

## INTRODUCING QUEENS.

—G. M. Doolittle

This is an old and apparently worn-out subject, yet, notwithstanding, there is nothing which gives the average bee-keeper more anxiety of mind than the putting of a valued queen into a colony of bees which has lately been deprived of their own mother queen, in whom they were well pleased. I find that there is no time of the year in which queens are more easily introduced than at the end of the honey harvest, for the reason that, at this time more queens are superseded than at any other season of the year, and when the bees are, of their own accord, changing their queens then is the time for the apiarist to do the same, provided he has such work to do; hence this article at this time, but not to bore the readers on a worn-out subject. I propose in this article to give a bit of my experience as regards introducing queens, rather than point out any particular method for so doing. In a practice of twenty-five years, many things have come under my observation which have been interesting, and have thrown light on an operation which has many times proven, not only to myself but to multitudes of others, to be not always a successful one. Heretofore the loss of the queen has been charged to the bees rather than the queen, some parties being so rash and provoked as to crush a ball of bees enclosing a queen, under their feet, when in reality the queen was the one to blame. Many queens would never be molested in the least by the bees if they would behave themselves as they did in the hive which they formerly occupied; and I venture the prediction, that when we arrive at a plan that will place the queen with strange bees in the same quiet condition she was in while in the hive in which she was reared, we shall be successful every time. To substantiate this position I will give some experience in the matter. Some years ago I had a queen which began failing during the forepart of the season. Wishing to replace her I went to a nucleus and took out their queen, which had been laying about a week; then going to colony having the failing queen, I removed her and placed this young queen on the combs in the exact spot I picked the old one from. She immediately commenced to "pipe," the same as a virgin queen does when there are rivals in the cells in a hive calculating to send out an after-swarm. To this the bees paid no attention, but quietly came to her as

they would to an old queen with the intention of feeding her, to ail appearances; but instead of taking the food offered she put out her foot and struck at then, or laid hold of their heads with her feet, and continued piping. She passed around among the bees piping at intervals for a minute or two, I watching all the while. When she came to a young bee just hatched, all white and fuzzy, she immediately uttered a short pipe or squeal, clinched the little fellow and stung it so it curled up and died in an instant. At this the bees became enraged and showed signs of hostility for the first, beginning to lay hold of the queen. With a little smoke I dispersed them and still continued to watch. In about fifteen minutes she stung and killed nearly a score of these young bees and was seized each time after doing it, but I as often dispersed them with smoke. At all other times they were ready to feed her and treat her as they did their old queen. Once or twice she took food of them, but as a rule she would strike at them with her feet when they offered her food. I closed the hive and left them, and upon looking the next day I found queen cells started and supposed her dead, but in a week or so they cast a swarm, when, lo! there was my queen running around in front of the hive trying to go with the swarm, but being unable, as I had cut her wing. I opened the hive but found no eggs or larva, as the bees had not allowed this queen to lay any. The queen cells formed on the brood of the old queen were taken off and the swarm returned, upon which the queen went to laying again as when taken from the nucleus, and made a good queen. Again I have had queens which the bees treated as they did their own queen, but they would not stay in the hive at all. They would run out at the entrance, often followed by a few anxious bees, which would feed them and keep them alive. I had one out thus until I had put in another queen and she had begun to lay, when I found the first under the bottom board to the hive with a few bees with her. I have no doubt but what many queens are finally lost in this way, by those who lose queens in introducing and send for another, while a thorough search about the hive would reveal them and save the ordering of another. Thus many facts in my experience go to prove that the queen has more to do with the loss sustained in introducing than the bees. "Well," says one, "if this is so, how can I remedy it?" The plan I have latterly adopted is this: Make a cage out of wire cloth having about sixteen meshes to the inch, large enough so it will cover some honey and quite a patch of hatching brood, by cutting little squares