

A complete guide to the mystery and management of bees / by William White ; to which is added a practical monthly bee calendar, by James Beesley.

Contributors

White, William, of Shutford.
Beesley, James.

Publication/Creation

London : Simpkin, Marshall, 1852 (Banbury : Rusher.)

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/etb58d8j>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

COMPLETE GUIDE
TO THE
MANAGEMENT OF
BEES,



BY
WILLIAM WHITE
AND
JAMES BEESLEY.

RUSHER, PRINTER, BANBURY.

AT.CA.
AA7(2)

AT. CA. AA7 (2)



22101853847



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/b24867056>

AT. CA. AA7 (2)

WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY	
Coll.	weIMOmee
Call	
No.	



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD COMPTON.

MY LORD,

It is not from a principle of vanity or self importance that I presume to inscribe the following sheets to your Lordship, but from the known consideration of your Lordship's generosity and good-nature, in giving encouragement to whatever may tend to the advantage of the community. The above good qualities in your Lordship are so well known, that it would savour of flattery were I to say any more upon them; which imputation I am willing to avoid.

The following observations on the Management of Bees, (being the result of many years' experience) though not written in a masterly style, yet contain such plain directions, that no person can misunderstand them; and, should they meet with your Lordship's approbation, I shall be abundantly overpaid for my time and trouble spent in the study.

Hoping that your Lordship will treat them with candour, and take them under your protection, I remain,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most obliged,
and obedient humble servant,

WILLIAM WHITE.

BANBURY, SEPT. 1771.

PREFACE.

It is become so usual a custom, amongst authors, to give an introductory Preface to their intended subject, that I should perhaps be deemed particular should I not follow the usual form of apologizing for what I have said in the following sheets; especially as I do not object, but rather think it necessary, to give the reasons which induced me to submit them to the perusal of the public.

I am sensible that there are many Treatises on the Management of Bees already extant; but, in general, their observations proceed more from conjecture than experience; for which reason there are many persons who ruin their stocks of bees, by an implicit adherence to what these authors advance upon bare supposition. Others there are, who, though totally unacquainted with the study of bees, will, for the sake of money, make a compilation from books already published on this subject, and palm what they have thus collected, without judgement, on the world, as their own observations.

To prevent the mischiefs arising from attention to those pernicious observations, is my aim in the following pages; and I flatter myself there is not one in Europe better qualified to judge of the management proper for those useful

insects than myself, having for thirty years, and upwards, made them my constant study, and, by experiments, attained the certainty and infallibility of the methods I have prescribed.

The reader may think that I arrogate too much to myself, and that vanity has got the better of my reason, having here only my own word for it; but I have the unanimous applause of the gentlemen who keep bees in this and the neighbouring counties; being frequently sent for to manage stocks, when almost past the possibility of human aid, and yet I have recovered them.

As nothing could have persuaded me to commence author, but a regard for the interests of the community, so the rules and directions for managing bees are here laid down in a plain, concise, and perspicuous manner; and as the following work was designed for the use of people in the country who do, or may hereafter keep bees, the directions are made intelligible to the meanest understanding.

I can never enough testify my abhorrence of the cruelty of destroying the bees when the honey is taken away; for which reason, I have here given such directions, that the honey may be taken and the bees preserved; which is a consideration worth the attention of every humane being. A celebrated poet sweetly sings:-

Ah, see where robb'd, and murder'd, in that pit
 Lies the still heaving hive ! at evening snatch'd,
 Beneath the cloud of guilt concealing night,
 And fix'd o'er sulphur : while, not dreaming ill,
 The happy people, in their waxen cells,
 Sat tending public cares, and planning schemes
 Of temperance, for Winter poor ; rejoiced
 To mark, full flowing round, their corious stores.
 Sudden the dark oppressive steam ascends ;
 And, used to milder scents, the tender race,
 By thousands, tumble from their honeyed domes,
 Convolv'd and agonising in the dust.
 And was it then for this you roam'd the Spring,
 Intent from flower to flower ? for this you toil'd
 Ceaseless the burning Summer-heats away ?
 For this in Autumn search'd the blooming waste,
 Nor lost one sunny gleam ? for this sad fate,
 O man ! tyrannic lord ! how long, how long
 Shall prostrate nature groan beneath your rage,
 Awaiting renovation ? When obliged,
 Must you destroy ? Of their ambrosial food
 Can you not borrow ? and, in just return,
 Afford them shelter from the wintry winds ;
 Or, as the sharp year pinches, with their own
 Again regale them on some smiling day ?
 See where the stony bottom of their town
 Looks desolate and wild ; with here and there
 A helpless number, who the ruin'd state
 Survive, lamenting, weak, cast out to death.

Upon the whole, if my directions are
 understood, my intention is fulfilled ;
 and I hope the candid reader will excuse
 any inaccuracy in language or grammar,
 not having had the advantage of a gram-
 matical education ; and my design being
 that people, who have suffered, through
 ignorance of the nature of bees, may, by
 observing what is here written, make
 them turn out more to their advantage.

