

"That seems strange to me. How did you account for it?"

"After a little watching I found that such death of bees rarely occurred except during the first heavy freeze each fall, and this led me to investigate the matter closely, said investigation proving to my mind that the bees died from lack of vitality, or old age, rather than from not being able to keep up with the cluster by being chilled."

"I do not see it yet."

"Usually we have much cool, cloudy weather before two or three weeks before the first severe cold, so that old bees do not leave the hive to any extent to die, as they do all through the summer months, so that the number of dead bees dying from that cause would be considerable, providing none were chilled. But, instead of dying at once, at this time of year, the old bees seem to linger along through the dormancy of the bees at this time of the year, and so gather in these little clusters, where they remain in a half dormant state until caught by the extreme cold, or a warm time comes when a chance is offered for a flight. If a flight occurs, I have often found them clinging around on old boards, fences, corners of the hives, etc., and I presume, if you will think, you have seen the same."

"Yes, I do remember seeing such things, but I had no idea that these nearly dead bees, sticking to everything, were those I would find dead after a cold snap, in late fall or early winter, if no flight had occurred."

"Then another thing. I noticed that, where a cold snap came immediately after the bees had had a flight, there would be scarcely a bee caught away from the main cluster, this showing also that those caught at any other time were too nearly gone with old age to keep up with the cluster. For these reasons I left off making holes through my combs, for it was

not only quite a job to make these holes, but a worse part was that the bees would fill them up every summer, and with drone size of cells at that. This would cause a lot of drones to be reared when and where I did not want them."

"Well, I am glad to have had this talk with you; and, while not thoroughly convinced that you are right, I shall keep watch of the matter; and if time proves that you are, it will be of value to me."—Conversations With Doolittle, in "Gleanings in Bee-Culture."

#### EXPERIMENT WITH WASPS' EGGS

In the *Rheinsche Bienenzeltung* M. Dickel describes a curious experiment. He cut a hole in one of the combs of a hive and inserted a piece of comb with the eggs it contained, taken from a wasp's nest. The experiment was repeated thrice and every time it produced a curious commotion amongst the bees. In approaching it the bees stopped dead, as if fascinated by the strange substance. Their antennae were extended forward with feverish movements. They then dashed upwards and spun round madly. This was soon followed by others who joined in the unrestrained dance. By degrees some of them got over their fear of this strange object and approached it with their trembling antennae extended and flapping their wings and still continuing their comical dance. At length they decided to risk an attack, and tore the nest into shreds evidently with repugnance. They were more undecided about touching the eggs, but these they also attacked at last, crushing them with their mandibles. They seemed thoroughly disgusted, and showed it by getting rid of the egg shell as quickly as possible with their front legs.—*British Bee Journal*.