

Thoughts and Comments

ON CURRENT TOPICS.

By a York County Bee Keeper.

"ALL'S WELL THAT END'S WELL."

Notwithstanding so much cold, wet weather through June and July, from reports received, would think that a good half crop of honey has been secured. In this locality clover yielded splendidly during the few days the bees could work on it; basswood did not bloom enough to be noticeable in the apiary. In notes for July I spoke of the comparative values of alsike and white clover as honey yielders. All through the season the bees' attention seemed to be divided about equally between the two clovers and grass peas. However, as soon as the alsike began to ripen, although there was an abundance of white clover still in bloom, the flow slackened perceptibly, so I still think that in our latitude alsike is the apiarist's best friend.

By the way, would like to see reports from other localities in regard to grass peas. This past season has convinced me that here, at least, is a honey plant of considerable merit.

LARGE HIVES VERSUS SMALL ONES.

I trust readers of the C. B. J. will pardon me if I venture to say a word or two in connection with that old chestnut, "What size of hive is most profitable?"

Discussions on this subject pro and con are generally wound up with the compromise "it depends upon localities."

While this may be true to a certain extent, in my judgment it depends more upon the season. If the

bees have wintered none too well, and the honey flow comes very early and is of short duration, no doubt, a hive no larger than 8 L. frames will give as good if not better results than a larger one. But in an ordinary season, particularly a late one, for an outyard at least, I want a large hive to secure the maximum amount of honey at a minimum of labor.

At an outyard of 70 colonies this past season, nearly 50 were in hives equal to 9 Quinby frames, 8 were in 8 frame L. hives, balance in very large hives equal in capacity to 17 L. frames, with extracting supers same size. Let me say at the outset that my experience with small hives is quite limited as I was "raised" beside great big hives, still I believe I am familiar with about every plan advocated by users of small hives, such as hoisting of brood, shaking off on starters, etc. The first plan means too much work for the busy man, the second is all right provided you want increase. But, to return, about 40 colonies in the smaller hives swarmed; swarmed any and every way, doubled, trebled and quadrupled, and for all I could do to the contrary, a lot of them were so demoralized during the honey flow that they were practically useless. Those in the "barns" kept mum and worked; results, each one of them stored from 200 to 350 lbs. from the clover during the few days they could work. As the average for the yard was away below figures like that, I feel safe in assuming that had all colonies been in "barns" this season, would have a great deal more honey to take care of. "One swallow don't make a summer," to be sure, yet results have been much the same at yard mentioned for past three seasons. All the work these large colonies received was to have their queens clipped in May, queen excluders and supers