

## The Result of Caring for or Neglecting Bees in Spring.

(Written for the Journal.)

It never paid me to feed to stimulate my colonies in *early* spring, and when I practiced it many years ago, I wore out the old bees already aged at a rapid rate, and got about one young bee for the loss of three or four old ones. The stimulating of my colonies by feeding them in *early* spring broke the cluster, excited the bees and caused them to fly too much in unsuitable weather when there was nothing for them to gather. By that sort of work I weakened many a good colony and then learned by experience to let all colonies carefully alone in spring until the bees began gathering honey from the willows, wild plum and other early honey producing trees. For several years I have practiced uncapping the honey in brood chambers in warm evenings in spring after the bees had begun gathering honey and I always found that it paid me about the best of anything I ever did. Last spring when my bees began gathering honey I uncapped some of the combs in the brood chambers in warm evenings, and put on the half stories, and a few evenings later on I uncapped the rest of the combs so as to leave no sealed honey in the brood chambers at that time of the year, as I wanted the brood chambers full of brood so as to get the hives very full of bees in time for the honey flow. By uncapping some of the combs one evening and the rest some evenings a little later on, the bees did not have too much to attend to at a time, then they cleaned things up very nicely each night, and as soon as the bees removed the uncapped honey up into the half-stories the queen started laying in the cells, soon after that I found every comb full of brood clear up to, and all along the top bars. About the middle of May wet weather set in and for three weeks we had the wettest time I ever saw. This very wet weather coming at a time when my colonies were so very full of brood and bees was a serious thing as it completely shut off all honey gathering at a time when a good deal was needed to feed the large quantity of brood that the colonies had on hand. Soon after the wet weather set in I examined the brood chambers to see if the bees were taking the unsealed honey down from the half stories fast enough to feed the larvae well. I saw that they were not

and that the larvae was not well fed, and that some of it was going to starve although there was plenty of unsealed honey in the top stories. With no honey coming in, and no *unsealed* stores in the brood chambers and bees hatching out and wandering over the combs putting their little bills into cells here and there in hunt of food, and not finding any. I knew that they would rob the larvae of its food, I then took the combs out of all the half stories and in the evenings fed every colony in the apiary, so that the brood could be well fed. When the wet weather was over and the bees began to gather honey I had the most bees in the hives that I ever saw, and every colony did well for a time. Then just at the time when they were doing their level best at gathering honey from clover, my colonies started swarming at a terrible rate. I never saw anything to equal it. This state of things was the result of the booming and feeding I did at the proper time in spring.

It paid me well the work I put on my bees in spring, even if it did send them into the honey season with a big swarming fever. I got a good crop of honey for a poor season and am sure that I would not have got near the quantity I did if I had not looked closely after my bees during the wet weather we had in the last of May and fore part of June. That long spell of wet weather that set in in the later part of spring when colonies were full of brood, was very hard on all apiaries where the owners did not attend to the wants of their bees. With the honey flow so suddenly shut off, the bees soon used up the *unsealed* honey, and then they did not uncapped the sealed stores fast enough to keep pace with the very large quantity of larvae that required so much feeding, the result was a good deal of starved brood. Soon after that the constitution of many colonies began to go wrong at a rapid rate, queens slacked up in their laying, drones were killed off, brood dragged from the cells and thrown out. Many of the small larvae never got a particle of food and when they died from starvation they looked like little dried worms. Soon of the brood died after it was capped through not being fed enough before it was capped to last it until hatched. The bees in a few cells here and there were a day or two longer than the usual time in hatching and came near starving on the scanty supply of food that was given them before their cells were capped, and when they hatched they were dark in color, slim and very weak, and scarcely able to fly, and were very often considered to be old bees by the owners. I found many colonies in the Province in a horrid state and going