

Cleansing Polonized Brood Combs.

—F. A. GEMMELL.

As a rule nearly all apiarists sooner or later, find themselves supplied with a superabundance of brood combs, containing more or less pollen, the quality or quantity being such that it is not desirable to again return them to the bees.

To those who may desire such combs relieved of their contents, I may here state that I have succeeded to my heart's content, and herewith give the method so that others having the same facilities may follow that practiced by myself.

The generally adopted plan heretofore used was to first soak the combs in water for a few days and then throw out the water soaked pollen by means of the honey extractor. In order to force the air out of the cells so that the water would find its way to the bottom, the combs were held over some large vessel, (I used a large square tin uncapping can) while yet another vessel containing a quantity of water was close at hand. A small corn broom or whisk was dipped into the water and swished or thrown over the surface of the combs, they being held at an angle of about 45° during the operation. As soon as thoroughly filled they were set side by side in the uncapping can, when it was filled with water so as to completely cover the combs, the same being held in position by having a board and large stone placed thereon, and allowed to remain thus for 36 or 48 hours or more if desired.

The above method has been practiced by myself in the past, but a more expeditious and much more satisfactory plan has been used of late, and anyone having the advantage of a town or city water works system I would certainly recommend its utilization for such a purpose.

The mode of procedure in this case is the same as just outlined up to the time of the applying of the water to the surface of the combs, but instead of whisking it into them a nozzle is attached to the water works hose, capable of throwing a fine stream or spray, that will cover the surface of the comb, five or six inches in diameter, every cell inside of that compass being thoroughly drenched to the septum with such force as in some instances to throw out the dried pellets of pollen which are sometimes seen in such combs, almost instantaneously. The filling and washing out of a whole comb being accomplished in a very

few seconds. The same method in regard to the saturating of the solid pollen is carried out with all combs not thoroughly cleansed by the first spraying, and in 48 hours the stream or spray is again brought into requisition, this time however, before the combs have been revolved in the extractor, as the stream, when directed on to the water soaked combs, forces anything and everything contained in them to make a hasty retreat, leaving all as clean and sweet as if new. Nothing now remains but to give the cleansed combs a few turns in the extractor to get rid of the remaining water they may contain. A wire cloth screen such as is used when shipping or removing bees to "fields anew" is now laid on two pieces of 2x4 scantling, and the hives containing seven combs in each and perfectly spaced are tiered five or six stories high with another screen on top so that a current of air can pass through and thoroughly dry them.

The above plan was so satisfactory that I was almost sorry when it was finished, indeed my son who assisted me in the work (he being an awful lazy fellow like myself), remarked that he never saw me like to boss a job so well before. You know I could sit down to it while he had to stand up and run the extractor. "By the way," he continued, "I notice of late years you don't get up at 4 o'clock in the morning as you once did. Is it owing to a lack of interest in the pursuit, or are you becoming troubled with that 'tired feeling' which young people who grow too rapidly are subject to?" "Well son," said I, "it no doubt is a trifle of both, but as far as I am able to judge up to date, the 4 o'clock in the morning business don't seem to trouble you much, not near so much as the 4 o'clock in the afternoon business does." All the satisfaction that I received however, was to the effect that he used to hear his mother say that when I commenced my early morning perambulations, that I disturbed the whole household, and he did not want to do that. I guess I am not the only bee-keeper who does less of that sort of thing than they used to, and my son has yet time enough for it too, for if he goes to California as he intends doing, and runs 1000 colonies of bees so as to make his fortune in one good year (if it ever comes again) he will require to get up earlier than a few minutes before school time in the morning. But here I find myself away from my text. That's me all over. By the way, some one has said that when I did write an article I could not, or did not adhere strictly to my text, and if I did, and sent it to THE CANADIAN BEE JOURNAL that it would be filled.