

From Gleanings.

Returning Swarms to the Parent Hive.

DADANT EXPLAINS HOW TO DO IT AND NOT HAVE THEM SWARM OUT AGAIN.

FRIEND ROOT:—The inclosed letter from J. S. Willard explains itself. Mr. W. desires that we should give in Gleanings the particulars of our plan of returning the swarms to the parent colonies to keep down increase. You will remember that this was mentioned in Gleanings for 1891, page 541, and called fourth a number of inquiries from bee-keepers is different localities.

Messrs. Dadant & Son:—In describing your plan of keeping down increase by returning the swarm in 48 hours, you do not say where to hive the swarm in order to save the bees that have their new home located; and, also, would you hive them in an empty hive or starters? A friend of mine wanted me to write you for particulars about that plan of returning the swarms; and, in fact, I thought I should like it myself too, and very likely several of the readers of Gleanings would like to have you describe the plan more minutely, and if you think so, you can write a letter to Gleanings at your leisure.

J. S. WILLARD.

Bedford, Iowa, Feb., 1892.

We wish to say, first, that this plan is not of our originating. We saw it first in the *Cours d' Apiculture*, of Hamet, published in Paris years ago. Hamet advised this plan more particularly for the secondary swarms. In those days of box-hive bee-keeping there was but little need of returning primary swarms to their colony. But we tried this method on primary swarms, and with good success. We notice, also, that a number of apiarists have tried it the past summer with fair results. Hamet says: "The swarm which is to be returned to the parent colony should be hived like any other swarm, and placed as close to the old colony as practicable. The next day, or the day following, the swarm should be shaken in front of the parent hive, just as is done in uniting several swarms together. They should never be returned the same day, as they would surely start out again in 24 hours. When they are returned after a lapse of time there is a fight between the queens, if the young ones are hatched, or the returning queen destroys the others in the cells."

Collin in his book, "*Le Guid du propriétaire d' Abeilles*," advises the apiarist to place the swarm on the old stand and remove the old colony to a new location, waiting till the queens are all hatched before bringing it back. But this method has one objection—the swarm re-

mains too long in the new hive, and raises brood in it, and this brood is practically lost.

The plan that we followed, and which we recommend, is to hive the swarm into an empty hive with frames and guides of foundation, exactly as if it were intended to be kept, and to place it near the old colony. In 24 to 48 hours, shake all the bees in front of the old colony. The combs that have been built in the meanwhile will never come amiss, and the few eggs laid will hurt nothing. It would be still better to remove the old colony from its stand, and return it when removing the swarm, and also to destroy the queen that has the least value—the queen of the swarm if very old, or the young queen if the old one is valuable. In fact, it is better that the old queen should remain, as bees are more likely to swarm with an unimpregnated queen than with a laying one.

We believe that this method prevents further swarming, only when the hive is in such condition that it would not have sent forth a second swarm. The issue of the first swarm puts an end to the swarming fever, the supplementary queen-cells are destroyed by the young queen, and one of the two queens vanishes in a duel when the swarm is returned. Unless the season is very favorable, the time for swarming passes away before the bees find out that they have been fooled by the apiarist, especially if he has provided ample room for their surplus honey.

As most of our bee-keeping friends well know, we are no longer comb-honey producers. For a number of years we have raised nothing but extracted honey, and therefore have no need of this method of preventing increase, for (Dr. Miller to the contrary notwithstanding) in an apiary properly run for extracted honey, there is no swarming to speak of. Every time that we have had swarming to any extent it was when we had infringed upon the rules that require that a colony of bees be supplied with a sufficient amount of empty combs ahead of need during the entire honey season. It may be of interest to our readers to know how we found out the value of Hamet's advice on the return of the first swarm to the parent colony. It was in 1876. We had a number of colonies of bees in the apiary of our friend A. Daugherty, residing in Rocky-Run township, some 14 miles from us, in a very good honey producing district. The season was a rushing one, and we were behind. The bees were swarming wherever they had not been provided with a large stock of empty combs. Friend Daugherty, who had some 80 hives of bees, including ours, found himself