

HOW RAPE SUCCEEDS IN KANSAS.

ALSO A CAUTION ABOUT SHIPPING BEES.

ABOUT two years ago now, W. M. Kellogg sent me what might be called a good strong nucleus, which filled up and gave me 25lb. extracted honey, and wintered well. Last year, they doubled and gave me over 80lb. of extracted honey, although I had so much farming to attend to that I could not give proper care to them. This last spring, one stock came out queenless, and failed to raise a queen the first time I gave them brood, but now have a fine young queen at work. The other stock has increased to 3 good ones, besides giving me 50lb. of honey so far, and now they are at work very lively on buckwheat, rape, and heartsease.

Last fall, W. M. Kellogg wrote me that a lot of 50 stocks of bees could be bought cheap, near Oquawka, Ills. Kellogg took care of them there until this spring, and was to ship as soon as he could extract some of the honey, as they were very heavy; but there was no time when he could extract without exciting robbing, and he waited until June 17th, when he sent them as they were, heavy with brood and hives full of bees. I got them from the car, June 21st. Honey was all over the car, and 18 of the strongest stocks dead, and several more so near gone that they came out and went in with other swarms. A few were in splendid condition, and have done well. Some are now at work in sections, and I have increased by natural swarming and dividing to about 45 now, and, I think by the looks, I shall have 8 or 10 more within the next week.

I have 4 acres of buckwheat and 10 acres of rape. Four acres of the rape I cut about two weeks ago, and the last is nearly all out of bloom now. I shall sow some more soon. Rape grows well here, and I could raise two crops on the same ground, by sowing earlier in the spring. I tell you a few acres of rape look very nice and it makes very white and pleasant honey. The bugs let it alone here.

Hastings, Neb., July 29, '79.

J. W. CRAMER.

I am very glad to know that rape does succeed somewhere, for, with us, it is one constant failure, on account of the little black flea. It blossoms so quickly, we could easily get two crops here, were it not for this enemy. Had your bees been prepared for shipping with wire cloth on both top and bottom of the hives, there would have been no trouble. To do this, you need a Simplicity or other hive with a movable bottom board.

IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING HIVES FREE FROM UNPLEASANT ODORS AND ANTIPATHY OF BEES TO THE SMELL OF COAL OIL.

I DO not suppose you care about answering questions through GLEANINGS for those that don't subscribe for it. I exchange, however, A. B. J. with brother M. Martin, so you see each has the reading of both journals. I have had serious trouble with my new swarms leaving their hive, some of them going to the woods. I worked hard to stop all swarming, changing places with hives, cutting out queen cells, &c., &c. Frames of brood made no difference with them. I found no remedy until I scattered my empty hives and fixtures over the ground and let the sun strike all parts of them and the rain beat on them. They were new, L.

hives with movable bottom boards, all made of pine; but I had had them stored in a barn, near a lot of refined oil barrels, also lubricating oil barrels, and I think the odor caused all my trouble. Some swarms would leave after being hived 10 days; but most of them in 1 to 3 days after hiving. I got so tired and heated that I wished I would never have any more new swarms. It made no difference whether they were shaded or not. Italians, hybrid, and blacks seemed bent on leaving for the woods, when they came out of the new hives. I clipped some queens' wings and some I did not. It is no easy matter to find black queens, as I have tried four times by shaking them on a sheet and letting them run into the hive, and had to give it up. In the first part of the swarming season, they would cluster near by, I would hive them, and they would come out the next day; but, as the season advanced, when they left their new hive, the most of them would go to the woods in spite of dirt and water. It seemed that, if a single bee went into a colony that appeared satisfied, he would coax them to leave their hive. Since sunning my empty hives well, I have had but few swarms come off, and have had no trouble. Frames with brood in all stages seemed to do no good.