W. WHITE.

CONTENTS.

An Essay on Bees,	PAGE 12
CHAP. 1.—Of the Generation of Bees,	13
2.—Of their Nature and Properties,	14
3.—Of their Gathering and Working, ...	16
4.—Of the Hives proper for Bees,	22
5.—Of the Queen-Bee,	26
6.—Of the Drone,	28
7.—How to choose a Stock of good Bees, ..	29
8.—The proper Situation for Bees; and what Trees, Flowers, Herbs, &c. are most suitable for their Use, ...	31
9.—Of the Feeding of Bees,	37
10.—Of Candied Stocks, and the Dis- orders occasioned thereby,	41
11.—Of the Swarming of Bees, the Oc- casion thereof, and how to make them swarm,	46
12.—Of Bees' Enemies, and how to pre- vent Bees from being plundered, ..	59
13.—How to increase Bees,	62
14.—Conclusion of WHITE'S GUIDE,	68
15.—BEESLEY'S PRACTICAL MONTHLY BEE CALENDAR,	69

AN ESSAY ON BEES.

The Bees (that nation of Chymists to whom nature has communicated the rare and valuable secret of enriching themselves, without impoverishing others; who extract the most delicious syrup from every fragrant herb, without wounding its substance, or diminishing its odour), should greatly excite our attention; for they not only, by their unwearied diligence and industry, teach mankind an admirable moral lesson, but also by their labour supply such a valuable composition, that the whole art and device of man could never be able to perform; I mean that of honey, which is the fruit of their labour; the benefit of which and its value to mankind is too well known and experienced to require further recommendation. The several other insects with which nature abounds, though curious to behold, yet are not to be compared to the Bee. The gay butterfly flutters its painted wings, and sips a little fantastic delight; but it is only for the present moment: the gloomy spider, worse than idly busied, is preparing his insidious nets for destruction, or sucking venom from the most wholesome plants: while the frugal community of Bees are wisely employed in providing for futurity, and collecting a copious stock of the most balmy treasures of nature.

A COMPLETE GUIDE.

BY W. WHITE, SEN. OF SHUTFORD, OXON.

CHAP. I.

OF THE GENERATION OF BEES.

BEES are of so industrious a nature, that they will not lose one moment of their time; for as it hath pleased the Great Creator to ordain all beings for the mutual support and assistance of each other, so hath He created Bees, to perform the several offices of their calling, for the benefit of mankind; of whose nature and properties, order, government, and wonderful performances, I shall endeavour to give a more particular and satisfactory account than hath hitherto been made public.

And first, of that called the Queen-Bee:-

The Queen-Bee is employed in the offices of breeding; for this bee breeds all, and none other: she goes from cup to cup, and blows in her young, which nearly resembles a fly-blow; and after it is blown, continues in its first state three or four days; then, with a small matter of moisture, together with the heat of the bees, it comes to life, and changes to a kind of maggot; after which, they fill the cups about half

full with water, and seal it up close, where it lays, without life or motion, until the appointed time of God, which is generally about seven or eight days; after which time it breaks forth, by biting its way through the seal, emerges from its former lifeless state, and creeps among the other bees, till it finds itself capable of flying. In a warm day, it cautiously comes forth out of the hive, and turns itself about several times before it takes wing. It does not go a great way from the hive for two or three days, till it finds itself capable of work, then goes eagerly to labour, and works as hard as possible, according to its strength; for there are no lost minutes with them, when the weather is seasonable.

Here we may behold the admirable works of the Lord! for, after the bees have sealed up their young so close that not one breath of air can get in, they leave the rest of their work to the Almighty, who, in a most wonderful manner, furnishes them with legs and wings, horns and eyes, and a Poisonous dart for their defence.

CHAP. II.

OF THEIR NATURE AND PROPERTIES.

Bees are of a hot nature: and their honey is also of the same quality, for it is

hot weather that breeds it: their temper also is well known to be of a hot nature, for if you give them the least affront, they will fall upon you with the ferocity of a lion; and if you strike them down to the ground several times, they will, notwithstanding, renew the fight, even until they lose their lives; so resolved are they upon vengeance, that they come with their dart ready drawn to strike. The first place they touch, the instant it enters the skin, causes a swelling, with sharp pain; nay, some people are so affected with their stinging, that they will swell surprizingly.

In respect to their fighting, (which is most observable at the time they rob each other) it is amazing to see how, in an instant of time almost, they will kill thousands of each other; the place they aim at is the under part of the body, after which, they fall in an instant, it being the only place they can give a mortal wound.

Bees have all the five senses; though there does not appear all those external organs of sensation which some other animals have.

