good, careful bee-keeper, a thoroughly practical man and one we should hear from oftener.

## Weak Colonies in Early Spring.

—Rev. Stephen Roese.

The writer does not intend to direct his remarks in this article to experts in apiculture, *nor masters of the art, but to those* who are young in the cause and inexperienced. In the southern part of our country bee-keepers are not much troubled with weak colonies in early spring, for they need not remove their bees from their summer stand, for it is in winter repositories where the temperature varies and changes too often, especially in beehouses above ground, and it is there where bees weaken, both physically and in numbers. This seems to be the chief drawback, for bee-keepers in this northern climate. In frost-proof wintering repositories bees will winter fairly well. But a bee-house or cellar not frost proof is worse than nothing. The frost will create dampness, and unless this is taken out by slight artificial heat, the bees will be affected by it, and bee diarrhoea will be the result, and if their malady once takes hold of a colony in good earnest, (unless a cleansing flight can be given), it will prove the death blow to such colonies and in many cases in spite of a cleansing flight, they will perish in time.

We are often advised by writers on this subject to give bees a flight and then set them back in again, but I have never met with any good results in this respect now for two years at least. In early spring I gave part of my colonies a flight and returned them again and the rest were taken out later and left out, and nearly every one of them pulled through and of those set back nearly every one perished.

It is also a mistaken idea to unite two or more colonies in early spring they will do well enough in the fall of the season, but in early spring when the bees are all old, they will not pull together harmoniously as they should in order to prosper, for after all the passing with thus uniting two, three or more weak colonies they will play out at last. A weak colony which is not too far gone is far better left alone. Put them on a few combs snugly packed and protected, and in most cases they will pull through all right in the end. They may swarm late, perhaps, not at all, for it is not natural to disturb their little home affairs in early spring and get everything out of gear. It annoys and discourages them to go on in their work. By opening the hive, the young brood may get chilled and not hatch and by the time the depopulated colonies tries to arrange another batch of brood, The few old bees have perished and there are none left to take their place in caring for the young, nor attend to household affairs, where on the other hand had the hive not been opened young bees would have hatched and taken the old-timer's places.

For several seasons the writer used to heat bricks night and morning, and place *them over head of the brood nest, and in* so doing he saved a good many weak colonies but this season another plan was resorted to, a 12 lbs. square screw top, honey can was filled every evening with almost boiling water and laid down over the brood nest On this a chaff cushion or rags of any kind with screw top on upper side, so the pressure of the water does not cause it to leak and then covered with blankets or old clothing, grain bags, etc. The bees keep under it as warm as toast and it will keep quite warm for 24 hours. Try it and find out the result. Try it also on a cold winter night in a cold bedroom, not over but under your feet and in the morning you will be agreeably and pleasantly surprised.

Maiden Rock, Wis., March 30th, 1895.

## An Experiment Conducted at the Ontario Government Apiary.

As reported in the Ontario Agricultural College and Experimental Farm report.

The use of comb foundation has become general; in fact, few if any, keeping bees in the movable frame hive, attempt to do without it. At present comb honey, owing to quality of the comb foundation, is not generally of a kind satisfactory to the consumer. Although it is desirable to get a foundation which, when utilized and added to by the bees, gives a comb as thin as the natural one, many claim that comb a trifle heavier, is not noticed by consumers. When, however, the base and bottoms of side walls are materially thickened, and the comb has an artifical appearance, and the wax does not crumble when the comb is broken, the result is that the consumer objects and the objection is intensified by the comparatively harmless nature of the change. Again, comb foundation and wax is wasted in the extra thickness; and this