

Bee-Keeping in the Past.

H. R. ROWSOME.

In this day of bee periodicals and compendiums, we bee-keepers rather fail to realize how meagre and scanty was the really practical information that was accessible to our forebears. It is mentioned in a biography of Lorenzo Langstroth that he had great difficulty in finding a text book on bees when he first began to explore that subject; and he had to fall back on the fourth book of Virgil's Georgics. Being curious to examine his early bias I looked over that book, and give to the readers of the BEE JOURNAL, in a fragmentary way, some of the curious bee lore that that pioneer sought to unlearn:—

The ancients believed that honey fell from heaven in dew, but wax was found from flowers.

The dislike of bees for strong smells is so great that they will attack persons who are strongly perfumed. Therefore, when you want to take the honey, disarm the bees, which will be otherwise violent and dangerous, by personal cleanliness and the application of smoke to the hive.

In stormy weather they do not fly as usual, but remain about the hive or try short flights, ballasting themselves with little pebbles. When you see them swarming in the air be sure they will make for water and trees. Rub with savory and balm the place where they are likely to settle, and make a clashing of cymbals and they will alight of their own accord and get into the hive. When there are two kings in a hive there is a battle. First there are hoarse murmurs, alarms as if of a trumpet; then the bees form around their king, issue forth into the air, and the action begins, lasting until one or the other party is routed. You may stop it, however, by sprinkling a little dust among the combatants.

Hives should not be near yew trees nor an echo, though no reason is assigned.

Bees do not generate like other animals but find their young among the flowers. Their ardour in their honey getting work is such that they often expose themselves to accidental death while engaged in it. In any case they are short-lived, seven years being their limit; yet the race ever goes on. If the stock of bees should die out altogether there is a mode of repairing the loss in which the eastern nations

repose unbounded confidence. The remedy is to kill a two-year old bullock in a narrow chamber by beating, bruise the body and leave it there with twigs of Casia and thyme, when bees will gradually breathe within it, till at last you get a large swarm—a sort of killing the fattened calf.

Herein, Mr. Editor, may be suggestions for a lot of experiments and new ideas with the consequent controversies and papers at conventions.

BURLINGTON, ONT.

A Beginner's Inquiry.

As Editor of the Canadian Bee Journal you must be capable of giving a new beginner in the bee business some good advice and I write you for the same.

1st. What are the best and cheapest hives for a beginner to use?

2nd. Would you advise the Italian bees in preference to the common black bees?

3rd. Can I take out from the old-fashioned square box hive the queen and put in the Italian queen. If so, how is it to be done?

4th. What supplies will I need for each colony of bees. The above questions answered will oblige

E. B. B.

Hall Stream, Que.

Dear sir,—I am in receipt of your letter, and in reply would say that the hives most generally used in the country is the eight frame "Langstroth," and so far as I know it is the cheapest hive. Of course you will understand that the lowest in price is not necessarily the cheapest. A well constructed hive is of great importance, and bee hives want to be accurate and correct. The material used in the hives should be durable, and if the above is not found there is likely to be great trouble and inconvenience. I consider the double walled hive an unnecessary expense; it is heavy to handle in the summer, and if general use is any sign it is but very little used, and there is but very little demand for it in Canada.

As to Italian bees. I prefer the Italian, or a bee more than one-half Italian, for the following reasons;—they are less likely to be attacked by the moth, the queen can be discovered more readily, they stick to the combs better, and can be handled with less trouble. There is of course a difference in strains. The very light colored colonies are very rarely of any use for honey gathering. You can get a queen out of an old box hive in the