

the Italians is very good from fruit and clover; that of the 85 black colonies is most excellent with 5 acres of Alsike clover; the 50 colonies have only fruit bloom. Now, from the Italians, I have not taken one drop of honey; but from the 85 black colonies in the Alsike clover region, I have taken 25 lbs. to the colony. From the 50 swarms among the fruit trees, I have also taken nothing, and the success of the season depends upon the summer and fall pasturage. I can say farther, that 6 black colonies, at the Italian apiary, swarmed 3 weeks sooner than the Italians. The Italians were as strong, when they went into winter quarters, as the blacks, but the latter dwindled none, while the former dwindled fully 10 per cent. Now, friend Root, I will not pass sentence until fall, but these premises seem to squint at the superiority of the blacks.

My plan of getting good Italian queens, to completely Italianize the apiary, is to select 4 or 5 of the best and purest colonies, and permit them to swarm the second time. The day before swarming you can detect 3 or more queens piping; when they swarm, a superfluity of queens issue; when I have the swarm, I capture and cage all the queens but one (the bees would kill these, of course), and if piping is still heard in the old hive, I open it and cage all the queens found except one. In this way, I have secured 3 and 4 beautiful, well developed queens, from one of these second swarms,—much finer specimens than I can raise in nuclei, and raised more in accordance with nature. These I introduce immediately to other colonies.

Please tell me, in next GLEANINGS, what becomes of the coloring matter of pollen, when fed to young bees. The paste in the cells is as white as milk. May not the drones fill other offices, in bee economy, than that of fertilizing the queen?

GEO. B. PETERS.

Council Bend, Ark., May 25th, 1878.

Our friend has written before somewhat to the same effect, but I have assured him that he would, sooner or later, decide strongly in favor of the Italians, as have all the rest who, at first, took the same position, he is now inclined to take. The one failing of spring dwindling, I believe, is generally conceded to be more prevalent among the Italians than among the blacks.

BOTANY OF HONEY PLANTS.

PROF. M. J. BEAL:—I send you a bunch of flowers and leaves from a shrub or bush that grows on the cliffs near my house, on which the bees are working more actively, I believe, than on the apple bloom, which is open at the same time. I would like to know the name of the plant. Please answer through GLEANINGS.

M. E. PARKER.

Somerset, Ky., April 16th, 1878.

This is Bladder-nut, *Staphylea trifolia*. It is a clean, handsome shrub, growing on moist soil, from Canada south to Tennessee and Carolina. It is quite common in central Michigan. I have often observed that bees are fond of it, as they are of our maples, which belong to the same family of plants.

W. J. BEAL, Lansing, Mich.

CHOOSING A HOME BEFORE SWARMING.

I HAVE positive proof that bees do not always select a home before running off, and also that a hive in the apiary will not prevent their absconding, though I once had a swarm go into a hive that the bees had staved out of, some two months before.

The first bees I ever owned, were found on a crab tree, some 25 years ago. They had settled on the fork of a limb, and had two combs about 6 inches long, by 4 inches wide at the base. I hived them, and carried them home, a distance of over one-half a mile. A few days after they went to work immediately and did well. Two years after, my son found a swarm in a pile of brush; they had also built some comb. They were both late and small swarms, probably second or third swarms.

On Apr. 30th, I was away from home, and when I returned, my wife said that No. 15, Simplicity hive, had swarmed between 8 and 9 o'clock, and after fly-

ing around for some time, had gone back into the hive. On examination, next morning, I found they had swarmed for certain and left the "diggins", although there was a hive, full of nice, clean comb, within six feet of theirs, that had been there all winter. The same queen swarmed 18 days before any other, last spring, and tried to run off then, but I brought her down to the fence about ten rods from her hive, by the aid of a mirror and a bright sun, and it was the only swarm I had that filled ten frames with comb last year. I forgot to say that they left 15 queen cells, 6 of which were capped. These cells I cut out and made nuclei. The first cell hatched on the 8th of May, and the last one was not sealed over until that day.

C. T. SMITH.

O'Fallon, Ill., May 21st, 1878.

I am pretty certain they do not always select a home before swarming, friend S., but do they not as a general rule? and can we not manage to entice a large part of the swarms that come out? The swarms you mention, seem to have been unfortunate in selecting a location, and who knows but that they would have eagerly taken possession of a convenient hive, had it been located near that brush heap or crab apple tree. You say you have had one swarm come out, and hived themselves in a hive in the apiary; does not this look encouraging? If they did pass by a hive that was filled with empty combs, was it not because it was not as secluded as they would prefer to have a home by choice? It seems the instances are quite frequent, where bees have chosen brush heaps, limbs of trees, or unsafe cavities between fence rails and the like, for taking up their abodes; now can we not furnish them something better than these, where they will be pretty sure to find them?

FAIRS AND THEIR AWARDS.

ALSO A WORD ABOUT CONVENTIONS.

THE state fair committee, I think, did me an injustice, in their award of premiums for the greatest yield of honey from one hive of bees, and on this point, I would like to have your construction, as if you were a judge. Entry No. 299 reads thus: "Greatest yield of honey from one swarm of bees, with statement of arrangement, protection against moth, &c.; 5 lbs. of the honey to be exhibited and quantity duly certified to. Premium \$10.00."

It has always been held, since the progressive record in bee-keeping came in, that the bee-keeper is entitled to the credit of whatever he could make out of one swarm of bees, in the way of surplus honey, whether it was done by artificially dividing them, so as to increase the working stock, or by allowing them to swarm naturally. That does not matter, provided the products are from the start of one swarm, and produced in one season.

Salem, N. C.

W. F. SHULTZ.

This point, like a great many others, needs to be plainly specified, in the award before hand, and I would suggest to county and state fairs, the propriety of having all these matters fixed as plainly as may be, now, before their premium lists are printed. With all the care they can take, to have these things plainly specified, there will still be room left for different constructions, and misunderstandings. To the progressive bee-keeper, it does seem many times a little funny, to say the least, the way things are done at fairs. At our own county fair, last season, the premiums on honey, both first and second, were awarded to very inferior boxes of honey, and no premium at all was given on a case of 1 lb. sections, that were the admiration of almost every body present. The