

biggest part of their doing; and that it was just possible (by looks of things, sometimes) that the world itself was one big mistake. If, however in the sum of things, it should prove to be otherwise, the anomaly is nevertheless here that this world is fairly full of mistakes, misdeeds, and misdoings, with misers, misanthropes, and monstrosities in plenty. But if the world itself, in the abstract, is not quite a mistake, in the concrete it has produced lots of men (a few of them bee-keepers) who are out and out blunders, worse than useless. They are pests in society and barnacles on the Body Politic. (Of course this is not applicable to bee-keepers to any great extent. I am coming to them presently.)

Through ignorance, passion, or perversity, men violate the laws of health and incur sickness, pain and premature death. They violate ethical law, and demoralize themselves; social law, and degrade themselves; economical law, and impoverish themselves, and so it goes. If the wise man (including the bee-keeper) is he who uses his organism and environment rightly, and the fool (including the bee-keeper) is one who does the contrary, then there are a thousand fools in this world for every wise man that's in it. I am not going quite as far here as the cynical sage of Chelsea (Thos. Carlyle), who has left his opinion on record that the world is mostly made up of fools.

But I am not particularly concerned here with the follies of mankind in general, but I am concerned with the follies and mistakes of bee-keepers in particular. The first mistake that some bee-keepers make is made, strangely enough, before they become bee-keepers at all. And this is an unprofitable mistake. If the man is square and the pursuit round, or the man round and the business square, there will be a misfit, and consequently a mistake. The world is full of such mistakes. Men persist in getting into the wrong places. They do this because of ignorance, or conceit, or ambition, or greed, or something else higher or lower, as the case may be. In the matter of bee-keeping, however, (I now refer to progressive, expert bee-keeping) there are, I am inclined to think, fewer misfits than in most other occupations. The reason of this is not far to seek. A large majority of bee-keepers are bee-keepers first and foremost because they love the business as a business, as well as the dollars it brings. And this attachment is in itself an evidence of special aptitude. As a rule, the business or vocation to which the boy or man naturally gravitates is the one to which he is naturally adapted. In other lines the particular art, trade or profession

is usually selected by others for the boy, instead of by the boy for himself. It is selected in most instances without any references to, or knowledge of, his natural qualifications or disqualifications for the position. Hence the numerous misfits—the manifold life failures. But this is not generally true of bee-keeping, as the business is spontaneously selected by the subjects themselves. Some men, it is true, go into bee-keeping solely to make money out of it, and such would love any business which “panned out” handsomely, whether the business was night-soiling, bee-keeping or gold-gambling! But even such men are apt to make a success of the bee-business without special adaption, because they bend all their energies to it—not through a love for the bees or the business, but for the money that's in it. Hence it is, that while in the lower walks of bee-keeping there is blundering in plenty, in the higher grades of expert bee-keeping the mistakes and failures are much less common than in most other occupations.

Primary or preliminary mistakes aside, let us now turn to a few of the supplementary mistakes, big and little, which bee-keepers, high and low, fall into.

In the first place, when a man gets by mistake into the wrong business (for him) of tending bees, it is another mistake not to get right out of it again before his money and himself have parted company. When the ambitious novice has seen heard and read just enough about bee-keeping to swell his head and fill it with the idea that he was specially predestinated to the business, and it was foreordained that he should make a fortune out of it, and that all he has to do is to go into it and through it to said fortune in a very short space of time—when this is the state of things in his upper *sensorium*, he is about to make a grand mistake, and his little capital is about as good as gone. To make a little fortune out of bee-keeping (saying nothing about a big one) it takes time and patient, persistent work, as well as special aptitude and ability; and, in addition to all this, an extra locality for the abundant yield of nectar. But a little fortune may undoubtedly be made under the favorable conditions noted.

When the novice sets out with a score or more of colonies to start with, this is a mistake. With such a number he makes so many mistakes before he gets experience, that loss instead of profit is soon down in his ledger. Probably his first winter fixes off his 20 colonies with their increase. As in so many other handicrafts (and *headcrafts*, to coin a word) nothing can take the place of experience and manipulation in modern