

The Apiary.

PUTTING BEES INTO WINTER QUARTERS.

By A. C. Atwood.

LETTER NO. 1.

Many persons form a very false idea of what constitutes winter quarters for bees; they think any place is better than out of doors, and, acting on that idea, they set them away, as I have frequently seen them, in such places as the driving house, granary, milk house, wood house, back stoop and a dozen more just such places as we would hang a chunk of beef, if we wanted to keep it hard frozen all winter. But for bees, such places are worse by all odds than their summer stands, as I shall prove before I have done.

Many will open their eyes when reading this, having always heard me recommend putting bees in winter quarters. Understand me; I am still as much as ever in favor of winter quarters, providing they are really what winter quarters ought to be. A winter repository for bees ought to be perfectly dark, quite dry, and away from the influence of fire, so that it will not be hot in the day time or cold at night; it should be where there is no jarring, hammering or noise; it should have an even temperature, as near 33 degrees as possible, never over 40 degrees as a rule. For those who have not a thermometer I would recommend to place a cup of water in the hive; the water should just freeze and no more, and it makes no difference where such a place can be found, that is the place to winter some bees.

In such a place the bees can at all times pass freely over their combs to their stores, and the combs will come out dry in the spring, with the hive full of strong bees, and will at the same time winter with about half the stores they would consume if wintered out of doors. They must, of course, have upward ventilation, as, indeed, they ought to have in all cases, according to the strength of the colony. If a repository cannot be got that will always remain at 33 degrees, I would rather have it run up to 45 degrees than to get below 30. Bees do not go into a cold dormant state, like snakes and frogs, as some suppose, for a thermometer thrust into the centre of the cluster will at all times show, even in the coldest day in winter, a summer temperature. Usually in February the queens begin to lay eggs; these eggs are hatched, the larva fed, capped over, and comes out a perfect bee in 21 days, the same as in summer, which proves the contra of a dormant state. Hence the necessity of a proper wintering repository.

The objections to wintering in such places as the driving house, &c., as referred to, are that a thermometer in such a place will show just about as cold a temperature as it does out of doors on a cold day, and if a fine, sunny day should come, such as we usually have every 12 or 15 days in winter, the bees in the driving house never feel the good of it. They stand perhaps for five months in a place as cold as can be. The breath of the bees condenses on the sides of the hive and outside combs, and they become one mass of ice. The bees on the outside of the cluster get chilled, and those in the centre are as backward to turn out as I am to turn out of bed these cold mornings. The result is that they arrive to death with plenty of stores in the hive, being locked up in ice.

Still, notwithstanding this fact, the poor bee keeper—or rather old fogy, he ought to be called—clears his conscience by saying: "I put them into winter quarters." True, but they proved to be a living tomb.

The advantages of wintering on the summer stands over such places can be easily proven. Bees will stand a great amount of cold if they are relieved every 10 or 12 days by a few hours of warm sun. The sun strikes the hive and warms it up; the bees live up and warm the combs; they move out and bring a fresh supply of food into the centre of the cluster, and are then ready to stand another siege of cold weather.

If a person has not a proper repository, I would recommend him to leave the bees in their summer stand; leave the honey boxes in for ventilation; raise the hive up say three-eighths of an inch from the board all around, not more, as the mice may get in. Fix it so that you can pack pea straw on the back, two sides and top full one foot thick, as tight as it can be packed, leaving the front directly facing the noon sun open, so the sun can strike the hive. Leave all the fly holes open, and in fine days lay wheat straw in front of the hives. Of course the bees will consume more honey than if wintered in a proper repository, but they will come out in a different shape than they would if wintered in the wood house.

Mr. D. Patterson, of Copetown, commends the Agricultural College and says all the farmers he has spoken to about it consider it a humbug of gigantic proportions.

NEW YORK AND EUROPE CARRYING TRADE.

The gross receipts of the carrying trade between New York and foreign ports amounted during the year just closed to nearly \$60,000,000. Aside from the interest which these statistics in themselves possess, there are several points emphasized by them which are worthy of attention. In the first place, the capital employed in this enormous and enormously profitable business is almost, if not entirely European capital. Most of the vessels used in this traffic, it will be seen, are built in the Clyde. All the profits go into foreign pockets. The most trivial details of the service results in benefit not at all to this country but solely to England, France, and Germany. The vessels employed are commanded by Europeans, sent out from the home offices. Not many years ago forty packed ships sailed out of this port under the American flag. When packed ships came to be superseded by steamships, and the profits of ocean traffic were immensely increased, the United States quietly handed over whatever advantages they might have enjoyed to their countries.

(Chicago elevators, on Feb. 31 contained 2,491,972 bushels of wheat; 1,862,346 bushels of corn; 681,746 bushels of oats; 62,257 bushels of rye and 334,063 bushels of barley, making a total 5,432,387 bushels of all kinds of grain, against 5,731,361 bushels at the same period last year.

ILLINOIS BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

A committee has been appointed by the legislature of Illinois to investigate into alleged exorbitant charges for printing the transactions of the Board of Agriculture. Some objections have been made, also to the character of the papers composing the volume, some of which that noted authority on literary matters, the Chicago Times, describes as "unmitigated trash," "literary slush," "worse than useless," "inconsequent lectures by irresponsible mountebanks," and "essays by prolific ignoramuses."

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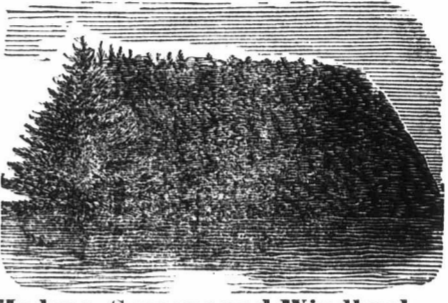
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