

Notes and Comments

(By J. L. Byer)

That lengthy letter of Mr. Geo. Ott's, in June C.B.J., was read with interest and pleasure by the writer. The fact of the author being 81 years old is in itself of interest, and I was led to wonder how many of us bee-keepers would live till that age and be able to write such an interesting letter. Taken altogether, his advice is good to prospective bee-keepers—a lot of it real good for young men, no matter what their prospective calling. While I agree with Mr. Ott that too much smoking of bees is harmful to them, yet I think he is making it a little too strong when he says that if bees are smoked when there is a flow of honey on they will fill their sacs with honey and "will not leave for the fields for a whole day."

To-day I have been at the home yard, and with Mr. Ott's caution in mind, I opened up a strong, "gingery" colony probably a dozen times, and watched closely to see if I could notice any difference in their actions. Honey was coming in rapidly, and not a bit of difference could be seen as the result of the frequent disturbances. Some few years ago Mr. Adrian Getaz, Tennessee, kept one colony to experiment with to see if frequent disturbances would cause any less honey gathering. Nearly every day, all through the honey flow, this colony was opened up, as many visitors came to Mr. Getaz's apiary, and the colony in question was always used for demonstrative purposes. In spite of these disturbances, the stock stored as much honey as any other in the apiary. Of course, these cases cited are not positively conclusive, and, like the anti-tobacco user, when told of a man living till over 100 years old and had used the weed 90 years, retorted: "Hard to say how much longer he would have lived if he hadn't used it." So we might wonder how much more

this colony would have stored if it had not been disturbed. However, this is not written in favor of useless disturbances of the bees, as such a practice is unwise from different points of view.

Some stories are better never finished. This will apply to my experiment in putting a very weak stock over top of a very strong one. On my next visit after the one mentioned in May C.B.J. to the apiary where the colonies were doubled, I found the queen in upper storey had disappeared, so that report needs to be reversed and read 100% lost. As the queen was young and vigorous, can give no reason for her demise; perhaps my first examination may have caused the bees to ball her, but I hardly think that the case. While the system works all right for some, for what few very weak stocks that I ever have I prefer my old method of saving the stock. Find the queen of a strong colony and set aside, then carry frames of adhering bees and shake in front of weak stock; the old bees fly back and the young bees crawl into entrance of the weak colony. This plan is perfectly safe, and is **always** sure, and the **help** the weak stock receives is of the very best. No added brood to chill, but more bees to look after brood, and in my experience during the early spring a weak stock with a **good** queen nearly always has more brood than they can properly care for.

It is nothing so very unusual to find two queens in a hive when the old queen is being superseded, yet a case in the Altona apiary this spring was so unique that I feel prompted to tell of it. During fruit bloom the queen of a strong colony was noticed to be failing, and the hive was marked to that effect, as in such cases swarming is very apt to take place early in the honey flow. Just when clover was starting to yield the colony was examined, and a single queen-cell