

A TEST OF THE ALEXANDER PLAN OF INCREASE.

Also a Test of the Nucleus Plan.

Last spring, when I read in an April number of "Gleanings," page 425, the plan of Mr. Alexander for securing both increase and honey at the same time, I was much interested. Here was what I had been looking for, but did not expect to find inside the lines of the bee industry—a double crop of honey and 100 per cent increase of colonies. If not, indeed a short and easy way to fortune, it was at least something approaching it. I selected four colonies of medium strength, having prolific queens, to test the scheme. April 22 the queen and one frame of brood and bees was taken from each of colonies Nos. 7, 9, 12, 13, and then placed in an empty hive under the brood-nest, with a queen-excluder between the two stories. To this one frame of brood and bees had been added nine good combs, some of them having a little honey. On June 1st, in the forenoon, I took the upper stories from the four hives and carried each to a new stand, intending to give them ripe queen-cells in the afternoon. Coming out from dinner about 1 o'clock, I was just in time to see the first swarm of the season. It was from the lower story of No. 12. I was just in time to catch the clipped queen. I examined what had been the upper story of No. 12. It had a lot of queen-cells, some of them almost ready to hatch. Two of the other stories also had queen-cells. Here was 75 per cent of swarming, actual or anticipated, at nine days from preparation of colonies—not very encouraging.

June 7, what had been the upper story of No. 12 sent out a swarm; also No. 7. Here were three swarms before any of the colonies which had not been divided at all had given a single swarm. From this inauspicious beginning, both upper and lower stories, the whole

eight of them, continued to swarm until all but one lost or killed its queen. They did good work, though, gathering honey. To count the original colonies, giving each one credit for what honey its new colony made, the result was as follows: No. 7, 125 lbs.; No. 9, 75 lbs.; No. 12, 110 lbs.; No. 13, 145 lbs., or 455 lbs. in all.

I now wish to compare briefly these results with those obtained from three colonies which I devoted to increase by the nucleus plan. Three colonies were increased to 15, and 425 lbs. of honey obtained. Here was 141 2-3 lbs. per original colony, while the Alexander plan gave only 116 1/4 lbs. per colony. The nucleus plan gave 300 per cent more increase, and about 22 per cent more honey, than the Alexander plan. Both produced extracted honey; but the latter plan has merit, and I shall try it again.—F. L. Day, Minnesota, in "Gleanings in Bee Culture."

E. W. ALEXANDER'S PLAN OF CONTROLLING SWARMING.

This summer I have been testing Mr. Alexander's plan of increase; and were I to judge by this season's results alone I would predict that this is the process that is destined to come into general use among practical bee-keepers, replacing natural and "shook" swarming. His article in the April 15th number will be worth to me the subscription price of "Gleanings" for a good many years to come. I have tried the plan with about 30 colonies alongside about an equal number of shaken swarms and perhaps 20 natural swarms.

Those in which Mr. Alexander's plan was used are far ahead of the others, both in the amount of honey stored, to the present time (July 20) and in the success attending manipulation. The shaken swarms come next, and the natural swarms are poorest of all. I never saw colonies so strong, nor saw them work more energetically through