

For THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

FIRE IN THE BEE CELLAR.

By C. H. DIMBURN.

In Canada, perhaps, more than in the United States, the successful wintering of bees is a problem of the highest importance. In all northern countries, in my opinion, the cellar must be generally depended on to surely accomplish this desirable object. But there is a great difference in cellars, as I have discovered in recent years; and I thought perhaps a little of that experience might be of interest to our cousins across the border.

When I first commenced bee keeping I had but few colonies, and almost invariably wintered them successfully in the house cellar, and I thought I had forever settled that point. My cellar had a cement bottom, and was plastered on sides and ceiling, with a six inch hole in bottom of chimney for ventilation. The bee room was separated by a partition from the vegetable room, and was but fourteen by sixteen feet in size. The room over head was almost constantly heated, and there was no trouble in keeping it warm and dry, and it is not strange that the bees usually wintered well in it. In time, however, it became too small to hold the increasing number of colonies, and as I intended building a honey house I decided to build a bee cellar under it, where it would be much handier to the apiary.

I had been reading Doolittle a good deal, and concluded he must be right about no ventilation being necessary, and made no provision for any. In justice to Doolittle, however, I overlooked the fact that his cave cellar was covered with four to six feet of earth, and the temperature would not go below 45°. I soon found that my new cellar was too damp; and, without a fire overhead, the mercury would drop to 35° in a cold snap. The bees became very uneasy; dead bees and mould covered everything, and it is needless to say that the bees came out in bad shape. The next season the cellar was cemented and plastered, but the result was not much better,

and in connection with the honey dew stores, my losses were greater than ever before.

I now turned my attention to providing some means for fire and ventilation for the cellar. I had seen oil stoves recommended, but I object to these, as they create no ventilation and burn up the life preserving properties of the air. A stove heats up too quickly, and throws out too intense a heat, and is too soon cold again. I finally decided to build a brick furnace, using the front doors and grate of an old cook stove. The walls are eight inches thick, and when heated, hold heat a long time.

Now, when a cold snap comes along, a fire is started in the furnace; and, to make it last a long time, some good big pieces of coal are put in, and the air slides are left open which ventilates the cellar thoroughly. The air is soon dry, fresh and warm, and the bees seem to winter perfectly, but very few came out to die on the floor, though I have several times run the temperature up to 65°.

I believe that the quality of food has more to do with good wintering than any other one thing; but temperature, ventilation and moisture come in as important factors. The other conditions can be easily secured, but nothing but fire will enable us to regulate temperature, which is a very important matter.

Rock Island, Ill.

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AFTER DINNER THOUGHTS.

By JOHN F. GATES.

As I indulge in catlike slumbers in this old arm chair after partaking in plenitude of the delicious viands which my wife has prepared for the sustenance of this six feet two inch body of mine, my thoughts seem less mixed and more settled than they have been for some time past. The business end of life's battle for 1892 has been reached, and victory has crowned our untiring efforts.

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The smoke is clearing away, and a little