Now I would like to hear from some one that has had like trouble and find out if coal oil or kerosine oil is so obnoxious to bees as to cause them to leave their hives. Not only a few swarms, but about all of them, I have hived some seven times. If those few empty oil barrels gave me all this trouble, they have cost me at least \$100.00, besides so much hard work. I also hurt my eyes getting over heated so much by throwing dirt and water. I now have 93 colonies, very strong too. I like very much to read GLEANINGS, it is so plain. It is we beginners that need plain simple language. Men of experience are generally well enough posted, but they certainly can understand when a new beginner can.

McLane, Pa., July 14, '79.

A. A. HARRISON.

It makes no difference at all, friend H., whether you subscribe or exchange with your neighbor. In fact, I like the idea of exchanging; it seems neighborly, and then you both have the reading of both journals, at a small expense.

I am well aware that bees are quite sensitive to disagreeable odors, and that hives should not be kept where they are liable to be tainted in the way yours were; but I never before heard of such a wholesale time of swarming out as you have had. Coal oil has been suggested as a means of driving away robbers, by rubbing it about the crevices of the hives they are hanging about. It would seem, from your report, friend H., that there might be something in it.

BEE BOTANY AND ENTOMOLOGY.

"QUEEN OF THE PRAIRIE."

ENCLOSED I send you a honey plant, which I came across this morning, and do not know that I ever saw it before. I found it in a marshy or wet field, where nothing grows but what we used to call sour grass. There were bees without number working at it. I think I will try and get seed from it. It may be nothing new to you but to me it is.

JOEL HEYDT.

Ashley, Luzerne Co., Pa., July 7, 1879.

The specimen enclosed is *Sphæra rosea* (Queen of the Prairie), common in cultivation as an ornamental plant.

W. J. BEAL.

Lansing, Mich., July 16, 1879.

BUGS; ARE THEY ENEMIES TO BEES?

Professor Cook:—Enclosed you will find a bug, that I frequently see around my bee hives. Please tell me if he injures the bees. Last summer I found one holding on to a dead bee; whether he killed it or not I do not know. W. H.

Ironton, Mo., July 15, 1879.

This is a bug or *Hemipteran*, and so related to *Phymata eros* described and illustrated on page 293, 4th edition of my "Manual". This is *Largus succinctus*, and belongs to the vegetable eating bugs; such as, the squash bug and chick bug. It is 9-16 of an inch long. The color is black, bordered with orange yellow. The posterior border of the thorax, and the margin of the *Scutellum*—the little triangle back of the thorax—are similarly bordered. There are many species of these trim, gaily colored bugs, and they are often seen on flowers. They are not enemies in any sense, unless they devour useful plants. A. J. COOK.

Agricultural College, Lansing, Mich., July 17, 1879.

LIPPIA NODIFLORA.

By next mail, I will send you a section of a plant that grows here, from which our bees get more than half of all their honey, and it is an excellent quality of honey. It generally commences to bloom in May and blooms till frost comes in Nov. or Dec. As you can see by the plant, the first blossoms that come last for months. As the stalk extends, the flowers increase in number, new ones coming all the time. It runs on the ground, and each thrifty plant will cover a yard or two square, by fall, with a perfect mat of flowers, as you can see by the specimen. It grows wild here. I have never seen it anywhere except in this, a small section of Cal. We have no name for it, and never have seen any one here that knew what to call it. The honey is fully equal to any white clover or sage honey. O. E. COON.

The plant spoken of above is *Lippia nodiflora*. It belongs to the verbena family. W. J. BEAL.

Agricultural College, Lansing, Michigan.

RICE CORN.

I also send you a few grains of what they call rice-corn here. It is a very profitable crop to raise for feed and good to eat when cooked. It is something like rice, and better than hominy, we think. It is also a good honey producer. Bees work on it very busily from morning till night, while it is in blossom, which is from 4 to 6 weeks. I don't know whether rice-corn is a proper name for it or not. Lemore, Cal., July 8, 1879. O. E. COON.