Of all their senses, their sight seems weakest, yet it is extremely clear at a distance, though not so quick near at hand; sometimes they fly against you, if you come suddenly across them when they

are laden ; and if they alight beside the door, near the mouth of the hive, they will run up and down, seeking for it, as if they were in the dark ; when they cannot find it, they rise up, and, flying back a little way, turn again with a better view. As many as fall beside the stool, when it waxeth dark, ten to one but they lie abroad that night ; and if at any time, being disturbed, they fly out of the hive, although they be fresh and lusty, they will leap up and down, and fly to and fro, until they are weary ; but by no means can they find their way in again : this therefore is the reason that, before they fly abroad, they take so much pains, as is observable they do, by rubbing their horns and eyes at the door, that they may the better discern their way forth, and more readily mark the door when they return.

Their smelling is quick and exquisite ; for they will scent honey a mile from their hives, and when flying will scent any flowery meadow or heath. As soon as the honey dew is fallen, they scent it, although the oaks which receive it be a distance off.

CHAP. III.

THE GATHERING AND WORKING OF BEES.

In the course of this chapter, it is well worth our attention to contemplate the

works of our good and great Creator; how and in what a wonderful manner He provides food for all His creatures, from the lowest insect to the lord of the forest, all of which He hath created for His own wise purposes, and for the benefit of man! How beautifully every field and meadow is adorned and variegated; not so much to please the eye, as to provide food for His creatures, the least and most despicable of which are not beneath the watchful eye of Providence, who has wisely ordained, that every plant, flower, shrub, and tree, should produce something for the support of some species of the animal creation!

When the sun is risen upon the earth, and shines with strength, the flowers spread themselves wide open for the bees to come and cull their sweets; and when the sun declines towards the horizon, you may observe them shut themselves up close, to protect them from the coldness of night.

So wisely has the Almighty ordered all things, that the seasons of trees and flowers blowing, succeed one another in a regular gradation; for were the flowers and trees all to blow at one time, these little creatures would have but a very short harvest: but Eternal Wisdom has ordered it otherwise; for they blow in their regular order, one thing after another; so that they have a most plentiful harvest, when the

weather is favourable. I have observed that the chief flower that grows for yielding honey is the white honey-suckle.

If you notice their wonderful ways, when they are gathering in the fields and gardens, you may delight yourself to behold (in the height of the honey season) what surprising knowledge they possess; busy in gathering that which is their most precious jewel, and as eager after it as men after the greatest object of their desires: yet, when they see a black cloud arise, they will immediately retire, and, like a man from the mouth of a roaring lion, mind nothing else but their escape. This is worthy of admiration; to think what wisdom their Maker has bestowed upon them, even to observe the rising of the clouds; for, when the holes of the hives are at the full width, I have seen them come home so fast that they have formed heaps at the entrance, and for eagerness to enter their hive, run round it: on the contrary, with their usual sagacity, if the threatening clouds seem to disperse, and the sky, near the horizon, appears somewhat clear, they will hurry out again to work as eager as before, so that not one minute is lost, as they appear to be sensible that their time is short, as it certainly is, for there is but one month in the year that is full honey season, which is the last fort-

night in June and the first in July. If this time be very wet, or over dry and harsh, it renders them in a very bad condition; but if it should be temperate, and now and then a shower, honey then is plentiful.

One year I had forty-six stocks, and the weather became very wet, and continued so all the honey season; when they had done bearing in, I found them in a very disagreeable condition, I took them all up but nine, and had not enough honey to make them able to stand, so hard was their situation. Sometimes there are stocks that are in a very bad condition on account of the Queen Bee's sickness, particularly if it happen at the beginning of May; for that is the season for laying, and she being unable to lay, and the working bees being sensible of it, they become indolent, careless, and indifferent whether they work or not; and if they load on their legs, it is so small that it is scarce discernable, for they know that she is the cause of the increase of the whole family, and without her there is nothing but decay, which occasions them to work faintly.

How wonderful is the wisdom of the Lord! who gives to these little animals knowledge to discern and foresee the destruction that is coming upon them.

On the other hand, if the Queen-Bee's disorder abate, and she is again restored

to health, their drooping spirits are soon revived, they go forth again to labour, and work as hard as they did before; and I have observed that such stocks have come forward sooner than others, for, having been in a bad and dangerous condition, and being now in great hopes of thriving, they seem to manage their concerns more effectually than those which have not been exposed to danger and suffered hardships.

It is surprising to see what diligent slaves they are, even to the hazard of their lives.

On June the first, 1766,* I was in a neighbouring garden, and there beheld a most sorrowful sight; I observed the bees of one stock running out of the hive to go to work, and came to the end of the stone, and dropped off to the ground, crawling along, one after another, to a great number, so that they covered a large space of ground before the hive; it had been showery and cold for two or three days, which kept them in, and, having spent all their honey, death began to stare them in the face: in the first place, if they attempted to go out, they dropped on the ground, and not being able to rise, must certainly have died; on the other hand, if they kept within, they must have perished with hunger, their food being entirely gone and their strength exhausted.

