

Bee-Keeping In North Dakota.

Christine, N. D., June 6.—To the Forum: I am now about to write a piece, stating our experience in bee-keeping, from the time we started it seven years ago, in '89 and up to the present year. Seven years ago, somehow we got the notion into our heads—I say we, because it includes a few more than myself—of starting bee-keeping. We just wanted to have two or three colonies, just enough to furnish honey for our own use, but they increased rapidly and we did not know how to prevent it. During these first years we had many experiences and some, if we should mention them, would cause considerable laughter. But I do wonder if you were to start without any knowledge about bee-keeping if you would act just as we did. We started in 1889 with one colony for which we sent to Wisconsin. We received it in the latter part of March, 1889, in very bad shape, as it had been smashed on the way, and many of the bees began to crawl out as it arrived at the depot. When we got it home we carried it up stairs, as the weather was too cold to put them out just then. One day we thought that it ought to be warm enough to put them out, but you see we did not know how much the bees could stand. The wind blew from the north that day, and it was quite strong. We spread the wire screen in front of the hive, to let them out. And out they came I can tell you! and in such a tremendous rush as they were, they started into the air, and, I am sorry to say, though I watched all day, I did not see many back again. There was about a cupful left in the hive, but fortunately the queen did not start out on the lively march. But I don't think we knew at that time that each colony had to have a queen.

The first year we got one swarm, which we sat watching for, in eighteen days. During these days that we sat watching for the bees to swarm, there came a man from Minnesota who said he knew a little about bees. It was a very warm day when he came, and the bees had gathered outside the hive and hung in large cluster. We had our new hive ready for the swarm. Well, he said the only way for us to be sure to get the swarm was to take a large bread pan and make a wooden spade. This was soon done, and we wanted him to practice what he preached." He started to work, got a veil and a pair of gloves. He filled up his bread pan, of course, and ran over to the new hive, opened the cover and poured them in; of course he closed the cover, but it did not help; they got back to

the old hive before he got there, so he had to give it up for a bad job. It should have been said that the old hive we got the bees in, was a square hive with gallop frames and we had not opened it since it arrived at our place, so we did not know how things were going on inside. We thought that they took care of themselves, without our help, and so they did the first year. In the fall of 1889 we put into the cellar two colonies, a good start for the next year. They came out in the spring in good condition.

In 1890 they increased to three colonies. That year we had one of our funny experiences of which I shall try and give you a brief account.

We had not taken any honey from our bees before. We selected our first swarm as the victim of our cruel treatment; as we have since called it. And now comes into my mind, to say a few words about the smoker we had. It was one of our own manufacture. It was made of an old rubber boot, which served for a bellow, and the fire box was made of a salmon box. A good looking thing I tell you, but the strength of its blowing power we will not dispute. Now back to the hive, it was opened as gently as possible, no veil was used, and nothing on the hands either, which we did not use for the first three years, but have been using afterwards. What a sight we saw when the hive was opened, the bees had started to build from one corner to the other, not a single frame could be removed without injury to the combs.

To the house we went for a knife and a cut was made between those frames which we wanted to take out. I believe three frames were taken out and the hive closed. After about five minutes time you should have been at the scene. Out of the entrance came a stream of that sweet nice honey, carrying with it large numbers of its owners, the bees I mean—thousands and more than thousands came to the end of their work. We did not know what to do, so we went to work and made a new entrance and bored a hole under the bottom of the hive. The hive was standing on a chair three feet high from the ground so it could easily be done. That was the first and last time we tried to take honey from our bees that year.

In the fall of 1890 we put three strong colonies into the cellar. In the spring of 1891 we took them out of the cellar all in good condition. We had now a little experience and had also read from a bee-book called "The Bee keepers Guide," by A. J. Cook which helped us a great deal. In this book we also saw the description of the Langstroth hive and frames. We