We sent the seed to the *American Agriculturist*, and the editor replies as follows:

Several varieties of *Sorghum vulgare* or Durra corn are cultivated in California, differing in the size and shape of the panicle, and size and whiteness of the grain. So far as can be told from the grain alone, this appears to be what one of our seedsmen, W. H. Carson, 125 Chambers St., received from Cal. as "China Corn." So far as honey producing qualities go, I doubt if there is much difference between the varieties, though to use as food, the whitest is no doubt the best. Whether that offered by Mr. Carson as "China Corn" is known generally by that name, I cannot say; but you can procure from him, under that name, what appears to be identical with your sample. GEORGE THURBER.

New York, July 16, 1879.

REMOVING A FRAME FROM THE CENTRE OF THE HIVE FOR WINTERING.

ALSO A MATCH BOX ATTACHED TO A SMOKER.

I WAS thinking while working with my bees to-day, that it would be a good plan to take out the centre frame in the fall, so as to give them more room there, and, if they would occupy it, it would make the cluster larger and they would not be so apt to chill.

Bees wintered very poorly here last winter. I had three colonies left out of 16. I now have 9, but won't get much honey. It was so cold and dry all the spring, until about the middle of June, that they only gathered about enough for brood. My hopes were about blasted, but I believe in "Try, Try,

again." I have transferred quite a number of box hives during the last two summers, and have two copies of GLEANINGS coming here, and one about 6 miles from here, in Wayne Co. Two years ago they did not know what a movable frame hive was.

I have also got two of your Simplicity smokers going around here, and one of them has got the small piece of sandpaper on it. I showed the owner the little tin match box I have on mine, and he thought that beat the sand paper. I have one of your extractors (bought it of Nellis), and extracted 140 lb. of honey from one hive last year and took three swarms from it besides. They had also over 20 lb. when they froze to death last winter.

I used about 20 lb. of fdn. last summer, and the people all like it, but I don't need any this summer, as I have lots of frames of nice combs.

Moscow, Pa., July 23, 1879.

S. J. HINDS.

The idea of removing one of the central combs is a very old one. It succeeds, I believe, but probably is no especial advantage, or it would have been retained by those who advocated it. In a hive whose combs are filled solid with honey, it might be a benefit; but where the honey is rather thinly scattered through the combs, it would do a positive harm. I have several times lost colonies by having a comb in the centre only partly built out when they went into winter quarters. In fact, my first queen, for which I paid Mr. Langstroth \$20., was lost the second winter in that way. You see this would not be quite as bad as leaving out a comb entirely. The trouble was that the bees consumed all the honey on one side, and were unable to pass over this space to the other side during a zero temperature.

I have studied considerably on a match box to be attached to the smoker, but have as yet been unable to get anything durable, and sufficiently out of the way to suit me.

HONEY DEW, MELLILOT CLOVER, ETC.

THIS has been the dryest year, up to the present time, that I ever witnessed in my life; but it has been very good for bees, up to the first of July. Since then they have not done so well. Through the month of June, there was the most honey dew I ever saw, and bees have made the most candied honey. Almost all the old bee raisers prophesy that the bees will all die off next winter on account of candied honey. They say they don't think the bees can eat it. I would like to hear from you in GLEANINGS concerning it, and also as to the cause of their making so much candied honey.

I have received a circular advertising seed of a bee plant that is called Mellilot clover. They say it stands drouth and frost, and grows on any soil, wet or dry, in any climate, north, south, east, or west. One acre will support 20 hives of bees and yield 500 to 1000 lbs. of surplus honey. I want to hear what you have to say about it. JOHN G. W. SEWELL.

Iron Rock, Ga., July 19, 1879.

Your candied honey, whether it is obtained from honey dew or other sources, is virtually grape sugar, and is no better or worse than grape sugar for wintering. The principal, and, in fact, the only, difficulty with either is the propensity to candy; but this will do no harm in warm weather, or at a time when the bees can fly out to get water to mix with it. No matter how hard it may seem in the combs, it is all used up in warm weather.