

farming. What can be pleasanter than to hear "the bees a-humming" around the homestead, and to know that while you are busy with your farming and your wife with her household duties, you have a colony of industrious little fellows working might and main, without instructions from you, to lay up for your winter use quantities of one of the most delicious foods given by a kind Providence to please the palate of man? Apart from this view of the question, there is the practical side; and right there is where the bees show to the best advantage. We will suppose the cost of a colony of bees, laid down on your farm, to be \$20, which is a high estimate. It is a poor hive indeed that will not put up 75 pounds of honey in a summer, and many go double that. To sell, this honey is worth at the least 20 cents per pound, which would be \$15. This of itself is a wonderfully good yield on an investment of \$20, but in addition there are the swarms. A strong, healthy colony ought to throw off at least two swarms a year, and on the calculation we started out with each ought to be worth \$15, deducting cost of hive, etc.; but we will suppose one swarm escapes or dies, and the result will be honey valued at \$15. One swarm of bees valued at \$15, or a total of \$30 on a \$20 investment. Of course it is not all pleasure and profit. They occasionally get mad and sting, but this is rare if they are kindly treated; then occasionally a few colonies will die. But taking one year with another, bees pay as well, if not better, than anything kept on the farm. They require some care—not a great deal—certainly less than a cow costing twice as much and yielding very little more, or a flock of sheep of an equal value.

## QUERIES AND REPLIES.

UNDER THIS HEAD will appear Questions which have been asked of, and replied to, by prominent and practical bee-keepers—also by the Editor. Only questions of importance should be asked in this Department, and such questions are requested from everyone. As these questions have to be put into type, sent out for answers, and the replies all awaited for, it will take some time in each case to have the answers appear.

### NUMBER OF COMBS FOR WINTERING.

QUERY No. 113.—What is the least number of combs, in your opinion, that it is safe to winter on?

M. EMIGH, HOLBROOK, ONT.—Five.

H. COUSE, THE GRANGE, ONT.—Five is little enough.

—DR. C. C. MILLER, MARENGO, ILL.—One, if it has honey enough.

DR. J. C. THOM, STREETSVILLE, ONT.—The same number that the bees will cluster on.

G. M. DOOLITTLE, BORODINO, N.Y.—I use from three to nine; five to seven being the number most used.

PROF. A. J. COOK, LANSING, MICH.—With nuclei I have wintered repeatedly on three combs. Full stocks often on five.

DR. A. B. MASON, WAGON WORKS, O.—Just the number the bees will nicely cluster on, depending on the size of the colony.

ALLEN PRINGLE, SELBY, ONT.—The least number of combs, in my opinion, safe to winter on, would be just the number that would hold stores enough.

J. E. POND, FOXBORO, MASS.—Last winter I carried two nuclei safely through on three combs of L. simplicity size. I think four combs is the least number on which success could be fairly guaranteed.

H. D. CUTTING, CLINTON, MICH.—It all depends on the size of colony. I prefer eight to a good large colony, when I use nine in the honey season. I have used four with good success with a small colony.

O. O. POPPLETON, WILLIAMSTOWN, IOWA.—The least number of combs that it is reasonably safe for bees to winter on depends on many things, such as location, manner of wintering, thickness of combs, etc. I am not attempting to winter any this coming winter on less than seven frames.

DR. DUNCAN, EMBRO, ONT.—That depends a good deal on the size and position given the combs. In a cellar that is frost proof they can be wintered safely on four combs of about the Langstroth or Jones size, if the chamber is contracted by division-boards and also enough honey and bees to keep up animal heat.

G. W. DEMAREE, CHRISTIANBURG, KY.—It depends on the size of the colony. I have wintered nuclei on two or three combs. I prefer to winter full sized colonies on a full suit of combs in the brood-chamber. I give it as my opinion that it is a mistaken idea that bees will do best by being crowded in a small place at any season of the year. They certainly are safer if they can draw themselves up into a central position, clear of the wood walls of the hive.

### LIGHT OR HEAVY COLONIES FOR WINTERING.

QUERY No. 114.—Whether would you