



"THE GREATEST POSSIBLE GOOD TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE NUMBER."

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### EDITORIAL.

How to tell when the Bees will Swarm.

**W**E have an enquiry before us from a friend, asking how we can tell when a colony is likely to swarm the first time. Of course second and third swarms are easily told by the piping of the queens; but there are many colonies that give as plain outward indications of swarming the first time as the second, and there are others that we cannot tell anything about. In passing through the yard the other day, one of the students asked how we could tell when a colony was going to swarm, and we remarked that it was a very difficult matter in some instances, while very easy in others. On looking round we pointed over to a colony, perhaps 80 feet away, and said, there is one that will swarm very soon. "How do you know?" was the reply, and we remarked, do you not see those two or three rows above the entrance, running up the hive, apparently biting with their mandibles, and backing down again, that is, they move backwards and forwards, continually working their feet and their mandibles, or holding their heads down closely

to the hive, and we have noticed them doing this same thing on the entrance board. One of our students once named it the bee dance, or balancing to their partners. While we were describing this to him, he said it was very plain if they would always do that, and there was no trouble in telling when they were going to swarm. "Ah," we said, "you would have to watch them every day, because after they commence doing that they are almost sure to swarm the same day, and will very seldom, if weather is favorable, wait till the next, and if they commence doing it in the morning before ten o'clock, you may usually look for a swarm before three. "Well," he said, "that movement is distinct, and we shall never forget it," for while standing there the swarm issued. These bees that were doing the moving back and forth, apparently did not know what was being done inside, till the swarm had about one-third issued, then they turned round, as it were, and crawled back among the rest, and flew back with them. They appeared not to notice the commotion in the inside of the hive, and though they were going through with that peculiar performance, seemed to stop for half a minute, and then rushed pell-mell from the entrance. In passing through the yard this peculiarity should be watched, and you can often pick out the colonies just about to swarm, and by having everything in readiness, catch the queen. We have sometimes taken such colonies, opened the hive,