

FEED FOR BEES AND FEEDERS.

"How has the season for honey proved with you this year, Mr. Doolittle?"

"The crop of white honey is scarcely up to the average this year—probably not more than fifty pounds of section honey to each colony in the spring. I do not have it all off yet, but judge that fifty pounds will be what I shall get. Have you yours off yet Mr. Brown?"

"Yes, and it is very little, indeed, what I have. I do not think I have more than an average of twenty pounds to the hive, and what I have is badly colored and mostly from mustard. But that is not the worst of it. My bees have little honey in their kegs, and there is very little buckwheat sown, the farmers having put cabbage in place of buckwheat and it seems to me that I shall be obliged to feed mostly for winter stores."

"There is scarcely any buckwheat, but I think the bees have sufficient for winter stores now if they can only procure a living from now till October, which I hope they may."

"Well, if you had my prospects, what would you do?"

"I think I would wait till about the 15th of September, and then if the bees did not have sufficient stores for winter with no immediate prospects of their getting such, I would feed."

"Yes, and that is just what I wished to talk about. How, and what shall I feed?"

"Have you any honey in frames hung up for the winter?"

"No. If I had the matter would be different."

"Then you will have to feed sugar."

"Yes, and I wish to know how best to feed it."

"Some make it into candy, similar to the candy used in the cages for sending queens by mail."

"Yes. I am told so. But is that the best way?"

"That will do where colonies have nearly honey enough for wintering; but if greatly short I doubt the advisability of so using."

"Well, what would you do?"

"My way has been, where colonies had to be fed for winter, to make a syrup as follows: Put 15 pounds of water into a vessel that will hold from 24 to 30 quarts, placing the same over the fire till it boils, when 30 pounds of granulated sugar is slowly stirred in, so that it will dissolve instead of settling to the bottom and burning."

"Is it liable to do this without the stirring?"

"If the fire is hot, and the 30 pounds is poured in all at once, it is so heavy that it will stick to the bottom and burn before the water will get under it. After you have the sugar stirred in, wait till the whole boils again, when you will set it from the fire and stir in 5 pounds of extracted honey. This will make fifty pounds of feed, fully as good as honey for wintering, and some claim better."

"What is the extracted honey put in for?"

"To keep the syrup from crystallizing in the feeders and probably in the combs, if the colony is small to which it is fed."

"But I thought that vinegar or cream of tartar was used for this purpose."

"So it is by some; but I find that the honey answers a better purpose, and helps along with the feed just so much."

"But suppose one did not have the honey. What then?"

"It might be well in that case to use the vinegar, as some fear that foul brood might be obtained if the honey of commerce were used. But if you have been prudent you will keep a little extracted honey on hand to use in emergencies."