

colonies not up to the level of the others, which he rightly attributes to his queens being past their prime, and hence his appeal to me for advice, which I gave him, and now repeat in these columns for the benefit of any who may be in a similar position.

I need scarcely go over the ground of showing the necessity of having vigorous queens at the heads of all colonies if we wish to make bee-keeping profitable. Some queens are vigorous even at the age of four years, but by far the larger majority are not so. Others are almost worthless at the outset, and as the only real 'proof of the pudding is in the eating,' having proved such and found them worthless, the wisest precaution is to be careful not to breed from such.

As to superseding, the bees will do it, but they will often lose a lot of time over the operation in the very height of the honey season, whereas if we do it for them we can choose our own time and that when honey is not so plentiful. But I will assume that you take all this as granted and proceed to give you the advice I gave my neighbour.

He wished to re-queen three colonies, so I advised him to proceed thus:—Remove one of the old queens and destroy her; now take the young queen from the stock that swarmed last year, which is his strongest and best, and introduce her to the stock from which the old queen was taken and destroyed. You have thus given one good queen in the place of a bad one, but you still require three queens. Five days after this prepare two empty hives and place them on stands somewhere apart from the rest of your stocks, open the strong stock that is queenless, and you will find several queen-cells, scattered doubtless on two or more frames. If this is so take one frame containing one or more of these queen-cells with all its adhering bees and place it in one of the empty hives; now give two more frames, without queen-cells if possible, but with its adhering bees, and close and wrap them up snug and warm. Proceed to treat the second empty hive the same way. You will then have divided your strong stock of, say, ten frames, thus:—No. 1, three frames; No. 2, three ditto; and the original hive has four left. If they should not each have an equal number of bees you may take a frame from the strongest lot and shake as many of the bees from it on to a sloping board in front of the weakest lot and allow them to run in and thus equalise them. You must be careful to give each lot one or more queen-cells and its fair portion of young brood. Should all the queen-cells be on one or at most two of the frames you must cut some of them out and in-

sert them into a frame that contains none, as failure must result unless each lot has at least one queen-cell—it is so important that I repeat it to emphasise it. Care must be taken not to crush or violently jar the queen-cells during the operation. I point out these matters that you may be guarded, but the operation is not so difficult as it reads if you will only go coolly along and neither bustle nor fume nor flurry.

Fourteen days after you may look and see if they are hatched out; let it be done in the evening, because if done at midday it is possible the young queens may be out for a fly while you are examining their home, and you may prevent their safe return. If they are hatched out and there is no young brood in any of the nuclei hives it will be advisable to give a frame from some other hive, and thus prevent all the bees from boiling out with the young queen on her wedding trip. Ten or fourteen days after you may hope to find eggs and brood, and then, of course, you know success is assured to you.

During this time two of the old queens have been at the head of their colonies, your next operation is to remove them and introduce the young ones into their places; you can unite the bees and combs back again to their original hive or you can give some of them with the young queens when you introduce them into their new homes; for myself, I prefer to give the queens singly. If honey has been abundant the combs in the nuclei will have been filled with stores as fast as the brood has hatched out; if this is so it is advisable to extract at least the lower part of the combs, which should be the brood-nest, thus giving the young queens full room to develop their egg-laying energies.

When is the best time to commence queen-raising? Now; before the drones are killed off, and while the colonies are vigorous and have not naturally lost the swarming impulse. How would you introduce the young queens? By Mr. Simmins' method, if done singly, but by drawing the nucleus step by step alongside the colony and feeding both for one night with scented syrup, and lifting the frames, bees, and all complete, out of the nucleus and placing them alternately with the other frames in the original stocks, if I preferred uniting. I hope none will run the risk of losing next year's harvest on account of having doubtful queens at the head of colonies because of the little trouble involved.

There is still another course which is simple; it is **BUY**, but it must be from those that have queens to sell, not from—

AMATEUR EXPERT.

Send stamp for samples of honey labels.