

OUR OWN APIARY.

SETTING OUT OF WINTER QUARTERS.

ON the 17th (just two days after the last issue of the JOURNAL) we arose betimes in the morning, and with the assistance of three of the boys, carried our 202 colonies out of winter quarters, and the story we have to tell is not so cheerful as we led you to expect in the report of our last examination, the latter end of March, when we looked over them, and did not find any dead ones, although in some instances we *thought* they were dead, until by rapping on the hive we heard the hum of the inmates. We were congratulating ourselves on the probability of coming through without any loss, though we had no right to expect any such happy consummation, owing to our neglect in not personally superintending the preparations for wintering last fall. After doubling up the weak and starving ones and counting those entirely dead, we are 29 colonies less than last fall. All the remaining colonies are in excellent condition so far as a hasty examination will permit of our judging, for the weather has been unfavorable for much manipulation. Some of our loss we can easily account for now that we can see *inside* the hives. A number of the colonies were in two-storey hives, and they had plenty of stores for wintering and to spare, if the colonies had not commenced breeding; apparently they did commence, however, very soon after they were put into winter quarters, as they had bred immense quantities of bees, and had starved. A lower temperature would have saved them. The lesson we learn from this is that strong colonies should be wintered in a lower temperature than smaller ones, and that the best success will be attained if all the colonies are as nearly equal as possible when put into winter quarters. We have always preached this, but this is an instance of others not carrying out our instructions. Three of the colonies died of dysentery, from breeding; and just here it may be well to mention that there is a difference between dysentery as produced by excessive winter breeding, and as developed by the consumption of bad stores. In the latter case the whole colony becomes affected, while in the first

instance the old bees give the evidences of dysentery, as shown by their distended bodies, while the younger ones are a natural size. The former died of dysentery, the latter of starvation. A number of the colonies were apparently queenless when put into winter quarters, if we may judge by the way the bees were scattered over the combs as though they had never clustered, and had died from exposure and isolation.

SMOKERS, AND HOW TO LOAD THEM.

The directors of the Ontario Beekeepers' Association have lately had sent to each member of that body, a No 2 smoker as a *quid pro quo* for the membership fee, and the contract for supplying these was given to the publishers of the BEE JOURNAL. We have had one or two requests for information as to "how the smoker works?" For fuel, a number of things may be used. See our reply to a query on page 18, present volume. The smokers as sent out are constructed somewhat differently to those made by us prior to the season of 1889, and what puzzles some may be to know at which end the smoker is to be "loaded," as those sent out are what we might term "breach-loading" as well as "muzzle-loading." When they were made to load from the "muzzle-end" or top, we were continually hearing complaints of how hard they were to load, when they required replenishing, with the nozzle so hot it could not be taken off by hand, and had to be knocked off with a stick, or other instrument, and allowed to cool, after fresh fuel had been put in, before it could be replaced. This objection we overcame by making the bottom end of the fire-barrel removable, and the fuel can now be readily put in without burning one's self.

WIDTH OF SEPARATORS.

We ordinarily make separators so they will not come nearer than a bee-space to either top or bottom of sections, but if the slots in the sections are made full-bee-space, and the separators are cut the full width of the depth of the sections, and are flush at top and bottom, the combs will be more true, and will have a neater and more finished appearance. The bees are inclined to bulge the tops of the sections, while they scarcely ever bulge the bottoms.