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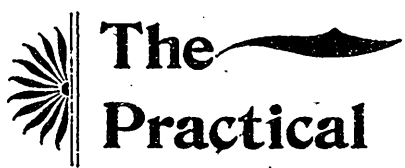
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No. 2
No. 3

NEW SERIES
Vol. 2, No. 3, 1895. March.



The
Practical

Bee-keeper

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NEW SERIES
VOL. II.

TILBURY, ONT., MARCH, 1895.

No. 3.

How Are The Bees Wintering!

JOHN MYERS.

On looking over a portion of my colonies a few days since to see how the bees are wintering I must say, I think I never saw the bees in better condition at this time of the year. My bees are all packed on their summer stands, and while going around to clear the entrances of dead bees, I was pleasantly surprised to find that there were scarcely any dead bees to be cleared away, and no signs of dysentery to be found. On examination of the interior of a few colonies I found the inmates snugly and closely packed between the combs, and looking about as nearly dead as it was possible for them to be—in fact I had to b'ow my breath on some of them before I could get them to move. Now while I like to see the bees in the condition as stated above, still this does not make it certain they will all be alive when the honey harvest comes. The great pull for life will be during the next two months, and all those who are not perfectly sure that their bees have enough stores to last them until honey can be gathered, had better keep a sharp lookout and see their bees don't starve.

How much more satisfaction a person has when he knows for a certainty in the fall that his bees have sufficient

stores to last until the honey comes again, than a person who is not sure, but thinks they will have enough. I would say to anyone that is afraid that any of his colonies are going to be short of stores that there is a remedy for them yet—one that I have tried numbers of times with the best of success. In fact I left three colonies short of stores last fall on purpose to test the plan again. The plan is to feed with cakes of candy made of granulated sugar. I just simply scrape the packing to one side, raise the quilt and slip the cakes of sugar in on top of the frames. Now after you have got the cakes on, your quilts will be too small to cover the tops of the hives and make them tight, such being the case I generally have some pieces of old carpet or canvas to lay over the top of the hives, you will need these pieces of canvas large enough so they will lap over the sides of the hive a little to keep the packing from getting into the hive as you will need to replace the packing again after the candy is given to them.

To make the candy, take the granulated sugar and put it in a pan of suitable size with a little water to keep it from burning until the sugar begins to melt, when the sugar has all melted and it commences to boil you will need to keep stirring it until it is cooked enough. This is exactly the reverse of the way in which the confectioners make candy as they don't want it stirred at all after

it once commences to boil as by stirring it you cause it to grain which spoils it for sale. But this graining is just what we want for the bees as it takes away all the stickiness from the candy and leaves it in the best possible shape for the bees to eat. Now what I want to caution you about very strongly, is in making the candy, be sure and don't let it burn. If it does burn don't give it to the bees as it will be sure death to them, you had better give it to the children for taffy, and try again, you can tell when it is burnt by the brown appearance. But I forgot to tell you how you can tell when it is cooked enough, well, just drop a little into some cold water and if it is brittle and will snap in pieces when you take it out, it is done enough. You then pour it out into some plates that have been previously greased to keep it from sticking, and after it is cold run the blade of a table knife under it and it will slip out of the plate in a nice cake ready for the bees. When you are going to take it out of the plates you had better have the children off to school or else there will not be so much for the bees.

Stratford, Ont.

It is said that on Lord Holmes' estate in the county of Berwickshire, England, is a tulip tree that is known to have been planted over 2000 years ago.

Heddon on Doolittle.

REV. WM. F. CLARKE.

I regret to see in the Jan number of the Practical Bee-Keeper, an extremely fierce and vindictive attack on Mr. Doolittle from the pen of Mr. Heddon. So fierce and vindictive is the article, that I had to read it two or three times before I could really bring myself to believe it was authentic. The article sets out with a very contemptuous

allusion to Mr. D. as "the master of 60 colonies of bees on an average." Now I do not believe the number of hives a man owns is to be taken as the gauge of his ability as a bee-keeper. This rule would operate most unjustly if applied to the father of modern bee-keeping Rev. L. L. Langstroth, who, I suppose, never owned more than a dozen or at most a score of colonies at one time in the whole course of his life. Mr. Doolittle believes he can obtain better results from comparatively few hives thoroughly looked after, than from a large number not so well cared for. Mr. Heddon, on the other hand, is always trying to find methods of lessening work and saving time in managing bees. Mr. Doolittle makes a good livelihood out of his "60 colonies of bees on an average," and Mr. Heddon has no right to speak slightly of him because he chooses to keep only such a number as he thinks he can make the most profitable.

