

FOR THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL.

THE WEATHER—FIRST SWARM, AND SWARMING.

THE drought still continues. This is the 15th of June, and there has been no rain to speak of in this locality since about the middle of May or before. Vegetation generally is suffering. The clover is out in great abundance—Alsike and white—and is giving a fair yield of honey since the 6th inst., when the honey-season opened, but the dry weather is telling upon it.

My first swarm issued yesterday from a Langstroth hive. A rather late beginning, you will say. Yes, but I have discouraged the swarming by giving abundant room and as much ventilation as would be safe. The swarm that issues under such conditions is worth hiving. The hot-house swarm that issues prematurely from a small, pent up brood chamber under the influence of heat and a splurge of honey is not worth so much. It is a very good rule to give plenty of room and ventilation and let them swarm when they get ready. Of course I have reference to prime swarms. After-swarving is not profitable and ought to be discouraged. By proper management and manipulation it can be almost entirely prevented. And with reference to the "artificial swarming" or dividing, whether in making first or last swarms, it seems to be "going out" as I think it should. Of course there are conditions and circumstances under which the dividing plan is indispensable, as in the case of the mechanic or professional man who has to go to his office or work and leave his bees to their swing. But the large bee-keeper or specialist had better let his bees swarm. My experience is that they then give better results. We get a better class of queens and better work and more of it. We all know how a new swarm will pitch in for all they are worth, as though every day was the last of their mortal existence. One thing I have noticed is this: that the young bee-keeper makes a "dead set" on the "artificial swarming." If you sell a colony or two to one of these enthusiastic neophytes the first and about the only thing he wants to know right away is how to divide them, and he goes on dividing and sub-dividing. This accomplished he is ready for the very largest kind of "bee business." But the old heads don't divide much. I would say to the young bee-keeper don't get "off" on the dividing business, but "make haste slowly." Let the bees swarm their first swarm and then keep back or put back the after swarms. "But my dear fellow, I have 100 colonies in my yard and if I do not divide them, and allow them all to swarm,

bedlam will be let loose certain days, and confusion will be so badly confounded when half a dozen swarms get out at once that I will be dumbfounded and can do nothing," says one. Well, now, that would be bad enough, but listen! Be wise in your day and generation as a bee-man, and have all your laying queens clipped—the non-clipping bee-men to the contrary notwithstanding. Then you will compass the confounded confusion, and get the bee bedlam beleaguered. This is no theory or "glittering generality" but sober fact, for this deponent has been through that mill. The *modus operandi* is simple enough, as thus: Have your hives of course all ready before the swarming season commences. Keep a supply of little queen cages constantly on hand in your pocket or tool basket. Keep a bee-veil on your hat, down behind and turned up in front, so that you can pull it down over your face in a moment if necessary; keep a pair of gloves in your pocket to use if you need them. With two or three sheets at hand and a pail of water with the little force pump and sprayer within easy reach you are armed for the fray and can confidently say—"Come on Macduff." When a swarm issues go to the hive and cage the queen which will be found near the entrance trying to fly. Then as soon as the swarm is out carry the old hive off to a new stand or if another swarm is issuing and you wish to gain time simply close the entrance and shift it away from the old stand three or four feet facing an opposite direction to that of original position. Now place your new hive on the old stand with entrance wide open and place the caged queen in on top of the frames. The swarm will of course come back to the new hive on the old stand. Now, this can be all done on your part in less than two minutes, and you are ready to deal in like manner with any other swarms that may be issuing. By this short and easy method (which is not new, however) I will undertake to hive a dozen swarms in from 15 to 20 minutes. Should two or three swarms cluster together before returning, your course is obvious and simple as there are no queens to hunt. Take a dipper, tin pan, or other vessel and divide them off among the number of hives together. Or if the united swarms all attempt to enter one hive without clustering the course is almost equally simple. When a fair proportion of the bees has entered the hive carry it off and set one of the others in its place to catch its proportion and so on. Or let them all enter and settle and then divide them off.

ALLEN PRINGLE.