* In this year the SOCIETY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES presented the Author with a Premium.

To relieve the poor creatures from this calamity, I got some sugar and water, and mixing half a pint, turned them up, and poured it over them, which was a very welcome medicine, for, had I delayed coming at that time, the stock must certainly have been lost; but, by so doing, I saved thousands of poor industrious labourers' lives; and gave my neighbour entire satisfaction, as his stock throve as well after as ever.

Many people think they do not require feeding at that time of the year; no more they do, if they can go to work; but if kept in day after day, they will be subject to this misfortune in a very short time, for they have not a sufficient quantity of honey for their subsistence; neither can it rightly be called honey, until they have purged and concocted it by the vital motion of their bodies; but when they receive it a second time, it will remain with them twice as long as before, and be of more nourishment to them.

Honey would be strange stuff, were not the bees to purge, concoct, and clarify it through their bodies; but so has the All-wise Creator ordained, to bring all things to perfection in due season, that when they receive it first from the flowers, it is almost like the sap of an herb; but when clarified through their bodies, it becomes

perfect honey; it will not then putrify, but rather curdle and candy, which is very offensive to the bees, but little the worse for use, especially to make wine or mead.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE HIVES PROPER FOR BEES.

Melissus, King of Crete, is reported to have been the first that invented and taught the use of hives, which is become so beneficial to the health of man.

As to the manner and form of hives in those days, it is impossible to describe particularly; though history affords several instances of persons, in all ages, who have been so delighted with these excellent creatures, that several of them caused hives of thin horn to be erected in their gardens, that they might with greater admiration behold their work.

But, in the present times, we have fallen upon a happier invention, by having hives of glass, by which we may more minutely observe their operations; yet it is thought that the ancient form of hives nearly resembled those now used in common, viz. the straw hives; which are certainly the best, and wherein the bees do best defend themselves from cold, especially when

they hang round together, in manner of a sphere or globe; therefore, the nearer the hives come to that fashion, the warmer and safer they are.

The hives may consist of twelve straw rolls; let the three first be of one compass, a foot, or somewhat more, in diameter; the four next above, larger, bellying out a little, each beyond its fellow, that the combs may be more firmly fastened; let the other five be by little and little narrowed to the centre at the top, that it may be pyramidical, or sharp, like a sugar-loaf. This is the common form of a small hive.

But, to prevent inconvenience, hives should be made of every size, so as to suit different swarms, either great or small. Some hives will contain five pecks, with a swarm yearly, and last, by succession, longer than those that are hived in small hives. But although a half-bushel hive will contain a competent stock, yet the swarms, for the most part, are small, and the castlings of themselves worth nothing; and the bees that are commonly left, when they have cast twice, are so few, that they quickly miscarry: therefore, let your hives be rather too little than too great; for if they are made too large, the bees will be more lazy, and work uncomfortably, because they despair ever to finish and furnish their house; for which reason,

an over large hive is more prejudicial to their swarming than a small one; yet, if there be a competent number of bees, they will work industriously (though the vacuity be large) and complete as much with combs as shall be sufficient for them.

When you have provided yourself with hives, as your occasions require, clip off and cut away all the staring straws in the inside, and make it as smooth as you can; first wetting the skirts of the hive, then hold it over a blaze of straw, turning it constantly and regularly for a few moments: then let it stand a little, and do so a second time; and, if need require, a third time; afterwards rub it with a piece of mower's rubbing stone, by which means you will mightily ease the bees; for although you may think you have done sufficient, you shall hear them, if you listen, in an evening, harping, like mice, for divers nights together.

If you use an old hive, and it is musty, holding it over the fire several times will sweeten it; and the bees will better like to be in a hive so ordered, than a new one, not purged with fire. Many people rub them before they use them with fennel and other sweet herbs; and also sprinkle them with honey and beer, or other sweet liquors: but the former method is suffi-

cient, in my opinion ; however, this may be left to the pleasure of the owner.

The next thing after this is to stick your hive ; and many and various are the fashions. But the method I advise is this:—

Take a willow stick, about nine or ten inches long, and, according to the thickness thereof, cleave it into several thin pieces, shaving each until it will bend, then sharpen both ends, and stick three such splinters in the centre of the crown of the hive, and bend the three other ends to the sides of the hive, that they may stand like so many bows ; then enter them in triangularly ; and afterwards put a strong splinter quite through the middle of the hive, within four inches of the bottom. If it be a large hive, put another across that, about an inch lower ; otherwise, not.

