

FINDING QUEENS ETC.

"Is this Mr. Doolittle?"

"Yes. What may I call you?"

"My name is Miller. I live in Pennsylvania, and I came to see you about finding queens, and to have a little talk with you about how I can manage my bees during the swarming season. But how it rains!"

"Yes, we are having lots of rain again this spring, and, what is worse for the bees, lots of cold; been but very few days since the bees were set from the cellar that they could fly, and it is now May 14."

"Then you are worse off than we are, for our season has been about an average one thus far. I have been trying to find my queens to clip them, but do not have good success. Can't you tell me how to find queens? I am a beginner with the bees, and take 'Gleanings.' It seems to me if you could only tell me how to find a queen as plainly as you tell about other things in your 'Conversations' I could find a queen at once."

"Well, it is hard work, often, for the expert to find a black queen, but with all of the other races there is not much trouble, and especially with the Italians. If you jar the hive too much, or use too much smoke, so that you set the bees to running, it will be very difficult to find the queen of any race. Why it is more difficult to find a black queen is because black bees have a greater habit of running and stampeding off the combs than any other bee that I know of; and why it is easier to find an Italian queen is that her color is generally different from the darker bees, and also because it takes much abuse to start these bees so they

will appear anything but natural on the combs."

"Well, I guess part of my trouble was that I jarred the hive too much. I use the Danzenbaker hive, and the end sticks and springs seem to stick in the hive as if they grew there."

"Your bees may use lots of propolis, thus causing things to stick. But if this is the case, you will have less trouble the next time you open the hives. Where things are badly glued in any hive, it is best, in opening the hive the first time in the spring, to pry all the fixtures loose, then close the hive for an hour or two, when by using care you can open it up, almost without a jar or any disturbance to the bees."

"That is something I had not thought about, but I know it is so, now you mention it, for the next time I opened the hives I did not have so much trouble."

"It is always best to take an empty hive or a light box of the same size of the hive with you when you go to find queens, as it helps very much in the matter, giving you a chance to look the combs over twice, nearly or quite as quickly as you would once, did you have no empty hive or box along in which to set each frame in order, as you take them from the hive."

"That is right; tell me just how you do it."

"Having your lighted smoker, empty box or hive, and a stool or box of convenient height for a seat, go to your hive and open it as carefully as possible. Having the hive open, you are next to put down your seat so you can sit with your back to the sun, this allowing the sun to shine on your work and at the same time keeping your eyes in the dark, so that you can see things twice as well as you would under other circumstances. Now carefully remove the first frame from the