

the extra labor expended: and, if so, could the plea of letting the bees take care of themselves enter into the problem?"

"I had hardly thought of that,"

"The question, it seems to me, is, which will give the best returns for the amount of labor expended? and not how little labor is it possible to run an apiary with and secure any returns at all?"

"Then you do not think as good returns can be secured with the large hives with little labor?"

"That is right. But let us look a little into this matter of large hives giving large colonies, with no desire to swarm, and another claim put forth by some—that swarms from the large hives are so much larger than those from the small hives. I believe there is something overlooked here; for, with those nine-frame Gallup hives, I have had fully as little swarming as I have had with the ten-frame Langstroth hives, and the average of the swarms was not materially different, as to size in either case."

"I hardly see why that should be so."

"I am free to admit that were each placed side by side, with no sections on, the ten-frame L. hives would probably be later in swarming, and send out larger swarms; but no one working on the contraction plan treats his colonies in that way."

"He would be a strange bee-keeper if he did."

"Then we have that, with the small hive or brood-chamber, the sections are put on as soon as the honey-flow commences, and the brood-combs are manipulated till the whole are solid full of brood; and when in this shape, if any honey is stored, it must go into the sections, for there is no other place for it to go. Is this as you understand it?"

"Very nearly."

"Thus started early in the sections,

the bees become accustomed to their surroundings, and these fully occupied combs of brood entertain the best queen to her full capacity as to egg-laying; and, if we have made no mistake, how could a larger hive give any larger colonies? Large hives do not give large colonies beyond any hive which gives the queen room for her full capacity. Am I right here?"

"I can see no flaw in that assertion."

"If the queen has all the vacant cell room her prolificness requires, more room is only a damage to our crop of comb honey; for in the finding of too many vacant cells in the brood-chamber at the beginning of the honey harvest comes an "accustomment" to the brood-chamber for storing honey, instead of the sections; and thus the queen is crowded upon honey, instead of said honey going into the sections, and with restricted room for her eggs comes discontent, and from this discontent comes the desire, and from the desire comes swarming, the very thing that we are told we shall not have if we will only use large hives."

"I wish my neighbor could hear your argument. Perhaps he could give as good arguments on his side. I don't know enough. I can only say that it looks reasonable."

"Remember we are looking at the matter from a honey-comb standpoint, or honey in sections, not extracted honey."

"But you do have larger hives, do you not?"

"Yes. Some fifteen to seventeen years ago I was persuaded to buy of a farmer, living five miles from me, his bees, as he did not wish to keep them longer, and with the bees he gave me the privilege of allowing them to remain where they were for a few pounds of honey each year. These bees were in the ten-frame L. hives, and I have kept them in those hives