The most objectionable part of the article is as follows:—

"Mr. Doolittle is nearly always wrong, and in all sincerity we ask if anyone who is a strict adherent to Mr. Doolittle's methods and chosen implements and fixtures, ever did succeed? We are sure we could not succeed with their use neither do we know of any one who ever did. They succeed best on paper. Some one may say, "Isn't this statement a little harsh?" Never mind; ask first if it isn't true, and if not we will attend to the harsh part after that is settled." Now, I do not hesitate to say right here, under my own name, that this is more than a little harsh, and, what is worse, it is untrue. Moreover, I protest in the name of decency, justice and courtesy against this style of writing. I am and always have been in favor of free outspoken criticism, but this is not criticism. His bitterness, spleen, and bad temper. It is well

known I do not believe in bee-keepers fondling and brothing one another, neither do I approve of their being discourteous to one another. I wish here to testify my respect for Mr. Doolittle as a man and a bee-keeper. I do not always agree with him, and I have before now criticized him freely, but I think courteously. I read his apicultural writings with pleasure and profit, though I would be glad if they were more condensed. I think my fellow bee-keepers here in Canada will agree with me when I express regret that this assault on Mr. Doolittle has appeared in a Canadian Bee Journal. I think we should all have been pleased if the editor had used his undoubted prerogative and consigned the ill tempered lucubration to the waste paper basket. Something must have "riled" Mr. Heddon terribly when he wrote it, and, I think, on calm reflection he would be glad to recal it if he could. But alas, "Litera Scripta Manet."

Guelph, Feb. 15 1895.

Bees and Grapes.

Nelson W. McLain, who was appointed by the United States agricultural department to investigate the complaint that bees destroyed grapes, has reported. He says:

The bees daily visited the fruit in great numbers and labored diligently to improve the only remaining source of subsistence. They inspected and took what advantage they could of every opening at the stem or crack in the epidermis or puncture made by insects which deposit their eggs in the skin of grapes. They regarded the epidermis of the peaches, pears, plums and other fruits having a thick covering simply as subjects for inquiry and investigation, and not objects for attack. If the skin be broken or removed, they will, in case of need, lap and suck the juices exposed. The same was also

true of the grapes, if the skin was broken by violence or burst on account of the fruit becoming over-ripe; the bees lapped and sucked the juices from the exposed parts of grapes and stored it in cells for food. They made no attempt to grasp the cuticle of grapes with their mandibles or with their claws. If the grapes were cut open or burst from over-ripeness the bees would lap and suck the juices from the exposed sedgments of the grape until they came to the film separating the exposed and broken sedgments from the unbroken sedgments. Through and beyond the film separating the sedgments they appear to be unable to penetrate. I removed the outer skin from many grapes of different kinds, taking care not to rupture the film surrounding the pulp. When these were exposed to the bees they continued to lap and suck the juices from the outer film until it was dry and smooth as was the film between broken and unbroken sedgments. They showed no disposition to use their jaws or claws, and the outer film, as well as the film between broken sedgments remained whole until the pulp decayed and dried up.

After continuing the test for thirty days we sent to Michigan for varieties not obtainable here; another colony of Italian bees were added to the rest and twenty varieties of grapes again exposed upon plates and suspended from the rafters. The conditions naturally prevalent during a severe and protracted drouth were again produced and the test again continued for twenty five days. The bees showed no more capacity or disposition to offer violence to one kind of grape more than another. No more attention was given the thin-skinned varieties than the thick-skinned. As long as the skin remained whole they did not harm the grapes. When skins were broken by violence, such as by cutting or squeezing, the juices exposed were appropriated.

Will the Bee-Keeping of the Future Differ from that of the Past.

W. Z. HUTCHINSON.

(Read at the Ontario B. K. Convention.)

