

or in a shape where I may expect that they may change the size of cell before they reach the bottoms of the frames, should I spread those apart which they already have and insert other empty or partly filled frames, I take out the combs they already have built, and thus put them in the same condition they were in when I started."

"Will they still work just as well?"

"No, not quite. They will not build combs quite as freely this time as they did before, unless there can be some young bees emerging; so, if I can conveniently, I give them a comb containing mostly honey and a little brood (if they have such a comb it is left with them, which is more often the case than otherwise) from some colony, when they are ready to work the same as before. In this way a colony can be kept building worker comb all summer, or till the bees are nearly used up from old age, the colony becoming so small as to be unable to build comb to any advantage under any circumstances. But if just the right amount of brood is left, or given them, so they stay in about the same condition, they will build worker comb all summer by the apiarist supplying honey or feed when none is coming from the fields."

"But suppose you do not find them very strong on your examination—what then?"

"If not so strong but that I think they will still continue to build worker comb, instead of taking the brood away I spread the frames of comb (now built) apart and insert one or more frames between them, when these will generally be filled with worker comb before enough young bees emerge for them to change the size of cell."

"I think I understand now, and so will be going."

"Hold on a minute. Don't be in too big a hurry."

"Why? What is the trouble?"

"There is one thing I do not think you take into consideration as fully as you should."

"What is that?"

"You should always keep this in mind, whenever you find these colonies building drone comb: The combs they then have, all except the one mostly filled with honey, are to be taken away so that they may feel their need of worker brood again, when they will build cells of the worker size the same as they did on the start."

"Thank you for this part. I should hardly have known what to do when they commenced to build drone comb had you not stopped me to tell me this. And now, in parting, how many combs have you ever had built in this way?"

"I have had hundreds of frames built full of worker comb in this way; hundreds completed as you are proposing to do, and hundreds and thousands 'patched,' where I had cut out small pieces of drone comb which had gotten in in one way or another. If you ever have a mutilated comb you wish to have fixed so it will give a surprise to you, just give it to one of these little prepared colonies, and see what nice work they can do at 'patching' with all worker comb. This last is an item the bee world does not seem to take in fully, and it is something which gives me the most pleasure of the whole, especially where, through mice in winter, or otherwise, comb has been destroyed in spots where said comb was in wired frames."—Conversations with Doolittle in "Gleanings in Bee Culture."

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