


Bee Thoughts for Spring.

CLIPPING QUEENS.—TRANSFERRING BEES.

 HAVE never practiced clipping the wings of queens, but do not think it would injure their usefulness. I prefer a perfect queen, unmarred, with her gauzy wings lapped so neatly together over her back. Where colonies of bees are located under large forest trees, it is often as much work to hive a swarm as they are worth. I know of an apiary thus situated, and the children watch them during swarming time, and as soon as they see a swarm issuing, they throw water on them to wet their wings, to keep them from clustering so high. It would be well to clip the queen's wings in an apiary thus located. The swarm will issue all the same, and tumble to the ground in an effort to follow. A new hive can be placed where the one stood from which the swarm issued, and the queen put into it. As soon as the bees miss her they will return to their old stand, and on entering the hive, find her and remain. If so desired the hive can then be placed upon a new stand, and the old hive returned to its former place. When a colony containing a clipped queen has swarmed several times, and returned, and the clipped queen crawls back into the hive, the bees become angry, and sting her to death and rear another one which can follow them. When the queens are clipped, the ground surrounding the hives should be kept very clean and smooth, so she can readily be seen. If it is in grass, she might be stepped on.


WHEN TO CLIP.

No queen should be clipped until fertile, for if they are, they cannot go out to meet the drones; all the eggs they lay will produce only drones, and the colony in time will die out, and the moths get the credit of destroying it. The queens can be clipped in the Spring when there are but few bees, so they can readily be seen. Some clip them when they are upon the comb, with a tiny sharp pair of scissors; others hold them by the shoulders, between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand.—I know many farmers who have bees in nail kegs, salt barrels, hollow logs, cracker boxes, churns and pump stocks. If you are one of them, procure some respectable, movable frame hives and move your bees into them. I prefer the eight frame Langstroth; there may be other hives as good, but none better. All hives in the apiary should be exactly alike, so that parts are interchangeable. In these days of perfect machinery, it is cheaper to buy than to make hives by hand. Buy them in the flat and nail together. Order them early, so they can be sent by freight, and have some time to go on before you need them.

WHEN TO TRANSFER BEES.

Veterans in bee-culture all agree that the best time to transfer bees is at the commencement of apple blooming. Then there are not many bees, and but little honey and brood to be in the way. If you have a shop, which all farmers should have, you can do the work almost any day. Carry the hives to the shop where you have a work-bench, table and tools. Get everything ready before you disturb the bees; you will need a hammer, a cold chisel for cutting off nails, and little splints and tacks to fasten them to the frames, so you can hold in pieces of comb or brood. The bees are good mechanics, and they will repair them neatly. Have at hand a long-bladed sharp knife, to cut the comb loose from the hive. When all is ready, invert the hive, and put whatever will fit, be it a keg or box on top of it, and wrap around some cloth to keep the bees from escaping. Then carry it into the shop and rap on the hive sharply from twenty to thirty minutes, when the bees will be found clustered like a new colony, in the top of the receptacle. The bees can then be placed on their old stand until the new hive is ready for their reception. If it is a box hive, cut the nails holding the top on, with a cold chisel and cut the combs from it with a long knife. Then cut the combs, and sticks if there are any, from the sides of the hive, and when they are loose, remove the hive and the combs will be standing entire. Remove them only as fast as they are fitted into the frames. When a comb is removed it should be laid on some soft substance like folded muslin, and a frame laid upon it to mark the size, when it should be cut a trifle larger and the frame sprung over it, and then hung in a hive to drip if there is honey in it. Such a comb might have cords wound round it, to keep it in place, until the bees could fasten it securely. When there are many small pieces of comb, tack little splints on one side of the frame, and fit the pieces in. Tack the splints on the upper side to hold the pieces in place. The bees will fill all vacancies, and make from them a perfect comb. Do not scatter the brood but put it together, as nearly as possible in the centre of the hive.—O. J. F.

Reports From Bee-Keepers.

 R. D. CHALMERS, of Poole, writes us: This is the worst spring I ever knew of for bees. Mine have come through very well, considering the season.

Friend G. M. DOLITTLE writes: Owing to the cold weather we have had this spring, bees