All well informed bee-keepers know something of the bee-keeping of the past. They know that in the early times bees were kept in log "guns," or in straw hives. Next came the box hive, made of boards. In those days there were no specialists; at least, not in this country, and as we understand the word? Probably not every farmer kept bees, but a large share of them did, and in the fall the heaviest and the lightest colonies were brimstoned. Then came the grandest invention of which modern bee-culture can boast—the movable comb hive. With the birth of this hive came the specialist. Then followed the bellows bee-smoker, the honey extractor, the section honey box, comb foundation, and queen excluding metal, and new journals sprung up and disseminated apicultural knowledge broadcast over the land, and bee-culture soon attained to the dignity of a profession, in which ignorance, superstition and slipshod management were supplanted by scientific knowledge and positive and accurate methods that brought certain and profitable results. Our country was in just the right condition to bring the best results from bee-keeping. It was not a howling wilderness in which there could be found no white clover, no orchards with their bluish bloom in the spring time, and no fields white with ruckwheat in the autumn; neither had it reached that stage where all of the grand lindens had been made into broom handles, barrel heads or buggy boxes, the hedge rows supplanted by the barbed wire fence, and the swamp once gorgeous with the purple and gold of autumnal flowers had been drained and converted

into meadows of timothy. Then there were great forests that acted as meteorological balance wheels. They prevented floods in the spring and droughts in the summer. Under these conditions bee-keepers flourished until the greatest problem connected with the business was the disposal of its product. Farmers dropped the business because they could buy their honey more cheaply than they could produce it.

But a change has come in many parts of the country. Good crops are the exception. I know of no reason for this change except that the natural honey pastures are cut away and the artificial resources are not sufficient to make of the business a profitable calling. Added to this is the summer drouth that results from the clearing away of the forests. A forest is like a sponge for holding water. The earth is shaded and covered with a thick coating of leaves that acts as a mulch. Then there are fallen and decayed logs, brush and tree tops, all of which absorb water and retard its flow. The amount of water that a forest will absorb and hold is astonishing. Slowly the water evaporates or soaks into the earth to reappear in the shape of springs. With cleared fields the water is off for the sea with a rush, and when the July sun pours down his rays there is no water with which to moisten the parched, bare earth. The time will come when irrigation will be needed in places where it is not now dreamed of. Man will be obliged to store up artificially the water that nature once stored for him before he destroyed her reservoirs.

I have always advocated speciality, and I still believe that the highest success can be hoped for when only one business is attempted, but there are many localities now in which I should not dare to depend for a living upon bee keeping alone. Unpleasant as may be the admission, it seems to be true

that in many localities bee-keeping as a specialty is doomed. Letter after letter comes to me saying "I have no fault to find with the REVIEW, but three years with no honey crop are more than I can stand, and I am going out of the business." Some mention four and even five failures in succession. The trouble is drouth and a lack of blossoms. I am not a croaker, and I also know that as a rule, the best time to buy is when everybody else is selling; that the time to embark in a business is when others are abandoning it, but not so if the natural conditions are against the business. There are probably localities where bee-keeping as a specialty will always be a success. In mountainous regions where the forests cannot be cleared away nor the posies plowed up: in Florida where there are orange groves and there is no inducement to cut down the saw-palmetto or the mangrove growing with their roots in the tide-water; or those localities where the alfalfa sends its roots so deep into the earth that it can smile at dry weather; in these favored spots, and in the newer portions of the country, bee-keeping as a specialty can be followed with every hope of abundant success; but in those localities where the forests have been cut away, and the swamps drained, and fields of corn, wheat, rye, oats, potatoes and grass stretch away mile after mile, it is folly to attempt making a living by the keeping of bees. To attempt to make a poor honey locality a desirable one by planting for honey is still greater folly. If the conditions are such that it will pay to raise honey producing crops for the crop alone, such crops will be raised—otherwise not. Where three, four and five years of failure come in succession, it is foolhardy for men to cling to bee-keeping alone hoping that 'next year will be a better one.' In fact, unless the purse is a long one, necessity will compel the adoption of some other business. If one has kept

bees so long that he would feel lost without them, and I am one of that class, he can take up some other vocation as his main business, letting the bees become a side-issue. It is astonishing to see with how little care an apiary can now be managed. It may be almost reduced to this; setting the bees out of the cellar, putting on the supers, hiving the swarms, taking off the honey and putting the bees in the cellar. Possibly the swarming may yet be done away with.

To sum the matter up in a few words, bee-keeping in the early days was a side-issue, then it became a specialty and will remain such in favorable localities, but over a large portion of the country it will again become a side-issue; but improved hives, implements and methods will make of it a more desirable and profitable avocation than it was in days gone by.

Notes from Florida.

