

was not able to do so either, they were not wintered as we usually do the weak ones; but we picked out the weakest and tied a string on each hive and set them in the centre of the cellar and they have come out in just as good condition as the stronger ones. I remarked to my husband that I did not think our bees looked or acted well last fall. They gathered scarcely any honey since last June, so we allowed them to take down honey enough out of their surplus sections to winter on. We noticed this: that where the bees were crowded down into a few combs and all other combs taken away that they could not cover, they wintered better than those that were stronger and had more combs.

If we live to see another fall we think we shall crowd our bees down into a very few combs to the colony of early gathered honey and feed sugar syrup until those combs are full and cover all with clean cotton duck, and fill hive with dry chaff, both for cellar and out-door wintering; lean the hive forward so the dead bees will be carried out easily, and lean a board over the entrance and let the snow cover the hives without molestation, as we think cleaning it off the alighting board arouses the bees somewhat and causes dysentery. Never saw ours have it worse, both in cellar and out of doors. Our crop of honey last year gathered in June was about 7,000 pounds; in 1883, 14,000 pounds; in 1882, was 39,000 or about 216 lbs per hive, four or five barrels of which was extracted honey, the rest two pound sections. Please criticise the above mode of preparing for wintering if you think of any defects, as we certainly do not want to meet with such a loss again, neither do we want to nurse so many sick bees in the spring. Please answer the following questions: How do you make hives tight enough to prevent snow and rain driving in and around the lids and through the joints of the lids, even when made very light? How would it work to put a fresh coat of paint over the hive and then lay on a thick cloth of cotton duck and paint over that, as our hive covers are made like the roof of a house and have a joint in the centre. I think some of our straw packing being damp helped on the dysentery of those out of doors. How wide an entrance should a good colony have in winter, and if best to tip the hive forward? Is it best to send a hand (not a very careful one) around once in a while to clean out the entrance when we think they are being clogged up? (My husband being somewhat of an invalid and not always to be around.) I would like to ask also if, when wintering in the cellar, it is advisable to pack the hives with straw or not? We have always done so and generally had better success in cellar,

wintering than in out-door wintering. The winter after our bees had gathered 216 pounds per hive, they were very strong there being almost double the bees in each hive as there was last fall. It was a very cold winter and we lost heavily that fall. We thought perhaps there might have been some "honey-dew" mixed in with their honey, but the honey was almost as light colored in the fall as that in the spring gathered from white clover. We think we have learned that it pays to put bees into winter quarters before the weather is too severe, as we had 118 colonies to put into one large cellar, we put in all but about thirty-five before the weather was severe, thinking we would leave the others out as long as we could, because so many in the cellar, and packed with straw, they seem to get too warm in moderate weather. There came on a very cold spell, and then it moderated a little when Mr. A. and a hand thought it safe to move them, so took them into the cellar. They were equally as good as the rest when put up last fall, but to-day there is scarcely a hive among the thirty-five that will much more than save their queen, three-fourths of the number are dead outright, and nearly one-half before taking out of cellar, or died in a few days, their bodies were terribly distended; a few of these were fed up later than any of the rest with section honey; the corner of the quilt was turned up a little and the help did not turn it down and take out sections. I think they all died. It grieves me so to see the poor little creatures suffer. We have had a cold backward spring with but one day that bees could gather pollen, except one other day when they gathered very little; but as our bees are crowded into such very close quarters, with combs of honey on outside of division board so bees can go over and get what they need, and the one day of pollen gathering two weeks ago, bees are doing very much better already. The better ones have their combs quite well-filled with brood, in a few days we will add another comb to such colonies as can take it. Excuse so long a letter from a stranger, and written in so hurried a manner, but I am one of the very busy ones though an invalid of thirty years, three-quarters of the time on my bed, except when caring for bees I get real well and strong. I have the oversight of our home apiary and care for it with the help of hired girls, and my husband takes care of the one away from home. The bees are Mr. Axtell's, not "Mrs. Axtell's Apiaries" as some have thought, because Mr. Axtell seldom writes for a Bee Journal. I write and say "we" and sign my name, and then editors call them "my bees."

MRS. S. C. AXTELL.

Roseville, Ill., April 18.

Anyone who will try the wintering of