

Bee-Keeping in South America

The honey season may be said to commence about the end of August or beginning of September, when the orange trees are in bloom. The orange blossom is a most valuable factor in the production of honey, as the tree commences to bloom about the end of winter (there is no season which can be called spring in Paraguay), at a time when the swarms are weak and other flowers scarce. The orange blossom produces an excellent honey, of fine color, pleasant flavor and admirable keeping qualities. Orange trees are present everywhere in Paraguay; they grow wild in the woods in great abundance, and are, in fact, in many parts the commonest wild tree. Although the fruit of the wild tree is not edible, the flowers are equally valuable as bee pasture. The orange trees continue in flower for about two months, when their place is taken by numerous other flowers. Some plants such as the banana, are in flower more or less all the year round, but, although they contain a large quantity of honey from the shape of the flower they are difficult of access to the bees, who are, however, very fond of them, and may be seen busily collecting honey from such flowers as have fallen to the ground.

To make a comparison between Paraguay and Australia, another part of the world where many large apiaries exist, Paraguay is exempt both from the extreme droughts and the extreme heats of Australia. In the latter colony the thermometer frequently rises to 120 degrees in the interior; in Paraguay a reading of 100 degrees is rare. Australia is just recovering from a

drought of seven years' duration; in Paraguay if a whole month passes without rain it is called a drought. Owing to the cheapness of living and of labor, working expenses are much less in Paraguay than in Australia, while the prices obtainable for honey are also in favor of the South American country. In Paraguay the average price obtainable for honey (whole sale) is about 5d. a pound, while in Australia, so far as I can learn, the average price is only about 3 3-4d. per pound. It is true in Paraguay the market is limited, but there is nothing to prevent the honey and wax from being exported to any part of the world. In Buenos Ayres there are dealers who advertise that they will buy honey by the ton in any quantity, but I cannot say whether it is more advantageous to sell in the Buenos Ayres market or to export to Europe. The latter market is certainly practically unlimited.

It is said that in tropical or semi-tropical countries bees tend to lose their honey-collecting instinct. In a country where there is no winter, and flowers abound all the year round, there is, of course, no object why the insects should lay up any store of honey, and, so it is claimed, they are apt to become lazy and live only for the passing hour. So far as I can learn from my own experience and that of other bee-keepers in Paraguay, there is no perceptible diminution in the laborious habits of the bees domiciled in the country. Although there is no valid reason why they should lay up stores of honey, in view of the never failing bee pasture which is to be found there, yet the insects still conserve the instincts of their primeval climate and continue to work as assiduously as ever in the manufacture of honey and wax. At the same time, I think it not improbable that in the course of generations the honey-sav-

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