

bees, should be carefully studied, in order to know from what sources to expect honey. Locations differ widely in this respect. Flowers that produce honey in abundance in some localities, are useless for this purpose in others. The flowers of one kind of plant may produce honey in great abundance one season, and absolutely nothing the next. But in this state it is rare that we have an absolute failure. Our best honey plants are white clover, basswood, and buckwheat. In some seasons the bloom of the apple trees secrets considerable nectar and in some localities the wild raspberries, sweet clover, golden-rod, wild asters, dandelions, thistle, sun-mack, heartsense, and some other less important flowers, produce forage for the bees. There are few localities where a majority of these plants are not found in greater or less abundance, and for this reason a person can hardly go amiss in establishing an apiary. Care should be taken to give the bees room to store the honey at the right time. The honey flow from any class of flowers usually lasts but a few days, and if the apiarist is not acquainted with the condition of his bees and his flora, and does not act promptly his opportunity of securing a honey crop will be gone.

A few words of comparison of apiculture to other rural vocations and avocations may not be out of place here. After the initial expense in establishing an apiary, the outlay necessary to the production of a crop of honey is comparatively small. Including interest on investment the expense would not probably exceed two cents per pound. The labor of looking after a few colonies of bees is hardly worth estimating, in as much as one man can without difficulty do the work required to run three or four hundred hives, if he devotes his whole time to his bees, and employs a few days help in the busy season. A fair average crop of honey may be placed at thirty pounds per colony, which, if put in good marketable shape, will sell for from 8 to 10 cents a pound. These are low estimates, and in many localities larger returns would be obtained. Thus the net returns per colony may safely be placed at from \$1.80 to \$2.00 per colony. Most farmers, if they have conducted their farming operations on business principles, know pretty nearly what the net profits are, from a given amount of capital, invested in poultry raising, sheep husbandry, dairying, gardening or fruit growing. Without attempting to be accurate I venture to say that the net profits from any of these rural pursuits are far less than

can be realized from the apiary. Bees are the only domestic animals that do not require daily feeding and constant care.

In the winter months apiculture can be combined with almost any branch of farming, and many apiarists are actively engaged in poultry raising, gardening and fruit-growing. Thus it is possible for farmers and gardeners who operate small places to greatly increase their income, by the outlay of a small amount of capital, and the use of a small plot of land for an apiary.

It is not advisable for a beginner to rush headlong into beekeeping. If he does failure and disgust are likely to result. From two to five colonies are all that any beginner should attempt to handle. The beginner is likely to try numerous experiments during his apicultural infancy and these experiments are more likely to be disastrous failures than not. If experiments are tried on a small scale the loss will be correspondingly light. As the number of colonies increase the apiarist will acquire knowledge and skill, and instead of giving up in discouragement on account of a wholesale failure and consequently heavy loss, he will be attracted and fascinated by this most interesting of pursuits, and eventually make it a financial success. Let the beginner start with a few colonies. Have them in good common movable hives, placed in some sheltered location, near the house: see that they have the proper amount of room for storing the surplus honey at the season when honey producing flowers are in bloom, and they will gather and store the honey for you. And if your bees are near your neighbors land, where there are plenty of flowers, they will not hesitate to trespass. But the neighbor should not protest for the bees are gathering and storing a pure and wholesome sweet that would otherwise go to waste: and incidentally they are fertilizing and fructifying the neighbors' fruit trees and clover and buckwheat fields that would be less productive but for the bees. From the standpoint of political economy every member of the state who is a farmer should encourage apiculture, for they add to your wealth. The income to the rural population might be largely increased if more bees were kept and the nectar that now goes to waste, saved. The consumption of honey is capable of great increase. It can be truthfully recommended as the purest and most wholesome of all sweets. In some cities it is largely used by bakers in the manufacture of various kinds of honey sweetened cakes. It is used in the manu-