

RETRIEVING A SWARM.

The handling of a swarm is not a serious proposition, provided it does not settle in a rather inaccessible place. Until it does cluster nothing can be done with it; therefore it is utterly useless, so far as the bees are concerned, to beat tin pans, ring bells, or otherwise make a hideous noise. Such strenuousness may provide occupation for the bee-keeper at a time when he feels he ought to be doing something to show he is in control of the situation, but he will display more wisdom if he sedately waits until they settle, in the meantime providing himself with a bushel or clothes basket and a large apron or similar covering. When the cluster is at the end of a low branch the basket is held close under it, then the branch is given a sudden downward jerk that tumbles the bees



Fig. 18. Retrieving a Swarm.

into the basket, which is then quickly covered with the apron. For a higher branch a stepladder is almost a necessity; sometimes one must climb the tree to reach the bees. In windy weather they may gather on a thick branch, or even on the trunk, in which case they must be brushed off with the hands. When the branch happens to be a small one the speediest way is often to cut it off. In any case, it is always as well to have a small saw handy when gathering in a swarm, to cut away twigs and sprays that interfere.

Once the swarm has been secured it is carried to the new hive, in front of which a sheet has been spread or boards laid to form a runway. A small lot of the bees is dumped out close to the entrance, the rest farther away, or they may be left in the basket, which is stood on edge leaning against the hive-front. In a few minutes some daring spirit will venture into the entrance and soon all will follow. In warm weather