

A WORD TO BEGINNERS.

IN a late issue of the *Witness* a subscriber asks some questions relative to bees and bee-keeping, and the editor of that department answers. As the answers are of good practical value, we give both here:—

Q. Will you please answer the following questions on bee-keeping? How much land would one need in starting the business? How much capital needed, and number of hives one could manage alone? Is it profitable? Would it be too hard work for anyone troubled with the heart? I am 21 years old and not able to do heavy work. Is there any practical bee-keeper that would take one to learn it and what are the terms; also best time of the year? What is the price of "How I made \$400 with my Bees"? It was advertised in *WITNESS* some time ago. I think the author was a lady. It was in pamphlet form.

Ans.—It requires but very little land to accommodate quite a number of hives. I have twenty within an area of thirty feet square. A quarter of an acre is land enough for an apiary of considerable size. It would require about \$500 properly to start an apiary of fifty hives, but beginners cannot be too earnestly dissuaded from attempting this business until they have learned it. Anyone who proposes to be self-taught had better commence with only one or two colonies. A skilled bee-keeper can take care of from 100 to 200 stocks. Much depends however on whether the apiary be run for comb or extracted honey, also on the surroundings, whether convenient or otherwise. Bee-keeping is profitable as farming and other avocations are profitable. A fair livelihood may be got at it if a man understands what he is doing and manages it well. It is not a "bonanza" for people who want to take life easy. There is considerable hard work to be done, especially in the honey season. A physician is the proper party to consult about the heart-trouble referred to. Some forms of heart disease would not be aggravated by bee-keeping while others would. Much would depend on the excitability of the patient. Swarming and other operations in bee-keeping are more or less exciting, and there are forms of heart-disease that demand avoidance of all excitement. Mr. D. A. Jones, of Beeton, Ont., takes apprentices to the bee business during the working season. I believe they board themselves, and get tuition free in exchange for the services they render in the apiary. Spring is the proper time of year to begin as a learner of practical bee-keeping. I do not know of any pamphlet with the title mentioned, unless it be one by a Mrs. Cotton, that is referred to. If so, give it and the authoress a good letting alone. Any good manual of bee-keeping will tell you how to make \$400 a year with bees, if the right stuff is in you out of which a successful bee-keeper can be manufactured, by dint of hard study and persevering practice.

For the Canadian Bee Journal.

A REPORT FROM YORK COUNTY.

THE summer of '87 has been very good for bees in York County, considering the dryness of the season and the short time that clover and linden bloomed. Of course, some got comparatively little surplus honey. The reason, to my knowledge, I might as well explain before I go any further. In the spring of '87 bees in this part of the country as a general thing came out of winter quarters in a weak condition, consequently it took them a long time to build up strong. When they got to be good strong colonies it was just about the time that clover commenced to bloom and then the swarming fever set in, and whatever hives were allowed to swarm, of course became weak, and before they could get strong again the clover bloom was over and for basswood (which the bees began to gather honey from on July 7th) it only lasted about four days after which there was not any honey for bees to gather and, of course, these hives had no more honey than what they required for winter, in fact, some had to feed their bees last fall before they put them into winter quarters. Some of us, however, wintered our bees very well; those that were put into the cellar stood no better chance than those that were left on their summer stands, properly packed away. I winter out-doors altogether, and in this neighborhood my bees are generally the first to swarm in the spring, which is generally about the 20th of May. I would like to know how it is that so much has been written in the C.B.J. about cellar wintering when I am under the impression that about one-half of its subscribers winter their bees out-doors and are not practically interested in such writings. Suppose that all us boys that winter out-doors gave our experience now. I have not got space here, but will write out my system of outdoor wintering sometime before spring.

Well, as I was saying some of us did very well. I only let about one-half of my bees swarm and consequently I got a little over 45 lbs. per colony. From one hive I weighed the honey as I extracted it and I took 102½ lbs. of clover and basswood besides leaving them enough stores for winter. This was a double storey hive and it was not allowed to swarm, therefore it got the full benefit of the honey flow. Let me say here that I fully agree with Mr. H. B. White, of Prescott, on page 814, Dec. 28th, with regard to strong colonies and tiering them up before they commence to swarm. I see that he had some difficulty, however, in stopping the queen from laying in the upper storey. Well, here is my method. (I have never used queen excluders or honey boards; I don't say I never will.) As soon as my bees have a tendency to swarm I take out the queen cells. If there is too much honey in the brood chamber I extract some of it after which I put on a top storey filled with racks in which the combs have been drawn out about two or two and a-half inches wide the summer before, (drone combs if possible.) I generally contrive to have a stock of these combs on hand, and when the cells are drawn out so that they are over one inch deep the queen very rarely lays eggs in them, in fact, never with my experience. And as soon as the bees commence