

My first hives were the old fashioned straw lippen, or lepen as they were sometimes called, and the original bar hive with its three glass sides protected by wooden slides.

These however were soon discarded for the Woodbury bar frame hive which differed little from the frame hives of to-day. Another hive of Woodbury's I much admired. It consisted of a rectangular wooden frame. The sides of the hive were constructed of little bundles of rye straw tightly bound together which fitted into the grooves in the frame work. The bottom board was of wood and the entrance was an inclined plane sloping upwards from the outside and opening within the hive and the top or crown board was similarly constructed, with the sides with the addition of a central hole for feeding. Two coats of varnish made everything tight and an outside cover with sloping sides made everything snug.

I soon learned to drive successfully and the doomed bees in my neighborhood were frequently rescued from the tartarean fumes of the brimstone pit and entered on a second lease of life in my wooden boxes. Sometimes I got so many bees in this way that I could afford to unite three or four swarms and then I had a hive sure enough that was equal to any emergency. A few pounds of sugar converted into syrup and simmered ten minutes to prevent crystallisation, was then fed to them from an ordinary wine bottle over the mouth of which some muslin had been tied. The bottle was then inverted over a hole in the crown board the whole being supported by the insertion of the neck in a suitable hole bored in a block of wood. An inch or two of wire gauze kept the bees out of the feeder and made all complete.

As soon as I discovered plenty of sealed honey comb feeding was discontinued and I generally had satisfactory results. Well, so much for old time experiences. Now let us proceed to Virginia. I have been here now over ten years and latterly have revived my old hobby. As I have a natural love for children I suppose I must not neglect "The Baby," and sad as it is I shall have to relate with much humility the disasters of last winter. I went into winter quarters with upwards of twenty hives, some of them I confess were weak, but I sanguinely expected that two-thirds of them would come through somehow as they were fairly supplied with stores. The early part of the winter here was mild, and as a severe one was not generally expected, I neglected to give the extra protection I had intended, hoping that it would be time enough to do so on my return from a trip to Florida which I contemplated. However, I took time enough to protect with chaff

packing four of the number and had I treated all in similar fashion I doubt not but that my losses would have been less. To make matters worse I was detained later than I expected. Winter set in with unusual severity and I returned to find most of my hives dead. Of the chaff protected one only perished and that was a weak hive that had been queened too late in the season. Of the seven hives I had remaining, Spring dwindling and robbing further reduced me to three, one of which was decidedly weak and the other two only fairly strong. In this predicament there was nothing for it but doubling so I started out to purchase a hive or two for the purpose. Much to my chagrin the bees in the neighborhood had been so decimated that it was next to impossible to purchase except at prohibitory prices. I then thought of trying to get some bee trees and after a little enquiry I procured two trees the bees from which I secured and united them with my two weakest hives. So now I have started once more with three very respectable hives, two of them contain Italian queens from the strains of Messrs. Root and Alley, and the third is a Syrio or Cyprio Italian, the full daughter of one of your extra honey gathering queens. They, *i.e.* the last named, are rapid in the extreme in the use of their stings, but for beauty, fecundity and honey-gathering properties they are as good a strain of bee as I ever handled. I find that a little tobacco smoke blown in at the entrance completely tames them and then with ordinary care they can be safely handled. Woe to the luckless wight that jars them unsmoked for he will know to his cost what it is to have a bee in his bonnet. Perhaps in justice to myself as well as my bees I should state that the demand for my queens kept my hives constantly disturbed, and really they had not a fair show. We will try and show up better next time. As I do not wish to exhaust your patience and hope to write again, I will conclude and next time I shall hope to tell you all about my way of taking bee trees.

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SOUNDING FOR A QUEEN WITH A PITCHFORK.

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—I cannot give you an account of my success in beekeeping as I never kept any bees though for the past year I have taken quite an interest in apiculture. My boss has ten hives. He had ten last Fall, left them on their summer stands and lost six colonies. A neighboring bee-keeper came the other day and sounded a hive from which a swarm had issued, with a pitch fork, placing the tyne to the hive and the handle close to his ear. You could hear the queens very plainly. The old one sounded strong while the young one sounded weaker and lower. The king birds are quite numerous here. They are great bee-eaters. I have heard that field mice get into bee hives and destroy the bees.