

FEEDING SIMPLIFIED.

A BIG IMPROVEMENT—ONE THAT
PROMISES TO SAVE BEE-KEEPERS
MUCH; A VALUABLE ARTICLE.

(By Dr. C. C. Miller, from Gleanings in Bee Culture.)

I've been having lots of fun trying different ways of feeding. It seemed that, to do all the feeding I should want to do this year the percolator I had would make too slow work. Yet after trying it, and finding how little work it was, I was loath to go back to the old plan of boiling syrup. I might make additional percolators, or a larger percolator; but while I was about it I thought I might as well try to have a plan by which the percolating would be done on the hives. If I could just carry the dry sugar to a hive, also the water, it would save a good deal of work, as well as annoyance from robbers. Especially would this be desirable with the out-apiaries, for only the sugar would have to be taken there, the water being readily at hand.

Another point of advantage would be that, to each colony, I could more easily give just the amount I thought desirable; for with syrup it isn't so easy. You may have a measure that is exact; but with the dripping stuff there is likely to be some variation in the strength of the syrup. But the dry sugar is uniform in strength, and easily measured to a quarter of a pound. Before trying the thing on any large scale I tried small quantities; and in this I think I struck on what might be very satisfactory for those who want to practice.

STIMULATIVE FEEDING

First, I tried letting the bees directly on the sugar. In England a damp quality of sugar is used, and what is called dry feeding is much practiced. I thought I would vary that by taking granulated sugar and wetting it. I nailed a bottom on a T super and made an inch hole in the bottom for the bees to come up through. Remember, this was hot weather in August, and it took no baiting to get the bees to come up. In the super I set a saucer, poured granulated sugar into it, then poured on water. The bees promptly went to work at it, worked out all the moisture, and left the greater part as dry sugar. Of course by pouring on more water more feed would be taken; and I can easily see that, for stimulative feeding, where fresh feed must be given or every other day, here was an excellent plan. Just put into a super prepared as I have mentioned, or into any box on

top of the hive, a tin dish containing 5 lbs of sugar. Pour water on, but not enough to have any standing on top. Next day it will be worked dry, and you will put on a little more water. The less water put on of course the slower the feeding will be. You will see that this stimulative feeding will be simply giving a little water each day.

I tried putting on more water at first, so as to have it wet enough for the bees to carry it all down without any second filling; but I failed. To have enough water on to dissolve all the sugar, I left the water standing on the top with so little sweet in it that the bees didn't care for it, and with the chance of drowning if they did not work on it. Then I thought I would try

PERCOLATING ON THE HIVE.

First, on a small scale. I took a tumbler filled it half full or more with water, then filled it up with granulated sugar. I laid over the tumbler a piece of flannel large enough to completely cover it, and over this I placed a saucer upside down. Then taking hold of the saucer with one hand, and the tumbler in the other, I quickly reversed the whole business. I put this into the super over the hive that I have already mentioned, and in about 48 hours it was empty. This would also do well for stimulating, and I'm not sure but it would be well to have the tumbler two-third full of water before filling up with sugar. No unusual machinery is needed; cups and saucers always on hand, and any cloth, cotton or wollen, will answer. Several tumblers can be used on a hive at a time, or a fruit-can or other larger vessel can be used, in the case of feeding up for winter.

I tried a jelly-tumbler with a tin cover. The bees couldn't get anything out of it. Then I bent the cover open a trifle at one spot so the bees could get a very little, and it took about two weeks for them to empty. So the matter can be gauged for fast or slow feeding.

Then I studied on a plan for something larger. A percolator like the one I had been using, only larger, could be arranged to operate on the hive; but to have a number of these would make troublesome storing, to say nothing of the expense. Would a percolator work if it were shallow instead of deep? Was it necessary to have a thickness of several inches of cotton for the syrup to percolate through? The working of the tumblers seemed to show that it was not; and, really, all that I could see to be necessary was for the syrup to be allowed to come through slowly and at the bottom. A little crack in the board would be all right if small enough. It must be at the