Mr. Levitt prescribes this method :—

“ Take a stick of fallow or hazel, as
 “ thick as a man’s thumb, a foot long ;
 “ cleave it cross-wise, till you come with-
 “ in a hand’s breadth of the other end ;
 “ then bend each quarter several ways,
 “ cutting off the sharp edges in the midst
 “ of every one ; then putting the end that
 “ is not cleft into the crown of the hive,
 “ and bending every one of them a several
 “ way, stick them into the sides of the

“ hive, that they may force the upper end
 “ of the stick with a shoulder, to prevent
 “ the crown of the hive from hanging
 “ downwards, as they are subject to do,
 “ (excepting your hives are exceeding
 “ good) when they are heavy laden with
 “ honey: then take a small stick, cleave
 “ it in the middle, cut both the parts flat
 “ and smooth, and put them cross-wise
 “ into the hive, within four fingers of the
 “ board.”

This method seems mighty reasonable
 and proper, yet it is attended with this
 inconvenience, they cannot be taken out
 but all together, and therefore the combs
 will be much broken; and, when you
 take a hive, the honey will be in danger
 of running out to waste,

CHAP. V.

OF THE QUEEN-BEE.

This bee is longer by one half, and
 much bigger, than a common honey-bee;
 yet not so big as a drone, but somewhat
 longer.

She differs from the common bee, both
 in shape and colour: her back is of a
 bright brown; her belly, from the top of
 her fangs to the tip of her train, is clean,
 beautiful, and of a dark yellow, some-

thing deeper than the richest gold ; her head is more round than the little bees, by reason the fangs are shorter ; her tongue is not half so long as theirs, for which reason she is incapable of working, for it is impossible for her short tongue to extract much out of any flower, were she ever so industrious ; her wings are of the same size with an ordinary bee, and therefore, in respect of her long body, seem very short, as they reach but to the middle of her train, or nether part ; she has straighter and longer legs and thighs than a honey-bee, which are of the colour of their belly ; but her two hind legs are more yellow : she has a lofty pace, and a countenance very expressive of majesty : her nether part is much longer than her upper part, and more sharp than an ordinary bee, having in it four rings or partitions, and, in each ring, a golden bar, instead of those three whitish rings which other bees have at their three partitions : her sting is but little, and not half so long as the other bees ; consequently, she is not so well qualified for defence as the ordinary bees, which are properly to be considered as her guards.

From the above description, I hope any person, however unexperienced in bees, may be able to distinguish this bee from the rest, it being entirely different from

the others, in shape, size, and qualifications; and carrying in her ordinary deportment the evident marks of superiority, commanding respect and obedience.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE DRONE.

Some of our authors have given an account that the Drone is the male bee; but I am of a different opinion, and have proved that the Queen-Bee blows all the bees that are bred; and it is very strange that there should be five hundred males, and but one female.

At the latter end of July the drones are all killed, and not so much as one left: some people pretend that, before the drones are slain, they leave the small bees pregnant, for the next spring; but it is my firm belief that there is no female among them, the Queen-Bee excepted, which we are certain is a female, by reason she is the mother of them all: and we may conclude, that it is ordered by the Great Creator of all things, for this bee naturally to breed these blows in her; and by Him directed to cast them into the cups; also, when cast in, ordered what sort they shall be, by Him whose hands are able to make any form or shape, and give to every thing its nature, that so it shall be.

CHAP. VII.

HOW TO CHOOSE A STOCK OF GOOD BEES.

Those who are inclined to keep bees, and are not competent judges of them, may be sure of laying their money out to advantage, by following the directions here laid down: viz.—

When you come to a garden of bees, where there are many stocks, and you are desirous of purchasing one or two, first of all be sure to have them turned up, and take notice that they be plentifully comb'd down to the bottom, and also free from small round knobs, resembling small hail, and of that colour, upon the stone or board on which they stand; if there be, do not make choice of any such hive or stock, for you may be sure it is candied. But if the bees lay between two or three combs, and also lay round and close together, and none of these round white knobs, as aforesaid, appear, then such a stock will answer your expectation; but be sure to observe that there be not above one drone comb: if there should not be above half a one, so much the better; for I have known some stocks that have had so many drone combs, that they have been filled so full,

that they have devoured the honey as fast as the working bees have got it, and so rendered them incapable to stand ; for they cannot breed them in the lesser cups.

N. B. That you may not be deceived in regard to the drones, in choice of any stocks, you are to understand, that when the old bees have finished the first breed of females, they then (after the same manner) breed the drones in the drone-comb ; (which is but one in every hive) but you may observe, that the drone-comb is nearly the backwardest in the hive, and made with deeper and wider cells than the rest.

The time most proper for the purpose of purchasing a stock of bees, is about Candlemas, old stile ; or rather two or three weeks after that time.

When you have thus provided yourself with a stock of bees, (more or less) and brought them home, set them up, and plaster the hive all round ; as soon as the bees are all got in, leave such a hole as your little finger will go in at, and lay a hatch or bundle of hay on the crown of the hive, which will help to nourish their brood, for the warmer you keep them the faster their brood comes on ; you are likewise to take special care that the tom-

tits do not pick the holes wider, and so let in the cold: for, if they do, you will suffer loss two ways; first, you will greatly damage the brood; and, in the next place, you will lose many of your working bees; for, if the cold gets into the hive, it benumbs the outside bees of the bunch, so that they fall down upon the stone, where they must inevitably perish. When you find them begin to bear and load in a-pace, then make your hole as big again; for if you keep the holes too little, they will clamber one upon another, and so break off their loads from their legs, and greatly interrupt each other in the progress of their works; therefore, be sure to give them free passage; for their labour is great; and a small thing in our sight is, perhaps, a great interruption to them.

