

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

The Hybernation Theory--Stingers as Trowels.

ON page 877 of the C.B.J., Rev. W. F. Clarke conveys the idea that the "hibernation" theory as advocated by him is gaining ground, or as he expresses it, the idea is making progress. He says "gradually the great mass of bee-keepers have become convinced that there is something in it, and there is hardly an issue of any bee journal in which some one does not more or less decidedly endorse it. As an illustration I will cite the last number of the *A.B.J.* One correspondent says:—"I have now fifty-nine colonies packed on the summer stands for wintering, and from outward appearance they are enjoying the quietude desirable for safety."

Of course "the great mass of bee-keepers" believe that bees winter best to be in a quiet condition, but they have by no means "gradually become convinced" of anything of the kind since the promulgation of the "hibernation" theory, for, if I mistake not, Mr. Clarke first spoke of "Hibernation of Bees" in the *A.B.J.* for July 9, 1884, less than four years ago, and twenty-six years ago the *A.B.J.* in its "monthly management" for December said: "The less the bees are disturbed at this season, when complete repose is so essential to them, the better." Has the correspondent quoted by Mr. Clarke made any further progress with the idea than the good old *A.B.J.* had made in the first year of its existence? Whatever change has taken place in the minds of bee-keepers generally in the last few years has been, I think, just the opposite of what Mr. Clarke intimates. I think this is shown pretty clearly in the initial number of the *Bee-keepers' Review* to which Mr. Clarke refers, and concerning which he says: "I venture to predict that 'correspondence, editorials and extracts' will all concur in advising such management as is calculated to secure the profoundest living slumber of which bees are capable." The fact is that the bulk of testimony was to the effect that disturbing bees in winter was by no means so injurious as we had years ago been taught to think, and the editor says: "Our faith in the popular belief that disturbing bees in winter is necessarily injurious has been entirely destroyed." As to the correctness or incorrectness of the "hibernation" theory I have only this to say, that I suspect that in it "whatever is new is not true, and whatever is true is not new."

Mr. Clarke in closing says: "I am not the father of the hibernation theory. It is Prof. Cook's discarded bantling." I can hardly think it kind in Mr. Clarke to persist in making such a statement, when he must know that in what

Prof. Cook considers the proper sense of the word "hibernate" that he (Prof. C.) thinks that bees never hibernate, and never did think so, and when Mr. Clarke makes use of words that Prof. Cook spoke to make them mean something that Prof. Cook never meant, is Mr. Clarke following the Golden Rule?

THE STING-TROWEL THEORY.

And now, while speaking of Mr. Clarke, I may as well refer to his theory of the bees' sting. Whether any great harm can come from publishing that bees use their stings as trowels in fashioning wax I am not prepared to say. But I think it better that no erroneous teachings shall go forth to the world as truth. If this theory were confined to bee journals it would be a matter of less consequence, but it has gone into other papers and only a few days ago I saw stated in a Sunday School paper as a positive fact that bees use their stings in fashioning their combs. So far as I can remember no proof of the truth of the theory has ever been brought forward. If there is any proof by all means let us have it. If it was only a "scientific pleasantry" then I think Mr. Clarke owes it to truth to promptly do what he can to recall the pleasantry.

C. C. MILLER.

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For the Canadian Bee Journal.

EXTRACTS FROM MY DAIRY OF 1887.

GENERAL REMARKS.

THE winter of 1886-7 was notable for its severe and long-continued cold period. From Nov. 25, 1886 to Jan. 11, 1887, inclusive, a term of 47 days, the mean temperature as indicated by the thermometer carefully noted every morning, was a fraction of one degree below zero. The coldest morning during that time was Jan 7 when it was 36 below. There were a few days from Dec. 8 to 12 when it moderated and thawed a little, otherwise the average would have been considerably lower.

The remainder of the winter was more variable and not quite so severe. In the fall of 1886 I put a few colonies of bees into my cellar to experiment with, in order to become more familiar with the necessary conditions for successful cellar wintering. The others were wintered upon their summer stands, prepared in the manner described in the *CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL*, Aug. 31, 1887, page 471. They did not get an opportunity for a cleansing flight from Nov. 9, 1886, to March 9, 1887. I examined them all at the latter date, and every colony had capped brood in three, and most of them in four combs.