

LETTER FROM W. F. CLARKE.

EDITOR PRACTICAL BEEKEEPER :

SIR,—You have done me the honor of asking me to write an article for your initial number. When *The Honey Producer* was started I received a similar invitation from its editor, who is now the Editor of the *Canadian Bee Journal*. I declined, assigning as my reasons that it was undesirable to multiply bee journals, and that we should all do our best to sustain the one *Canadian Bee Journal* already in existence. My declining gave offence, and caused a grudge not forgotten or forgiven, I think, to this day. The party whom I offended by declining in the former case, can hardly object to my taking the course now which he considered I ought to have pursued then. It was concluded that I declined on personal grounds, which did not an injustice, for I acted sincerely, trying to carry out the golden rule of doing as I would be done by. My well-intended line of action in the former case was misjudged, so I will trim my sail on the other tack this time. If the worst comes to the worst, I can only be misjudged a second time. Even being misjudged is nothing when you are used to it.

Your invitation to write an article for the *Practical Bee-Keeper* is peculiarly worded, and I propose to make that my present theme. I am asked to write "on any of the open questions of the day on Bee-keeping." Does this imply that there are some questions on bee-keeping that are not open ones? I hope not. But the fact that some of the leading bee journals of the North American Continent refuse to permit discussion on certain subjects, among them the vital question, "What is honey?" makes it very desirable that we should have a clear understanding at the outset of this point. I am an old editor, having been at the business forty years. I think I am the patriarch of apicultural editors. My principle has been to permit and contend for the fullest liberty of speech, within the bounds of courtesy. Of course an Editor must use his best discretion, and not allow any discussion to become over-done. He must try to preserve the symmetry of his journal, and

give all topics their due relative prominence. But to take the ground that any topic of interest to bee-keepers must not be discussed at all, is disgraceful in this nineteenth century. Long ago the celebrated Junius wrote, "The liberty to argue freely I prize above all other liberties." The *American Bee Journal*, *Gleanings*, and even the *Bee-keeper's Review* ("tell it not in Gath") entered into a compact of silence, cowardly silence, on certain topics. How long is this demon of dumbness to have possession of these distinguished journals? "I'd rather be a kitten and cry 'mew,'" than a dumb dog of an Editor, wearing a muzzle put on me by my subscribers. With this spectacle of craven subservience before us, the myth is upheld that Editors mould public opinion! That's what they should do, but as a matter of fact many Editors are but slavish mouthpieces of public opinion, daring only to say and do what they think will be popular with their subscribers.

"Is it now the burning question, in this age of vaunted light ;

As to every mooted subject, 'Is it true and is it right?'"

Rather do not men and women in our much-enlightened day :

Ask on every mooted question, "Is it SAFE AND WILL IT PAY?"

I have reason to write strongly and feelingly on this matter, for at a meeting of the Oxford Bee-keeper's Association, held at Woodstock, June 1, 1893, I was made the victim of a virulent personal attack, not by an individual but by the whole Association, which passed a resolution to the effect that my writings "are doing great injury to the industry of bee-keeping," and calling upon the proprietors of journals to "discontinue publishing anything from the pen of the said W. F. Clarke, upon the subjects of bees and honey!"

Mr. Editor, I send you this as an item for your first number, the publication of which will give you much notoriety among the bee-keepers of this continent. In view of this volcanic eruption of wrath from Oxford, perhaps you had better re-consider