

Thoughts and Comments

ON CURRENT TOPICS.

By a York County Bee Keeper.

Was much interested in reading Mr. Deadman's article in August issue of C. B. J. As we have had considerable experience with Alsike as a honey plant, as well as growing it for seed, would endorse all Mr. D. has to say about it. I think he has made very conservative statements as to yield per acre, etc., and as to its value as a honey plant, would say that, taking one year with another, bees in our locality would hardly make a living if they had to depend upon any other source for nectar. Some twenty years ago my grandfather sowed a field for his bees; he was quick to see the value of it as a farm crop, and ever since that time it has been grown in this section. This year the average yield per acre of fields near the colonies is from five to nine bushels; scattering fields, two or more miles from the yards, yield from two to four bushels to the acre. Needless to say the farmers here are nearly all great friends of the bees and we have very little fear of our bees being poisoned by syringing, etc. To give our readers, not in alsike districts, some idea as to the amount of honey alsike brings in a community, will give a few figures for 1901. For a number of years we have handled the seed on commission for a firm in Toronto. Last year we shipped them from our nearest station about \$100.00 worth of seed, as the two or three adjoining stations shipped probably as much more each, and as the business we deal with is only one of five in the honey business here, one can easily

form an idea as to what alsike growing means to the farmers. Just a few days ago we shipped out a car load of over 700 bushels, paying over \$4000.00 for the same, which amount was distributed among fourteen farmers, the lots averaging over fifty bushels each. Like everything else, alsike has an unpleasant side to the story as well, it seems to have the propensity of making everybody sick while threshing is in progress, and it is hardly ever the farmer's wife need make much preparation for more than two meals for the men the first day of clover threshing. The writer can speak from experience on this matter, having been so terribly sick more than once that he would solemnly vow "never to go near the stuff again," said vow, by the way, always being broken when next season's crop would come.

Mr. Darling speaks of getting the farmers to grow a "second crop." Don't know if I understand him rightly or not, but in this district alsike when cut for seed rarely throws an after growth, even when cut for hay, unless the first crop is taken off very early the after-growth will amount to but little. In fact that is the principal objection the farmers have in raising it for hay, as, here at least, it will not come on the second time like red clover. In wet seasons, like this year, some fields that were seeded in the spring will blossom quite freely after the grain is taken off, but, although the bees work freely on it, have never seen any results in the supers, probably not enough of it to accomplish that.

"Tropical competition in the honey market."

Considerable has been said lately in "Gleanings" as to the probability of Cuban honey coming into the U.S. market. W. K. Morrison and others think it extremely doubtful that tro-