

Hints for Beginners

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To beginners perhaps, more than to any other class of bee-keepers, it is necessary to say, give the bees during the spring time a wholesome letting alone rather than be everlastingly looking at them. A child of an investigative turn of mind (you know the children are all that or something else wonderful, in the estimation of their foolish parents) will sow seed and then scratch it up to see how it is getting on. The beginner in poultry rearing will often remove the hen and see how the eggs are getting along, and so the beginner in bee-keeping with the same disposition shining through it all, is inclined to open, at seasonable and unseasonable intervals, the hive and pull the sitting bees off the eggs and do more or less damage. How few bee-keepers really realize that in the combs is going on a process in many respects similar to that in the poultry yard. As the hen deposits eggs so does the queen each in its nest, by nature the hen's eggs are left in the nest until a sufficient quantity is laid and then hatched, but the egg deposited by the queen at once begins the hatching process, or rather, period of incubation. Just as the egg of the hen requires a certain temperature to have this incubation carried on, so does the egg of the queen. You can take this egg, or better, a piece of comb containing the eggs immediately after the queen has laid them, remove them from the hive and after a limited period return them to a hive and thus prolong the egg-stages very materially. Of course, the eggs will become stale, dry out and be

useless. Conditions more or less favorable will prolong or lessen the period after which it will still hatch but the comparison is striking. The egg ordinarily hatches three days after depositing, when laid they stand pretty well on end, that end being stuck to the base of the cell. The end of the egg at liberty gradually sinks and at the end of the third day almost lies on its side, when it hatches. This information is of value in telling the age of the egg, and also in detecting other conditions in the hive. Who can tell us what becomes of the shell or outer covering of the egg?

We have now the little larvae from the eggs or grubs requiring most careful nursing and they have to be kept warm continually. Being so small and delicate, they are easily injured; the young bee keeps on developing, a worker bee emerging from the cell 21 days from the time the egg was deposited, in the latter period of development previous to the 21st day the young bee develops a good deal of warmth itself and actually helps to keep the hive, and its contents warm. Few consider this, and yet how many have seen young bees emerge from the comb days after it has been taken from the hive, and after the younger brood has perished owing to the reduced temperature. In building up weak stocks the brood to give is not that in the uncapped condition or even that in the early capped, but such as is almost ready to emerge from their cradle. But to return to the brood, much harm may be done by exposure during cold weather, and while I admit that an expert bee-keeper can, at times, assist his bees by manipulation, the beginner is more likely to do harm than good, at least until settled warm weather.

Again, how much damage is done by the improper return of combs to the hive. I know this has been mentioned

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