

RE-QUEENING OUT-YARD COLONIES.

[By G. M. Doolittle.]

Having found the queen and killed her, the next work is to give them one of the ripe queen-cells I have brought. Making them from the brooding colony at home each one was placed in one of the West cell-protectors, so that the bees would not destroy the queen by cutting into the cell before they were aware that their old mother was dead. Each cell-filled protector was carefully imbedded in a sheet of cotton wadding, cut to fit into the bottom of a pasteboard thread-box, easily obtainable at any dry goods store. Having the number required in the box, another right-sized sheet of wadding is spread over all, the cover to the box put on and a rubber cord sprung around the whole to keep all in a secure position so that the cells cannot roll around when the box is handled. One end of the box is marked "top," and the base of each cell is placed toward this end of the box so that I may always know which the cells point down when carrying the box in my inside vest pocket, or in my shirt, where cells are usually carried at all times except when in the bee-yard where they are in a "ripe" cell is one from which the queen will emerge in from 20 to 30 hours, and I have often carried such cells from one to twelve hours, in the out-yard given, without the loss or injury of a single queen. In this work wadding is far preferable to cotton batting, for the glazing on the wadding keeps the cotton from sticking to the cell or cell-protector, as it is liable to do. After killing the queen the frames are put back in the hive, when two of the centre ones are pried apart so that the cell-protector will

go down just under the top-bar to the frame, when the frames are brought back to place again, thus imbedding the protector in the comb so it is securely fastened there until removed by the apiarist. As this is the season of the year when the bees do most of their superseding of queens (it seems so natural to them), my loss in using this plan will not average more than one queen-cell out of 20 given. So small a loss will not pay for a special visit to the apiary to ascertain whether colonies so treated obtain laying queens or not—especially as the colony which will occasionally destroy a cell or kill the just-emerged virgin queen have brood of their own from which to rear a queen, so the loss is never very great should an occasional cell be destroyed. Of course, there is a chance that the young queen may be lost when going out to meet the drone, in which case that colony is doomed unless rescued by the apiarist. In such a case as this the observing apiarist will easily discover the loss by an outside diagnosis of such colonies at a later visit to the apiary. This re-queening at this time (July 24) is so easily done that there is no excuse for having poor queens at the out-apiary.

The reader may think that what is here given conflicts with what I have written in the past about allowing the bees to take care of the superseding of their queens themselves. With the small and contracted brood-chamber, I still hold that the bee will take care of that matter fully as well as the apiarist can; but with this system of working, and that with ten-frame Langstroth hives, a queen will lay nearly as many eggs in two years as she would under the contraction system in three or four years; so that any queen which is more than two years old is almost sure to be played out; therefore, I make it a practice with this plan to supersede all queens which are two