

## The Prevention of Swarming— Questions.

FROM THE AMERICAN BEE JOURNAL.

[We received the following letter from Dr. Miller, in which he asks "The Dadant," some questions. Upon its receipt, we forwarded the letter, and in due time, there came back with it a reply from both Mr. Chas. Dadant and his son, C. P. The Doctor's letter and his two answers are as follows;—Ed.]

MESSRS. DADANT & SON:—You have done what you could to embitter my life by keeping bees that would not swarm, or by keeping hives from which bees would not swarm. At any rate, you report only from three to five colonies out of a hundred as swarming, and you attribute it chiefly to the large amount of room you give your colonies. This year I gave to most of my colonies 16 Langstroth combs, making, I think, about one-third more capacity than you give to your colonies. Most of them were reduced to one story with eight frames at the time of putting on supers, but before being so reduced a number of them made ready for swarming, and of those left on 16 frames the large majority decided to swarm.

It might be said that being in two stories the bees did not work in both, but that is a mistake, there was brood in both stories, and the queen went freely from one story to another. Now, why do my bees deport themselves so different from yours? Is it "locality," or is their something in the shape of the hive? Is it some witchcraft you brought over from France? If the latter, will you teach me the secret if I come down to your place?

Enviously yours

C. C. MILLER.

CHAS. DADANT'S ANSWER TO DR. MILLER.

There is nothing in discordance with what we hold to be the habits of the bees, in the above facts as described by Dr. Miller. The frames of our large hives have about 100,000 cells; those of the 8-frame Langstroth about 60,000, or two together about 120,000, but as soon as the crop begins we add the super containing about 50,000 cells, and when this is a little over half full we add a second one, if the season is favorable, thus raising the capacity of the hive to 200,000 cells.

The difference in the quantity of swarms is not due only to those successive enlarg-

ments of the hive. A colony in a state of nature, always builds its combs from the top down, and continues them downward without interruption, without leaving any space open. The queen may thus run over them without obstacles or irregularities. It is not thus with a double-story hive, and for that reason the queen always hesitates more or less either to go up into the upper tier or down again in the lower. The upper combs are separated from the lower, by the top-bar of the lower combs, the empty space, and the bottom-bar of the upper combs. This space compels her to hunt around in the dark, in a way which is not according to her instinct.

In a large, single-story hive the case is different. She finds in a brood chamber the entire space that she needs.

In our apiary of about 80 colonies, here at home, we have had but two swarms this season. We should gladly welcome Dr. Miller, and show him how our bees behave with our methods.

In a criticism on page 891, Mr. Doolittle, speaking of large hives, writes that it is useless to have hives full of brood and bees in the month of March, for it would be as if one hoed the potatoes before they were up. We do not know where Mr. Doolittle has seen hives full of brood and bees in March, probably not in our latitude, which is about the same as his.

It is just the other way. In either large or small hives, one usually does not get brood and bees as early as one would wish. Every season we try to induce our bees to breed early, by giving them flour before the pollen comes.

I would add that I would be very glad to find a way to get still stronger colonies than we usually have in April, for their is a great deal of fruit-bloom every year, and at that time there are but few colonies, even in large hives, that are sufficiently strong to harvest more than is necessary to breed from.

CHAS. DADANT.

C. P. DADANT'S ANSWER.

Dr. Miller is either trying to poke fun at us, or he is wanting to bring us out with our hobbies. I rather think the latter is the case. Although Dr. M.'s motto is "I don't know," we suspect him of knowing a great deal more than he lets on, and we think that he is not nearly so ignorant as he would let us believe. Well, Doctor, we will take you as if in dead earnest, and will "talk back." Right here, in the home apiary, we have about 80 colonies just now. We have had two swarms, and think we have lost another. Mr. Dadant, senior, has had the task of watching the