

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

HOW TO HIVE BEES AND PREVENT AFTER SWARMS.

THE HEDDON METHOD CONTROVERTED.

Query No. 38.—Which is the safest way to hive a swarm of bees?

THE safest and best way to hive a swarm of bees is, of course, the way I myself do it! Every old bee-keeper has the "best" plan, and here is mine: I, of course, keep all my queens clipped. I say "of course" because I think every first-rate bee-keeper clips his queens, the non-clippers to the contrary notwithstanding. When a swarm is seen to be issuing I take a little wire cage to the swarming colony and usually find the queen just in front of the hive trying to fly. The open end of the wire cage is put over her when she immediately crawls up into it and is shut in. Then, as soon as the swarm is all out I close the entrance of the old colony and turn it round facing the opposite direction and two or three feet from where it stood. I then place my hive for the new swarm on the old stand and put the caged queen in it on top of the frames under the quilt, and the work is done. This occupies from three to five minutes. By this time another swarm or two may be issuing, when they can be treated in the same way on the double quick. By this short and easy method I have hived as many as eight or ten swarms in about fifteen minutes. If three or four are coming out at once and you have no tents to put over them to catch them you can manage them all as above alone rightly if you "look alive." Run around to the swarming colonies and cage the queens as above directed turning each colony around and placing it off two or three feet, and as soon as you get round them all go back and begin placing your hives for the new swarms on the old stands as rapidly as possible. If you have your hives ready and handy by, as every bee-keeper ought to have, you can go over half a dozen in this way in an almost incredibly short time, even though they all come out at once. When several are issuing at once and you are going rapidly over them and caging the queens, the reason for turning the old colony round out of place before leaving it and not waiting to complete the job by placing the new hive in position and putting in the queen, is just this: Should you do so the probability is that before you would get round half a dozen, some of them might be returning without clustering; but, if they do return, and the old hive is shifted out of place they will hover round for a short time until you get your new hive placed. Should the several swarms out all cluster together which they are quite apt to do, the remedial process is both

rapid and simple. Proceed to the cluster with a vessel with cloth cover and a wig, and if, say, four swarms are out, take about one-quarter of the cluster and dump them in front of one of the empty hives (all of course containing the old queens caged) and repeat this till you get over them all. If they all co-mingle in flight and instead of clustering essay all of them to return together to one hive, either allow them all to enter and then divide them up or cover the hive with a sheet as soon as the right proportion has entered and place one of the other empty hives immediately in front of it, covering it when it has its quota and so on. They can then be rapidly distributed to their place.

But how about the old colonies that are shut up you ask? There may be a dozen of them scattered around the yard—one of course for every new swarm. Well, we will now deal with them. There are two good reasons for just hastily turning the old colony around out of place and shutting it up when the swarm is all out. The first and obvious reason is to gain time in getting on to the next swarm and not be bothered any more with the old colony at that present time. But when the swarms are all out for the time and hived and the rush over then you have time to attend to the old imprisoned colonies. Do not imagine that shutting them up will hurt them or even disturb them much. They are mostly young bees, they now have plenty of room, and consequently do not worry much to get out. In a great rush of swarming and press of work I have occasionally let them stand till the next day with no bad results. And here comes in the second reason for leaving the old colony near the new and shutting it up. And here comes in also the subject of after-swarms and how to prevent them. With due respect to Mr. Heddon I must here express the opinion that his method of preventing after swarms must inevitably prove a failure in a large proportion of the cases. One very obvious reason for this is that in many cases, owing to various reasons, the young queens are nearly hatched before the first swarm comes out. Little less rare is the occurrence that many of the old bees remain behind. Under such circumstances, depending on Mr. Heddon's plan would certainly be depending on a broken stick. I am satisfied that no plan for preventing after swarms can be depended on unless it involves an examination and manipulation of the old colony. "The longest way round is the safest way home." These short-cuts in bee-keeping to avoid a little work are as unprofitable as they are unsafe. And really it is not such a formidable job to go over a hive that has just swarmed and put it in shape. An active man in