

bees that I had calculated would build up for winter on buckwheat; but now there is no show along that line, so I came over to ask you what I had better do with these light colonies."

"Have they their hives full of comb?"

"No, not many of them. And that is one of the things which bother me. If they were strong in bees, and the frames all full of comb, I would try to feed them, although I could hardly afford to buy sugar for so many."

"Well I would wait till the first of September, as we may yet have some honey from an unexpected source. If we do not, then I would unite these weaker colonies, doing it as early as the 10th to 15th of said month, as we never have any yield of honey worth speaking of later in the year than the middle of September."

"How would you unite?"

"On some cool cloudy day, when the bees fly but little, or, better still, some day near night, after we have had cool cloudy weather for a day or two, so as to keep the bees at home, I would take the weaker of two colonies and carry it and set it right on top of the colony I wished to unite it with, stopping all cracks, if there should be any large enough to allow bees to pass between the two hives. As soon as the cracks are stopped, blow smoke in at the entrance and pound on the hives with the fist till the bees begin to make quite a roaring, this showing that they were filling themselves with honey."

"What do you want them to fill with honey for?"

"Two reasons—the first of which is, that they do not fight or quarrel; and, second, that the colony brought to a new location may mark their new home instead of going back to their old place of abode."

"Will this cause them to do that?"

"Yes. A few bees may return and hover about the place where they formerly stopped, but soon all will return, so no bees are lost."

"That is very simple. How long have you united in that way?"

"Every fall I have a lot of nuclei to unite, left after the season for the queen-rearing is over; and last year I found that I could unite bees in this way without loss."

"But what about the combs?"

"After placing the hives having the colonies in together, as I have told you, wait a few days till the bees have had two or three flights, and they have become accustomed to the new situation, when you will go and select out all of the best combs, and those containing the most honey, putting these into the lower hive. In this way you will be liable to secure fairly comfortable combs for the one hive."

"Yes, I see. But how about those which remain?"

"Shake the bees off from these down at the entrance so they will run into the hive with the others, and then you can store these frames partly filled with comb for use another year. If much honey remains you can put an enameled cloth over the hive having the bees in, and turn up one corner of it a little so that but few bees can come out of the lower hive at a time, and then set the hive having the combs left after uniting on top of this; and by uncapping what honey there is that is sealed, the bees will soon carry it below."

"How about the queens?"

"If you have any choice, you will want to kill the poorer of the two day or two before uniting. If you do not have any choice, then pay attention to this matter, and the bees will destroy one of them, as only one