

GENERAL.

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

Blacks vs. Italians.

IN one of our Bee Journals a certain brother takes another to task for praising the Black bees too highly, then he makes the same mistake in the other direction by giving the Italian bee an unseemly boast. He says he got 1,100 pounds of honey from twenty-five colonies of Italians, while 9 colonies of Blacks gave him "nary a bit." Now, perhaps we are not careful enough at times in our verdict. I don't doubt the brother's statement, but have all the facts been brought to light in this case. Were the nine colonies on an even footing with the Italians at the first of the season? Had they the same hives, the same numbers, the same feed, and care? Did he pet the Blacks as much as the others, and call them fine fellows? Did he try to work the Blacks up? There is a good old homly saying, that to have a fat pig, you must pat him with your hand and tell him he is a fine fellow. Did you look cross-eyed at the Blacks, and tell your neighbors that you didn't expect any honey from those nine Blacks; did you expect after that they would be faithful to you.

I have handled both Italians and Blacks—or German bees, about as long as any one, and I find there is no need to be losing sleep over the bad qualities of either race. My best [hive of Blacks gave me about 110 pounds of comb honey and my best Italian colony about the same. I know nothing about all these new kinds of bees that people are hunting up, so I will not speak for, or against them, but I know this, that if all the praise that is sung in their favor prove as groundless as the praise bestowed on many other things in years gone by, it only proves, that we will never find a better bee, all things considered, than the German or Black bee. In saying this, I do not disparage the Italians, for they are as good as the Blacks, but not better, this wholesale praise of any race of bees, to the exclusion of the native Blacks, is not doing bee-business any good, it is causing perpetual changes and expenditure of money where it is not needed. I have found no reason to give any bee preference over Blacks. Perhaps much that is said in praise of any variety is only for effect. Imagination and prejudice, also play their parts on these changes. No profession is free from jay-hawkers, and sharks don't all live in the sea, farmers are duped with Bohemian oats, while bee-keepers stand in open mouthed wonder listening to wonderful tales in praise of some new kind of bees, which

if once obtained, no further assurance of riches would be needed; so it goes, year after year, all unmindful that there is nothing new under the sun. Evolution never has nor never will give us better bees, even could we fence our bees in as we do cattle, we could produce no better bees than the Blacks, but as it is, I fear the result of our native bees coming in contact with some of these imported wonders that are praised so much by those who may have selfish ends in view. Most honey producers have long ago settled the question in a simple conservative way, and wish nothing better than the bee that made honey for his pan cake when he was a boy. Evolution is needed in our management of bees, but we need to evolve many of our absurd and costly fixtures which only add to our worry and the cost of raising honey. In these days of multiplied nonsense what must be the cost of producing honey, when conservative men say its production costs them thirteen cents per pound. But let us compare the two races of bees, for in this way we may not condemn either race unjustly. The Italian is a little larger than the Black, and for this reason has a longer tongue in proportion, and can gather honey from Red clover, still I have no reason to believe that it excels its sister Black in this direction to any great extent. If it protects its hive from moth better than Blacks, it is strange I have not observed it. Italians are not as domestic as Blacks, they are roamers, leaving their brood on cold days when the Blacks are employed at home to better advantage, they are also more apt to rob.

The Italian is not quiet enough to make a good wax secreter, they delight in "git up and git" no doubt. They lack wax, so they fill their cells so full of honey as to wet the cappings making their honey appear watery, and dark. If honey is not abundant they forsake the supper, and store their brood chamber so full as to exclude brood, hence, the lack of young bees for winter, and consequently spring dwindle takes place. The Italians like to gather honey, and by giving them combs, and working for extracted honey, they will do well, but if you give Blacks the same advantage, they will not be left far behind even in this; it is natural for blacks to store in boxes and they will fill the boxes if there is a hole big enough for them to enter, while Italians seem to like their hive to be all in one, and they ignore any surplus arrangement that has not the largest possible entrance. Hence, the tiering up of hives, with combs supplied, and working for extracted honey in this way you can work Italian bees, still there is something that makes us like this gold bands, and we can