

WHY IS IT?—By J. K. DARLING.

When requested by the Secretary to prepare a paper for this meeting I did not know what to say in reply. My experience is not sufficient to warrant me in choosing a subject relating to apiculture and treating it as it ought to be treated. I thought I could not do better than note a few of the difficulties that I have met from time to time, some of which I have partly well overcome, while others remain as obstinate as ever. The object of this paper is not to show what little I know about beekeeping, but rather to string together a few of the difficulties that are more or less annoying to the majority of beekeepers, especially those who have not had experience enough to help themselves over these sand bars in the stream they have decided to float upon. I say "help themselves," for it is when a man is not able to help himself, and has to depend on the information he gets from the books and periodicals devoted to apiculture, that his real troubles begin.

QUESTION.

1.—Why is it that the instruction given in this manner so often proves partially, if not wholly, useless to the novice who is trying to carve his way as a beekeeper.

ANSWERS.

Assuming that it is true that the instruction given in bee books and journals often proves of little value to the novice the reasons may be various. In the first place the "instructions" may not be clear, and hence misleading. In the second place the "novice" may not understand the instructions; but thinking he does, he proceeds to follow them and "puts his foot in it." In the third place, he may understand the instructions all right, but, through lack of experience or skill, may not be able to carry them out right; hence the result reached will be quite different from the result expected. In the fourth place, instructions, perfectly clear and good in themselves, may not apply to the place where they are carried out, yet would be perfectly applicable to some other place; or they might not be applicable to the circumstances of hive and environment, and hence the result would astonish the "novice" instead of pleasing him. In the fifth place, the instructions themselves (probably only a theory or speculation) may be all off, and consequently just as likely in being carried out to produce a bad as a good result. It is a nice thing to be able to dis-

tinguish between a principle and an hypothesis; and in the realm of apiculture I presume the novice would be quite likely to confound them. And this is not to be wondered at when we see the old heads and the professional heads sometimes doing the very same. It is quite astonishing what a small amount of generalization will enable some reasoners (?) to reach a general conclusion. A few facts will suffice, and the principle is forthwith adduced or deduced, and is duly set up as a fundamental principle worthy of all acceptance. Facts are, it is true, stubborn things; but it takes more than one or two of them to transform a theory into a principle. Hence it is that a great deal of the popular literature of apiculture, like that of many other growing sciences, is crude and theoretical, and therefore just as likely as not to land the novice into a thousand and one dilemmas. He is utterly unable to sift the wheat from the chaff. The only and best advice I can give the novice in these premises is to hear all sides as far as he can; and then, wherever there is a conflict of authorities, use his own judgment as the final court, and follow the course which to him appears right under his own circumstances. By doing this, and carefully and intelligently watching results, he will soon get on the right track.

—ALLEN PRINGLE, Selby, Ont.

On account of different flora, a different locality, and different manipulation.—G. M. DOOLITTLE.

The instructions are nearly always correct; but we do not read or understand them as the author does. I find that if you request ten persons to read a set of instructions, eight will not get them correctly.

—H. D. CURTING, Tecumseh, Mich.

The instruction is not given in a plain way as a teacher should give it, and because a novice is slow of understanding.—JOHN F. GATES, Ovid, Erie Co., Pa.

The answer to No. 1 is to my mind easy and simple. Different writers write from their own standpoints, which takes in locality, etc., consequently the information