

BEGINNER'S EXPERIENCE IN WINTERING.

Twenty colonies were fixed for winter on their summer stands in this way:—Large boxes made of two segments or stories, with long horizontal and moveable front door on the lower segment, also, a moveable zinc cover; the whole resting on a platform raised about six inches from the ground; (said platform used throughout the whole year to secure dryness, neatness and ventilation.) Inside of the large box, resting on a smaller platform or bottom board, is placed for winter, the hive packed hard with straw all around (about 6 inches); such are the main features of my methods of wintering.

But added to this, is a special adjustment of my own, devised to facilitate the cleaning of the bottom board during winter, as also the spring feeding under the frames. It is this: The hive instead of resting directly on the bottom board, is (for winter-time) raised about four inches from it by means of a distinct frame-work three inches thick; the front (or 4th side) of said frame-work is left open, a little moveable board 1-2 inch thick being applied as the fourth side of the frame work and used as a door to the underpart of the hive; and for the daily use of the bees, a small entrance is cut in the lower part of said movable board. Anyone will see how easy it is to remove the front large door of the big box, the little inner door of the frame work, and all the packing between the two or under the frames without disturbing the bees to any serious extent, and then to clean the bottom from all dirt and dead bees. To make a cleaner job I use a piece of coarse paper to cover the bottom board; the packing being done between two sheets of said paper under the frames of the hives. As I just said, I pack with straw the four inches space under the frames; for,

the bees could not very well keep warm with so much free space under the frames; but a sheet of brown paper placed under the frame prevents the straw from annoying the bees. The packing is a little loose near the entrance to allow a passage for the bees. With such a method I can in a little more than an hour clean all the bottom boards of the twenty hives, without disturbing the bees or jarring the hives.

Now, here is a mistake I made this winter. I did not pack soon enough the four inch space under the frames; the result was that the long cold spell of December last killed one of my colonies. As the month of March has been splendid so far I removed that hive to the honey-house in order to examine the combs of said colony; and here is what I found: About one thousand bees dead in their two or three inches of capped honey; they had occupied the space between four combs. The queen I found also dead in the central cluster. About the same number of bees were dead inside of the empty cells. The combs, besides an abundance of capped honey, had also an abundance of bee-bread or pollen. The cluster of bees had reached the upper part of the middle frames; unfortunately there was no passage-way above the frames for the three small clusters to unite in one or two. From the presence of so much pollen I concluded that the sad fate occurred in December. I also concluded that the young queen was not laying, and perhaps was yet a virgin, from the fact that I found five queen-cells just emptied, and another queen-cell with an immature queen dead in it. I suppose that the old queen died, or was superseded late in the fall, and the new queen had no chance to mate. Hence the colony grew very weak, and was less able to withstand the cold. But all this is a mere supposition, and I wish some of the veterans to give a more satisfactory explanation of the