

This may be made of any kind of fabric that will retain heat, but ordinary table oil-cloth is generally preferred, with the glossy side turned down, because the bees will attack fibres of ordinary cloth and carry them outside. It is, however, a good plan to put a piece of ordinary cloth, such as a double layer of sacking, above the oil-cloth quilt.



Fig. 7. 8-Frame Hive.

Our next step is to remove the quilt. The interior of the hive is now presented to our gaze; at least, we see the tops of the frames from between which, if it be in late spring or summer, thousands of bees are appearing and covering the upper part. Fig. 9 shows the frames.

We will now have a chance to learn something about the temper of the insects in this particular hive, for if they are good they will not offer to fly, but if they are bad they will run round and fly off, some at us, some at the hive entrance. Now is the time to use smoke to keep them in subjection; how much will depend upon circumstances, but never any more than is necessary. In the case of a colony known to be irritable, it is usually necessary to give a puff or two into the hive entrance before removing the cover, but with gentle bees a few puffs across the frames, never down through them, will be sufficient. In spring and autumn when the colonies are weak in numbers it is often unnecessary to use smoke.

Before touching anything we will examine the arrangements a little. The frames are eight in number, jammed tightly together and against one side of the hive. If we