sold to advantage and it is a source of dissatisfaction and loss to everyone who touches it.