

can start with strong stocks when set upon the summer stands from the cellar.

Now, on the other hand, a weak swarm put into winter quarters in November or December, will be weakened in April or May. A little patch of brood will probably be found in such the last of March. Such swarms cannot be expected to begin work in surplus cases at least, until seven frames of the Langstroth size are pretty well crowded with bees. Ordinarily this cannot be accomplished till the summer honey harvest is well advanced, unless such colonies are helped by stronger ones; and this is hardly a paying method.

All of our considerable apiaries contain more or less colonies of bees, which do not come up to the standard of honey production that others do. I know there are causes, other than the one I have set forth, to which the difficulty may be attributed in part. These are—some of them—want of prolificness in queens, disease in winter depopulating the colony; loss occasioned by age of bees, etc.

Then, if my premises are sound, the first point to be considered in the production of comb honey is the oft repeated injunction to have strong colonies in the spring, and to accomplish this we must adopt a plan at the close of the preceding honey harvest, to insure strong colonies of young bees to place in winter quarters.

GETTING OVER A DIFFICULTY.

Spring now comes with its vicissitudes. The fact is generally admitted—disbelievers can learn by experience—that bees wintered indoors are more subject to loss by spring dwindling than those wintered out of doors. To obviate this as far as possible, it is best to keep the bees in the cellar till the first of May, if they can be kept quiet. There are exceptions to such a rule, for sometimes our seasons give us warm weather, and that continuously from the 15th of April. The two past seasons, early May brought cold weather, which the bees could have passed to better advantage in the cellar rather than nosing around the willows with overcoats and mittens on.

The question of stimulative feeding in spring is one of importance. There is no question but such feeding has an effect upon the colony in quickening their energies and giving them the impulse of breeding. This impulse is not confined to the queen alone, as some people seem to believe, but the energising influence pervades the whole colony. The question of feeding in early spring to induce breeding is one which needs to be carefully considered, because it is easier to do more harm than good by adopting

the practice. I believe it better to feed in September for spring strength than in the following May, unless it be the very last of the month, as the seasons latterly have come to us.

TUCKED UP WARM.

But there is one thing that is always in order in early spring; and that is, to take every precaution possible to retain the internal heat of the hive and prevent ingress of cold from without. The bees have this provident care inherent in their nature, as is shown by their care in sealing up all cracks and crevices in every part of the hive before the advent of cold weather. The moving of hives in spring, and manipulating them from the top, as each hive should be when placed upon the summer stands, so far as is necessary to clean out all dead bees and remove mouldy combs, and to contract the brood nest to proper size for the colony. These manipulations necessarily sunder the carefully glued joints and crevices, leaving numerous ways for cold to creep in and warmth to escape from the hive.

This may be quite effectually prevented by the use of cushions, dry chaff and leaves; the latter is always preferable to chaff. Extra pains to tuck the cushion and quilts down and not be sparing of the amount put on through May, will pay for the trouble.

For the reasons just stated, I would as far as possible winter bees in chaff hives, or change to such as soon as practicable in May. The chaff hive as now made is superior to the single walled hive. To our friend E. P. Churchill, of Hollowell, I believe, belongs the credit of making improvements in the chaff hive which places it ahead of any single walled hive I have used for the production of comb honey.

A QUESTION OF JUDGMENT.

Given a certain number of strong swarms of bees in spring, how shall they be worked to produce the largest amount of comb honey? This question is not so easily answered as it might at first seem to be. But ordinarily I believe it profitable—the honey flow of course being good—to let one swarm issue, allowing the parent swarm to raise a queen, destroying all but one of the queen cells about the fifth day after the swarm issues. Previous to swarming, however, when seven or eight frames are well filled with brood and the bees seem disposed to build bits of comb in all available spaces the time has come to put on surplus cases.

Now we will say that five swarms are each in seven frames and ready to receive sections for the storing of surplus honey. The season is now advanced and weather warm so the brood