

OUR OWN APIARY.

Set Out Mice Instead of Bees.

THOSE who have read the JOURNAL for years past will doubtless recollect how urgent we have always been in reference to precautions against mice, for we have had a colony or two destroyed in that way. Last fall at our home apiary we sold off most of the colonies, leaving us with less than 100 by the first of September. We afterwards sold a large number of queens and bees, the result was that we had few to put in winter quarters. Taking the ordinary precautions to destroy all mice about the bee-house late in the fall, we thought that we might trust it, as heretofore, to be free from mice until the following spring. Such, however, was not the case, as the mice seemed to have gathered from all directions after the bees had been set in. As our winter quarters are only a short distance from several large barns we fancy the mice must have held a convention, and appointed every mouse a delegate to meet in the bee-house. Let that be as it may, the facts are that when we went to set out the bees this spring, we noticed that all the bees on the floor appeared to be chopped up or cut in two and noticed the mice scampering away. The first hives we commenced to lift off the shelves convinced us that something was wrong and we ventured the statement that half of the bees were destroyed. Our surmises were correct as examination proved there was scarcely a hive in the bee house that had not from one to five mice in it. We carried out one hive into the yard and stood around it with sticks and as they came out, killed twenty-nine mice. We did not kill any bees in that hive as the mice had taken the contract and finished it. Two-thirds of the bees in the bee-house were similarly treated, and those living were very much injured. We used to think that mice did not touch live bees or kill them, we are now convinced that they do. We noticed on the bottom boards of most of the hives, bees bit in two at the thorax, not one, but many, life still being in them. Their feet were moving showing clearly that they had been very recently destroyed. As one colony that ap-

peared very strong did not show any signs of mice, when we set it out we left it until the next day, before examining it, and when we came to look it over we noticed the same thing—bees bit in two yet alive, showing clearly that the mice had been at work just before the hive was opened, as a number of pieces of bees lay there working their feet, and three of them could yet move the probosis. The mice were all fat and slick, they had evidently done well on their winter rations. Some of you will say, no doubt, "we would have known better than to allow bees to remain all winter with mice, destroying them that way." Well, we went into the bee house on several occasions, but as we disliked to make it light and thus agitate the bees, we went in at dark and listened at the different hives, and hearing a pleasant hum came to the conclusion that everything was all right, as usual. Now, friends, we hope what was our loss will be your gain. You ought to take a lesson from this, as we most certainly will, and be sure your bees are not injured by mice. A little metal at the entrance is all that is needed, as a $\frac{3}{8}$ entrance will shut out all mice, while the bees may pass in or out freely.

INTRODUCING QUEENS.

After all that has been written and said about introducing queens in the *Bee-Keepers Review* and other papers lately, has any one suggested a simpler, better and safer plan, than the following: Go to a queenless colony in the evening, puff a little smoke in at the entrance say for about ten seconds, you then lift off the lid very carefully, and if you have quilts on each hive raise up the corner of your quilt. Have your queen to be introduced ready and just let her crawl in and drop the quilt, with sometimes a puff of smoke after her. Usually queens may be introduced this way without any smoke. We have frequently done it by simply raising the quilt and letting her crawl in late in the evening, perhaps after dark would be even a better time than during daylight, as the bees would be much quieter after sunset than they would be during the day when all are busy and active.