C. D. DUVALL.

You see Mr. Editor my notes cannot come from "Linden Apiary" this time as I will be located right here until April 15th, when I will return to Maryland again. While beekeeping here is managed somewhat different from what it is in Canada, yet a few remarks from here no doubt will be of interest to the readers of the Bee-Keeper. At the present time we are feeding to stimulate brood rearing so as to have bees ready for the first honey flow, which comes from orange blossoms and usually commences from Feb. 20th to March 1st. and lasts about four or five weeks; the yield is said to be from 75 to 100 lbs. per colony, sometimes more; but this year the severe freeze has injured the trees to such an extent, it is uncertain yet how much bloom they will have from orange. In other sections, not in the orange belt, they get a flow about the same time from what they call Titi and Tuplar

gum; the next flow comes from Palmetto, and usually the heaviest flow comes from the Mangrove, but that is killed to the ground and it is said it will be three or four years before they will get another flow from that source. All the sources of honey cannot be searched in one locality, and by the most enterprising, "migratory" bee-keeping is practised to some extent. When the honey harvest is ready to gather in one section, the bees are loaded on a car or boat and taken to the honey fields, when that crop is harvested the bees are moved again to a new field and another crop is taken; by practicing this method to its fullest extent it is possible to secure four or five crops in one season.

Bee culture is in its infancy in this state, but they have no winter problem to vex them here. I was making artificial swarms on Dec. 24 and 25th. Although bees as a rule at this season of the year have very little brood in their hives yet you can take a queen and a half pound of bees and build them up in time for the honey harvest. With proper attention queens could be bred here any month in the year.

Extracted honey is raised almost exclusively, and generally it is of good quality—although, for some cause it has not as yet been given as high a place on the market as it deserves.

Bees are now working on maple also wild plums are in bloom.

Ants are quite a pest to the bees in some sections, also the moth worm is more of a pest than it is in a colder climate.

I have had very little chance to review the bee journals lately. The senior editor of Gleanings is visiting this state now and is expected here tomorrow.

San Mateo, Fla., Jan. 21, '95.

One bee in the hive is worth two in the hat.

Apicultural Literature.

PAPER READ AT THE MICHIGAN STATE CONVENTION.

JAMES HEDDON.

I was so very anxious to attend this meeting, and consequently I determined to do so, I thought nothing would stop me except sickness; but in that I was mistaken. I have two offices downtown; the lease for one of them expired and unexpectedly I was compelled to move, and to reasonably oblige my successor, I found it impossible to leave home.

I hope I may read in the report of your cogitations, that you have honestly, earnestly, fearlessly, conscientiously and faithfully considered the subject given me—a subject which I believe demands the immediate and serious consideration of honey-producers. While it is a fact that the apicultural literature you purchase costs very little, compared to your income and out-go, at the same time its influence upon your success or failure, is immense. Any business can be correctly judged by its literature.

Were I looking toward no interests except that of supply dealers and professors connected with our business, I would have no fault to find, for the present condition into which our literature has degenerated, answers their purposes very well; but when we come to consider the interest of the spinal column of our business—the honey-producers—he is getting fearfully little besides that which is misleading, as compared with our literature of years ago. We had but little in quantity then, but the quality of it, considering the status of apiculture at that time, was certainly infinitely superior to what have now. It seems to me that the good old American Bee Journal has fallen into nothing but an echo of Gleanings.

We all know that its editor is not a bee-keeper, having no practical knowledge, of the business, and that Gleanings' editor (a bee-keeper of over 20 years ago) has so exchanged the practical for the theoretical, that it would be just as well for us had he never produced a pound of honey. It is impossible for these men to either write or select first-class articles.

On page 653, of current American Bee Journal, is an article by C. Davenport, and while we cannot endorse all of it, we have no doubt but that it is really the best article appearing in that journal for the year 1894. Perhaps not the best article, either, but surely one of the very best, and the whole tone of it bears positive evidence of the honest, practical, bee keeper, and that is saying a great deal. Any literarian would know, after reading that article, that C. Davenport will succeed as a honey-producer, anywhere, and that he prints facts, and not falsehoods or fancies, in every line. Now, the editor of the American Bee Journal, no doubt, headed the article, which is as follows: "Something from a Big Bee-Man." In the second line it is stated by Mr. Davenport, that his apiaries contain 337 colonies, and those figures account for the adjective in the heading. Further than that, Bro. York did not go, because he did not see. In his closing paragraph, Mr. D. says that some time he will tell us all about the kind of hive he uses, how he controls swarming, about different varieties of bees and their improvement, together with how they are degenerated under some of the popular plans for the suppression of swarming. Not a word of comment by the editor. No invitation to come on with these articles; not a public invitation to encourage such a writer; and all because Bro. York didn't know; he isn't a honey-producer.