CHAP. VIII.

OF THE PROPER SITUATION FOR BEES;
AND WHAT TREES, FLOWERS, HERBS,
&c. ARE MOST SUITABLE FOR THEM.

Let your bees be seated not far from your house, free from the danger of an echo, covered well above, and stopped well below; let the door be somewhat to the west; let your bee-garden be well fenced from cattle, and as well as may be

defended from winds, especially the west and south-west winds, which are usually most constant in summer; let them be so situated that they enjoy as much as possible of the winter's sun, that they may stir now and then; for that will be a means of preserving their health, by enabling them to come out to ease their bodies; they being of so clean a nature that they will die before they will drop their ordure in the hive.

I was lately in a garden of bees, and the owner thereof desired me to inspect a few of his hives; whereupon, taking a stock and turning it up, I beheld a most pitiful sight, for a number of the poor creatures were dead, being greatly swelled, and stunk extremely, for they had been kept in all winter by the owner; for want of experience.

But, if they have not the benefit of the winter sun to induce them to stir out now and then, they will keep their ordure in them till they burst; and even those that recover are thereby rendered so sickly, that they are not in a condition to work, and it is very doubtful whether they ever get the better of such disorder or not; therefore, let this be a sufficient caution to you against depriving them of the sun in winter, as their success in the approaching

spring and summer depends in a great measure upon it; for without, they will not stir out of the hive to ease their bodies; which cannot fail to make them sick and ailing.

Be careful likewise to guard against the south and west winds; for they many times blow warm at spring, and also very high; so that if the bees stand exposed to them, they are subject to be enticed out by the mildness of the air, by which they are blown down upon the ground; and being early in the spring, when the earth is cold, and they being of so delicate and tender a nature, are soon chilled. I have known thousands lose their lives by this misfortune; and, after a high wind, I have taken an empty hive, and picked up hundreds of poor labouring bees for dead, but, by setting the hive by the fire, they soon came to life again, and returned them to their hive, in as good condition as ever.

The flowers, &c. which bees commonly prefer, are the following, viz. wall-flowers, black-thorn, bear-foot, dandelion, primrose, daffodil, violet, gooseberry, &c. and of these chiefly in the month of March.

Alehoof, oak, peach, cole, turnip, sycamore, ribwort, stock-gilliflower, furze, strawberry, broom, beans, bear's-ear, ozier,

plum, cherry, pear, and apple-tree, barberries, beech, maple, birch, apricots, &c. and of these chiefly in the month of April.

Water-cresses, angelica, parsnip, onion, leek, garlick-seeds, sage, mouse-ear, raspis, marigold, small yellow honey-suckle, poppy, woodbine, medlar, burnet, wild tansy, archangel, hawthorn, elder, pease, and white honey-suckle, which, as I have said before, is the chiefest flower of all, and of these they chiefly gather in the month of May.

Dewberry, bluebottle, dyers-weed, white briony, common thistle, burrage, red and damask roses, mustard seed, mallows, melilot, calamint, cucumbers, &c. and of these in the month of June.

Carduus, benedictus, pennyroyal, scarlet beans, May-weed, gourds, horse-mint, sherrents, yarrow-nip, sowthistle, succory, dill, fennel, hollyhock, French marygold, lavender, blackberry, buck, &c. and of these in the month of July.

Red eye-bright, knap-weed, heath, ivy, &c. and of these in the month of August.

Many of these flowers blow twice a year, as rosemary, archangel, burrage, although not the same roots; many afford matter

of gathering in the morning before the dew be quite exhaled. If there be flowers near enough at hand to make up their burden of that sort they begin with, they will meddle with no other that journey; but, if they have begun to gather of a flower they like, and cannot find enough to furnish them, then they will make up their load of some other.

I have here given a sufficient catalogue of such flowers, &c. as will enable any person to make choice of such as the garden is not stocked with, where the bees are situated; several of which every garden should be furnished with, for the advantage of the bees. Plum and cherry-trees are what they particularly delight in.

Be sure not to let your bees be situated where they are in danger of being exposed to the smoke, for nothing is more offensive to them; therefore, let there be no brick or lime-kilns, brew-house, &c. near the place: let them not stand above a foot or eighteen inches from the ground, for if they stand higher they are more subject to the violence of the wind; and when beaten down from the hive, if there be a present shower, or the sun suddenly be overcast, they will quickly chill and perish.

