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## CONTRACTED BROOD NESTS FOR COMB HONEY

By F. P. Adams.

It is a good many years now since Mr. W. Z. Hutchison of the "Bee-keepers' Review" gave such wide publicity to the method of contraction of brood chambers when hiving swarms for the production of comb honey. This system has been practised by bee-keepers, both great and small, all over the country, and has many warm advocates among comb honey producers. The writer has used it to good advantage in former years, and to a certain extent during the past season, but it must be confessed that one by one its main features have been abandoned, and a different system and different principle has been introduced into the yard at Bow Park.

The theory of the Hutchinson plan is that by hiving a swarm on the old stand, in a brood chamber filled with frames of starters, and after a few days contracting the frames down to only five, the honey will go rapidly into the supers above and the queen below will keep the brood combs filled with eggs about as fast as the bees can build the wax, thus insuring worker comb below and plenty of honey above. It is certainly a very attractive-looking method of getting over many of the

difficulties with which the comb honey producer is beset, but the trouble with it is in practice that it adds new complications to an already complicated business, and for this very reason is apt to defeat the object for which it was devised.

There are some swarms that seem to take kindly to the contraction of their brood chamber, and with them the work goes merrily on in the supers, but with others (and these are usually our most profitable ones) such treatment seems to be just the reverse of what they require; instead of staying put in the little brood nest, they fool their time away in repeated attempts to change their quarters, and try the operator's strength and patience in an endeavor to get them back to work again.

It is in the big colonies that we must work for if we are to get the best results in the supers, and they require different handling from the small or medium-sized ones when they swarm out. With such, a small-sized brood nest is soon filled with eggs and honey, and before the season is over they have swarmed the second and sometimes the third time, thus frittering away their energy and the bee-keepers' profits, simply because he failed at the critical time to give them enough room for their labors.

Unless the frames in the brood chamber have been contracted down to a very limited number, there is sure to be too much drone comb built when starters are used in the frames, and