

A New Plan of Securing the Queen in Large Swarms.

SIR,—On Sunday, June 23th, I was watching one of my hives, which I expected to swarm, when, as I stood, the swarm issued—the bees tearing out as if the "old gentleman" was after them. After the usual gyration they settled down in the centre of a thick garden hedge. I fixed a skep above them, and smoked them up. It was a very large swarm—above five pounds, I should think.

While they were settling in the skep I examined the parent hive, cut out all queen-cells except one (as I knew the queen to be an old one, and intended to try to catch and kill her), and gave more surplus room. Now, thought I, I shall have an opportunity of trying "S. J.'s" suggestion for finding the queen in large swarms by means of hiving into two skeps, &c. I therefore followed his directions carefully.

I am sorry to say that, in my hands at all events, the plan did not come up to my expectations. In the first place, the bees showed a very decided preference for one of the skeps, and hardly entered the other at all. This was no doubt, due to the queen being nearest to the hive preferred, and to the fact that she either had entered, or was progressing towards it. This did not lead to the equal division of the bees, as "S. J." no doubt anticipated. In the second place, no less than four skeps are necessary, and in use at the same time. I followed the plan up without success until my patience was entirely exhausted, and finally hived the whole lot—queen and all—into the parent hive.

I do not like making disparaging remarks, but I thought that my brother bee-keepers might be glad of information as to how a newly suggested plan seemed to succeed. I therefore tender my apologies to "S. J."

During the week which followed I daily expected the same hive to swarm again, as there were both an old queen and a sealed queen-cell within; and on Sunday, July 5th, at 10.30 a. m. I was walking down the garden when I saw an enormous swarm in the very centre of my best gooseberry-bush, and evidently from the same hive. I think the swarm was larger than before. As I smoked the bees up into a skep fixed above, the idea occurred to me to filter the queen from the bees.

No sooner said than done. I got my hiving-board fixed, and placed thereon three wooden blocks, about one and a half inches square; on these a square of excluder zinc, and on the top a good-sized skep, plugging up the entrance in

the rim of the skeps with my handkerchief. I then threw the bees out on the sheet in front of this erection. They at once marched in, and though it took rather longer than usual, and a liberal allowance of smoke to keep them moving, the bees went through the zinc into the skep, leaving just a few handfuls of bees under the zinc. Amongst these, of course, was the queen. After lifting off the skep containing the majority of the bees it was a very simple matter to pick out the queen, as she marched with the rest of the few remaining bees into a skep placed beside them. In fact, the plan succeeded admirably, and I hope you will be able to find room for this letter in the *Record*, as I should like other bee-keepers to try my method, feeling certain that it will minimise the great difficulty of picking out the queen in a very large swarm.—Yours, &c., FREDERICK E. DANIEL.—Bee-Keepers' Record.

We have used the ordinary Jones drone trap over the entrance of the hive for this purpose frequently, and especially when hiving a second swarm, where we thought there were a lot of queens that we would like to get. We have sometimes caught a number trying to get into the zinc, following the bees. After catching them, we would select the best and let her run in. If you wish to get rid of the old queen in an easy way, when the bees swarm, just take a young queen and put her on a cluster of bees as they cluster on the limb. She will be accepted the same as any other by lighting on them, and after crawling in through the cluster, shake them down in front of a hive, allowing them to run in. You will then find when the fight commences that the young queen will come out victorious. We thought we had a great invention after having two or three old queens killed and the young one we wanted in her place, but just about the time we were going to swing our hats and give three cheers for the invention, the bees swarmed out, part of them going with the old queen and part of them with the young one. As it was a large swarm, it made two pretty good sized ones. We hived them separately and set the hives close together. After they had quieted down, the next day, we examined and found the old queen. On another occasion about half of the bees swarmed out with the old queen, leaving the young queen in the hive.