On page 932, of Gleanings ('894) begins an article under the caption,

"Locating and Managing Out-Apiaries." Then the sub-head, evidently filled in by Bro. Root, reads as follows: "A valuable and practical treatment of the subject, from a practical man." This article is by E. France, and in a few foot-notes, the editor praises the article and the man to the skies, and on his editorial page, 952, the first words he says are: "Don't fail to read the article by E. France in this number. It is long, but good in proportion to its length."

E. France is no doubt a practical and successful honey-producer, but from that article it is evident that his success rises more from things he can do, than from those he can tell. Bro. Root offers no criticism. Mr. France says 30 to a 100 rods from the public road is proper to place an out-apiary. He says 25 cents per colony, per year, is the right rental to pay a farmer for the use of ground on which to place an apiary. He advises quadruple, chaff-lined hives, the broodcases containing each eight Langstroth frames, using three in summer and two in winter. He clips all the queens' wings. He advises taking out all the frames and placing the brood in the lower story, also looking them over every ten days, to make sure no queen-cells are being started in any colony. If the printer has not misrepresented Mr. France, he advocates about 60 pounds of honey per colony, for winter stores. Now, brother honey-producers (for I suppose most of you are practical men) where an editor is a great commentator, and can write whole columns in trying to explain how it was that Bro. Taylor's bees took more kindly to the Given than to the Root foundation, should he not have seen these misleading points and kept them from confusing, or much worse, misleading, his readers? But Bro. Root is not a practical bee-keeper. He does as well as he can, under the circumstances;

his time is very much absorbed in other matters, and sometimes when we stop to consider the many lines of thought and work he is engaged in, and of the voluminousness of his writing, do we not wonder that he is sure of anything?

Now, I wonder if some of you are saying; "Heddon's gloves are off again: how can he be so harsh?" Why, gentlemen, I am not harsh, I am truthful. The above statements are not from choice, they are of necessity. It is a condition and not a theory, that I am dealing with. I am writing what I believe, and what it seems to me I know. We have other bee-journals whose editors are hardly more practical, and I am not blaming them because they have chosen the editorial field in our pursuit, but I am trying to tell how it is, as it seems to me, and to suggest to you one of the principal reasons why our literature is so degenerated.

"One of the reasons," I said. Yes,

Toute Sorte De Chose.

J. W. BROWN.

With pleasure I again take up the quill and stalk into your sanctum. Why? Because the pen is mightier than the sword and with it greater deeds have been done. But of course it takes a practical pusher to do it. Fortunately or unfortunately for me I am not a wielder of the sword and but a very indifferent pusher of the pen.

The great convention at Stratford has come and gone and as you have all the particulars before this, I will pass it over by saying it was simply "fine." I think the most of the boys enjoyed themselves fairly well, for my own part I have no reason to complain. It was a source of pleasure to me to meet so many old acquaintances and make a great many new ones. I was particularly well pleased to meet Mr. Ouellette of Tilbury, and many others for the

first time. I wonder how many of those who ordered photos are pleased with them, for my part I consider them worse than useless. If I had not known where some of the boys were placed I would never have recognized them in the group.

Now for a stroll among the bee hives down cellar. As far as can be ascertained the bees are as happy as a big sunflower that nods and bends its golden head to the breeze. I regret to say however that such is not the case with some seventeen hives I have in another cellar about three miles from home. A visit to them reveals the fact that they are too damp as water is trickling from the entrance of some of them, with the temperature at 40°/°.

It is said that it is not well to shout before we are out of the woods, but the prospect for clover is good, as we have a good coat of the 'beautiful' on the ground. Bee-keepers should take time by the forelock and have everything in readiness for the big flow when it comes as I hope it will in the summer of 1895.

Now Mr. Editor, I want to ask a friendly question while I am in the box and I hope you will not act the Yankee, by asking a dozen others before answering. Here it is. "What has become of the report of the Russell county Bee-keeper's meeting?"

Chard, February 16th, 1895.

Editorial crowded out this month.

We regret exceedingly that two very interesting articles from Messrs Pringle and Boomer, reached this office too late for publication.

Variety seems to be the 'order' in bee-journal literature. Next month we may give our readers the initial number of a series of papers on composition by Mr. W. A. Hurton, a gentleman eminently qualified to write on this subject. He will begin at the very beginning and from advance sheets already in our hands we can promise that they will be of interest to bee-keepers and their families, particularly the boys and girls at school.

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