

For the Canadian Bee Journal.

MY TORONTO HIVING ADVENTURE.

TO vindicate the honor of Toronto and calm the martial excitement of its doughty champion, Dr. Miller, as well as for the diffusion of useful knowledge in regard to bee-keeping I have investigated the history of that swarm at whose hiving I was the presiding genius, and, as Dr., M. and friend Pringle think, perhaps justly, the evil genius. The result is embodied in the sub-joined letter from my Toronto friend, "my Toronto man," as the types made me call him in my last article, but whether the error was in the copy or made by the compositor I do not know.

Toronto, Sept. 17, 1887.

DEAR MR. CLARKE.—I am sorry I was not at home when you called on Friday for the particulars respecting the swarm you hived and my experience in queen's wing clipping. So far as I remember when I arrived home that evening I found the bees had left the hive and most of them had returned to the old one. The remainder were clustered under the slats on which the hive stood. On examining the old colony I found two of the queen cells with the caps open so I at once concluded that the bees must have superseded the old queen, probably on account of her wing being cut. Having been busy I had not examined them from the time of clipping until after the swarm issued, so I took a frame of brood from the parent hive, first examining it to see that it had no queen on, and placed it in the new hive. I then dumped the cluster of bees in front and added sufficient from the parent colony to make a good swarm, having also placed the new hive on the old stand. The next morning they appeared all right so I felt assured that they must have a queen. About a week after I examined this as well as one or two other swarms to see if the queens had commenced laying when I found no eggs, and as the bees had not started any queen cells I set about a deliberate search for the queen which I failed to find, but was astonished to find two queen cells hanging from the bottom of the frame of brood which I had given them from one of which the wax was removed ready for the queen's appearance which took place the next day and a few days after she commenced laying. The hive filled up a good strong colony but did not yield me any surplus which they would probably have done with the old queen as she was a very fine one. Of course it was possible for a portion of the bees to have swarmed out the next day when the queen discovered the presence of the queen cells, but I am firmly of the conviction that there was no queen there as I closely examined the small cluster of

bees before they ran in over the paper and was also very careful not to give them one amongst the bees I added. I also could see no difference in the quantity of bees in the hive a week afterwards except a perceptible increase from the the frame of brood given them. My own opinion was that either you and "Mary" had left the queen behind in the "apple tree" or that "Mary" had drowned her in the plentiful supply of water with which she had deluged them in order to check the impetuosity of their swarming zeal. I thought of writing a few lines to the C.B.J. on the matter but neglected it, taking credit to myself by thinking that it was a pity to take any of the poetry out of your nice little article. In regard to queens' wing clipping my experience as you are aware has only extended over a few years. I may say that after the first year I clipped about half my queens and this was the first case of one being superseded and I have never lost one during swarming. About two years ago I had a strong cross swarm that swarmed out three days in succession (although every day I increased the shading) and doubtless I would have lost them if the queens' wings had not been clipped. I have frequently had them cluster long enough for me, after leisurely putting everything in order to take them the same as though the queen had not been clipped. Once I had two hives swarm together, and as they had been out a little while before any one noticed them I had to be pretty lively in getting the new hives on the old stands and caging the queens. When I had all ready, however, I went to look at them and found that they were all clustered in one large sugar loaf cone, and to my astonishment more than three-fourths of the bees returned to the one hive so that I had to equalize them. In conclusion I may say that I am decidedly in favor of clipping, which I think it safer and easier to do before the hives are very full of bees which has been my usual practice. This year I neglected it until nearly swarming time when the hives were pretty full and I think more liable to destroy the queens. I may say that in this case it could hardly be the fault of the clipping, as the wing was not cut more than half off.

Your "TORONTO FRIEND."

It will be seen from the above that my friend is of the opinion that the queen whose wing he clipped had been superseded, and that the young queen which led the swarm was either left on the tree by "Mary" and her too officious assistant, or subsequently drowned in a certain deluge which he describes. I can vouch for it that the queen was not left on the apple-tree for the branch was so cleverly handled that the cluster was not disturbed in the least. As for the deluge