A watering place near your bee-garden

is also verſ necessary ; theſ cannot ſubſiſt without it ; and, if you can, have the banks on the north ſide of the Pond free from all buſhes and ruſhes, where theſ may drink under the wind, and in the heat of the ſun, and ſuck it out of the earth above the water, which theſ rather deſire than to ſuck the pure water itſelf. But, if you have neither pond nor river within a ſmall diſtance of your bee-garden, ſet water in wooden troughs, in your garden, and have light boards or corks within them, to riſe or fall with the water, with manſ ſmall clifts or holes for the bees to ſtand on and drink ; keep hens and chickens, eſpecially ducklings, from the troughs, or they will deſtroy the bees.

I have heard ſeveral perſons, unacquainted with the nature of bees, argue that a place may be over-ſtocked with bees, as well as ſheep on a paſture ; but I will aſſure mſ readers it is not ſo, for I have proved the contrarſ ; for, if there were a hundred ſtocks in one town, or a ſmall village, and it ſhould be a honeſ ſeaſon, theſ would all be a good weight ; and if it ſhould be a cool ſhowerſ time, in the height of the honeſ ſeaſon, if there were onlſ one ſtock in that town, theſ would not be heavſ enough to ſtand ; for there is plenty of honeſ one daſ, and none at all another.

CHAP. IX.

OF THE FEEDING OF BEES.

In this chapter I shall give proper instructions how bees are to be fed, and consider the time most proper for feeding them.

And first, it will not be worth while to keep any stock that does not weigh fourteen pounds, nor even of that weight if it be not well combed down. If you should have a stock about that weight, and find they have done getting honey, as soon as you can get them any new honey, give them about six or eight pounds, all at one time; put your honey in a crock, and stick some empty combs amongst it; if you have no empty combs, get some wheat straw unbruised, and stick it full of them, cut about a span long.

When you have honey that is knit to about eight pounds, put in a pint and a half of beer or water, (either will do) work and stir it together, until you make it as free as new run honey. If your honey be knit, take notice that it be not candied; for, if you give them candied honey, you might as well give them poison.

When you have ordered your honey as here directed, take an empty hive, and put therein some straw or hay, so that you may set the edge of the pot to the edge of your empty hive, and set your stock upon it, then the bees will have but a little way to come to fetch up the honey, and you will by so doing prevent great hazard of their lives.

If the weather is cold, and your bees should require feeding in April, be careful in giving them food as here directed; and observe that the most proper time to feed them is about seven o'clock in the evening; and in the morning, as soon as possible, take your crock away again, for at that time they are very eager after honey, there being none for them abroad; and they will have it wheresoever they can find it.

If you find you have about the middle of April some stocks that get light, and you think they will spend all their honey by the time the month is expired, fail not to provide them with sugar betimes, before they have spent their stock; for, if you supply them with a little sugar every day, they will eat what you give them, and save their honey, which will prevent the danger of losing them entirely; for, if you should neglect feeding them, so

that they should spend all their honey before you begin feeding, and be confined in a few days on account of bad weather, the next fine day that should come, they will all come out; which if they do, they will never afterwards stay in to do any good: I have tried all manner of ways to recover them, but to no purpose; for it makes them so discouraged, that they are out of all hope of ever getting anything again; and, for that reason, will not try to work any more, but are so sunk into a lethargy and carelessness, that they will yield themselves a prey to most grievous famine, rather than take pains to recover themselves; therefore, take care to begin feeding them betimes, for better to begin too soon than too late, as they are of a covetous nature; and the more they have the better they will work.

The most proper method to give them sugar is to make a scoop of elder, which you may run in at the hole of the hive, and so pour it in, giving the hive a rap or two, and they will come to it just like sheep round a hay-rick, in time of a storm; and, when used to it a few times, they will run down at the least disturbance possible, for sugar is preferable to honey, because they will not rob for sugar half so soon as they will for honey; besides, if you give them sugar, you need not give them can-

died honey; and they will do full as well with sugar as with good honey.

If you have stocks that are forward at the latter end of May, or the beginning of June, and that are ready to swarm, and the weather be wet and cold, and continue so for several days together, and you observe them to bring out white young bees, then get a quarter of a pound of sugar, and mixing it with beer or water, turn your stock up, and pour it all over them: by this means you will save your stock, if not from losing the swarm, at least from utter destruction; for if you let them alone, when you see them in that condition, they will set bodily to work, and pluck them out headlong, both little bees and drones, masters, &c. and rid them of all together, and ten to one but it will prevent their swarming that year; but, if they should swarm, they will be very late, for at that time their honey is all gone, and they are fearful that the weather may continue unseasonable, which causes an obstinate temper amongst them, obliterating all tender feelings, so that they will fall upon their young, and massacre them; for they see nothing but a grievous famine before their eyes, which makes them willing to be rid of their increasing family; but, either feeding them, or a few fine days ensuing, alters their minds, and pre-

vents them from killing their young ; so, that when you see the first appearance of their throwing down their brood, be sure feed them next day, by which means you will prevent them from doing what is before mentioned, and you will not sustain so great a loss.

