

RIGHTS OF BEE-KEEPERS.

The Profits of Bee-Keeping—
Honey As a Food.

(From the Montreal Weekly Witness.)

To the editor of the Witness:

SIR,—Upon my return from the International Bee-Keepers' Convention, held at St. Joseph, Mo., I find in the Witness of Oct. 3, under the legal department, the following question and answer re bees:

J. B. Ont.—Q.—A soda water manufacturer is bothered to such an extent with a neighbor's honey bees coming to his factory day after day, that he has to stop work until they leave. As they are a nuisance, what steps if any, can be taken to prevent this? Ans.—The owner of the bees should be requested in writing to abate the nuisance, and, in the event of his failing to comply with the request, an action might be brought for an injunction to restrain him from continuing such nuisance.

The above answer conflicts with a statement which I made in the CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL, as editor. The question of the rights of bee-keepers is not a new one. The poor little creature is perhaps, unable to defend itself, or the liberal use of honey imparts to bee-keepers the characteristic which a honey circular sets forth as the result of its use, "a sweet disposition." Or perhaps they imbibe wisdom with the honey and think the best policy is to bend their heads and let the storm pass by. Yet it is not always wise to allow stamens to go unchallenged, so I will state in kindly spirit the case of the bee-keepers.

I do not know why a creature so valuable as the honey bee should be so liable to attack unless through lack of information upon the subject. We read of people being injured and even killed by horses, yet no one thinks of preventing the keeping and driving of horses. We read of humanity suffering the most dreaded of deaths from hydrophobia, and yet the keeping of dogs is not prohibited. I am a great lover of good dogs, yet I would not dare to say that the average dog is as useful as the average colony of bees. A small percentage of dogs are able to save life and protect property. What do the bees do? The first object in the existence of the honey bee is to assist in the fertilization of flowers. The parts of a flower are calyx, corolla, stamens and pistils. The stamens contain the male portion of the flower and are divided into filament and anther. The filament is the stalk. The anther is a little case or hollow body borne on the top of the filament. It is filled with a powdery matter called pollen. The pistils are the bodies in which the seeds are formed. They belong to the

centre of the flower. A pistil has three parts. At the bottom is the ovary, which becomes the seed vessel. This is prolonged upwards into a slender body called the style. And this bears a somewhat enlarged portion, with a naked roughish surface, called the stigma. Upon this stigma some of the pollen, or powder from the anthers, falls and sticks fast, and this somehow enables the pistils to ripen seeds that will grow.

Flowers vary very much. Some contain both stamens and pistils, but some we find having pistils only and sometimes stamens only. Sometimes a blossom bearing both stamens and pistils cannot fertilize itself, as they mature at different times and prevent self-fertilization. Or the parts are so arranged that in its visits the insect brings about cross fertilization. This is an excellent provision of nature. Just as in and in breeding in animal life is injurious, so it is injurious in plant life and cannot be followed to any great extent or progeny lacks in vigor and is otherwise defective.

Very elaborate experiments have been conducted by Darwin and other, which go to prove the importance of the honey bee to the fruit-grower and gardener. Take the apple, for instance. A core is divided into five parts. The apple is really a fusion of five fruits and to secure a perfect fruit there must be five distinct fertilizations. If none are effected, the calyx, which forms the flesh of the fruit, instead of swelling, drops off. An apple often develops imperfectly. If four of the stigmas have been pollen-dusted, the fruit rarely hangs long enough to ripen, the wind storms shaking them off. These apples may generally be known by their deformity. One part has failed to grow because there has been no diversion of nutrition towards it. If the apple is cut, the part opposite the deformed part will likely be undeveloped, shrivelled and shrunk.

It may be claimed that other insects are able to do the work of fertilization, or that bees are not natives of this country, and that, in ages past, plant life got along without the bees. When such a statement is made, it must be remembered that our great fruit orchards, with their wealth of blossom, are an artificial condition of plant life, and to balance matters we require an artificial condition in insect life. As a rule, if not always, in insect life, the mother alone survives the winter. In the bumble bee the queen only survives, and only after the bulk of fruit blossom is over do insects of this kind become numerous. With the honey bee it is different. Ten to thirty thousand worker bees survive the winter with the queen (the mother), and these workers are ready to begin the sea-