

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

QUESTION DRAWER.

DEAR SIR,—In answer to your query regarding the bleaching of wax, I may say I have never tried to bleach it myself, but I find the following process in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:

"To bleach wax, it is formed into shreds and strips, so as to expose the greatest possible surface. So prepared, it is spread out, and frequently watered and turned in the direct sunlight—a slow but effective process. To hasten the bleaching action, the wax may be mixed with about one sixth of pure spirits of turpentine, and this preparation, on exposure, by its copious production of ozone, effects in four or five days a bleaching which otherwise would occupy three or four weeks. When the bleaching is complete, all trace of turpentine oil will have disappeared."

Yours, etc., S. CORNELL.

Lindsay, 16th May, 1893.

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AFTER DINNER THOUGHTS.

MR. EDITOR,—The usual time for thought on this subject brings to my remembrance my promise to try to help Mr. Darling in analyzing some of the trials which the novice encounters while learning to keep bees. Friend D. is right when he says that a beekeeper's real trouble begins when he has to depend on books and periodicals. In order to succeed in any worthy undertaking a man must be real, for a man made of paper and ink is tossed about with every wind that blows. Of course, Mr. D., if a novice tried, as you say, to follow Mr. Doolittle's plan of natural swarming, he would have all swarms and no honey; for as usual, he would take the term "natural swarming" to mean—let them swarm all they can, or as they will; while Mr. D. certainly must have meant—let them swarm naturally, but not to excess. You say why is it that the instruction given so often proves partially if not wholly useless to the novice. I think the majority of their failures is because we, older ones, don't talk plainly enough. We

stay on top of the fence and talk down to people; a misunderstanding of terms used is the result, and the novice is not so much to be blamed as we. I will pass by the caging of queens, to get large crops of honey, for I don't do such foolish things. I aim to simplify beekeeping, and reduce the cost of producing honey. You say, why is it that some of those very prolific queens sometimes prove to be the poorest stock a man has in his yard. Surely I never saw a poor stock which had a very prolific queen, but I have had such stocks swarm very early when I was off my guard, and go to the woods, and the stock remain so thrifty that it took keen eyes to detect that it had cast a swarm without opening the hive. Again, I agree that you can't induce a few bees to go into the tiering up business, but you can produce them to do it. Produce a half bushel of bees, and see how quick I will send them into their cases. I would shade and ventilate them just enough to keep down excessive heat, which is one great cause of swarming. Give them a case of sections about a week before the general honey flow commences, placing in the centre a few sections of empty comb, even if I had to cut the comb from an outside frame in the brood chamber and fit it in the sections, for such combs though dark can be extracted. After a few of the strongest have made a good start in cases, distribute their partly filled sections among the next strongest which will help them to start also. I would do this *before they got the swarming fever*. Perhaps one colony in fifteen or twenty will act as though they didn't care whether school kept or not, and prefer idleness. First, see if such colonies have a queen; if they have, then borrow enough unfinished sections from two or three strong colonies to make a full case, and give it to them, which will shame them into activity. Now that half bushel colony will swarm soon. When it does, just wait until the last is in the air, then remove it to a new stand before many bees from the field return to it, placing a hive for the new swarm in its place. Now go and fetch the swarm which by this time has alighted and