CHAP. X.

OF CANDIED STOCKS, AND THE DISORDERS OCCASIONED THEREBY.

When a stock becomes candied, it never fails to cause a great disorder among the bees ; the candied honey being unfit for food, and the smell being so offensive to them, that some of them will leave the hive every day, and sometimes even the queen-bee will desert them, and then nothing but decay will ensue, for there can be no more bees bred, and their family consequently will decrease every day. When this is the case, they go out as if they were going to work, but, being sensible of the condition they are in, care not to return home again.

If their governor be lusty and strong, she will give them orders for a removal, and so come out, as if going to swarm ; and will settle in the same manner ; and

ever, if you put them in again, they will come out the next fine day; and thus, for several days together, they will endeavour to quit their hive, until perhaps they lose their governor; which, if they do, they will do no more good of themselves.

To remedy this misfortune, the best thing that can be done with them is to take away their governor, and let them remain without her one whole day; then put them to some other stock that is thin of bees, and they will assist them greatly.

When you put them together, let it be near night, on the close of the evening, thus: take a rare, and set it upon the ground, near to the stock you intend to put them in, and turn the crown of the hive into the rare, and set the other hive upon it as gently as you can, so that they may creep gradually up together; by so doing, the other bees will receive them kindly for their fellows; but if they be disturbed when put together, they will fall to fighting, and much harm will ensue, for they will make great slaughter in a little time.

To prevent which, wrap a cloth round both hives, that one bee come not out; for when they have crept close together

for some little time, they receive each other's breath; after which, they will allow them to settle in their commonwealth, behave as loving brethren, and will not after provoke one another upon any consideration, but will agree to work together as if they were all of one family.

On the 23rd of June, 1765, the following circumstance happened to a neighbour of mine:—

A swarm came by accident near to his house, and he hived it; and presently after a second came also, and entered into the same hive; so there were two swarms in one hive: on which account I was sent for (as I usually am on such occasions, for several miles round this country). If I had been there at the time the first swarm settled, the second might have been prevented entering into them, by throwing a cloth over the hive, and so confining them close, until the other had settled elsewhere; but as they were now joined together, some method was immediately to be used, in order to divide them, otherwise, I was well assured, one of the governors must die in a little time, if not speedily prevented; therefore, I took the following, as the most proper, method, in such a case:—

First, I took hold of the hive, and gave

it a stroke or two with my hand, and they immediately came out, by which I perceived they had seized fast on one of the queen-bees, and would soon have killed, if I had not immediately rescued her; it was very surprising to see how resolute they were, and determined to murder her, for there was a whole parcel of bees all of a heap, about the bigness of an apple of a middling size, which stuck so close together, that I rolled them about like a hedge-hog, and they would not part; till, at length, I was obliged to get a small stick, and forced them to release the poor creature, who was confined in the middle of them; but they were very unwilling to part from her, being very spiteful, and determined that she should die.

After I had got her from them, I kept her in my hand for some time, and then put her to them again; but they seized her after the same manner; this being no more than I expected, I took her from them, and took the hive that had the other governor in, and put in a sufficient number of bees for a swarm, and set them at a distance off, so far that they could not hear each others' sound, I kept the other bees by themselves till they began to be very uneasy, as I knew that was the best time to offer her to them again; so I put a few bees in the hive which that

swarm was to go in, and put her to them, and they received her kindly; I then turned the hive down on a cloth, and put more bees to the edge of the hive, but at first they lay very sulky, till I stirred them about with my finger, and then they began to run in, so I knocked them on the cloth, and they all ran in like sheep into a fold; and by this means their minds were changed from wilful murder to mutual love and friendship.

Thus, it appears, anything may be done with them, if proper means are used; but without that nothing can be done. It was wonderful to observe what a change I wrought in their minds in a short time; being a little before determined to kill and destroy, but now resolved to protect and defend, love and embrace each other; when they had all mixed together in one hive, as aforesaid, they had unanimously agreed that the other queen-bee should be saved, and this (which I preserved) should die; and if I had taken the other queen-bee out of the other hive, and put into this, they would doubtless have assisted her as freely as they did this.

If you have a stock at spring that throws down candied honey, at the latter end of May take care to rear it; cut the crown of an old hive out, and put under it, for,

by this means, they will get a good weight. I have heard ignorant people say they will not have the bees reared, because it will prevent their swarming; but this is because they know no better, for I am certain, from experience, that if a tub is put under them and they chance to breed a governor, they will come headlong down the tub and swarm.

Many people are of opinion that the reason of bees swarming is want of room; I am surprised that their own reason should not convince them to the contrary, especially those who have any concern in keeping bees, for many times they are known to lie out at times a month together, and perplex themselves to no purpose, and sometimes will continue so until cold weather comes and drives them in; but, if want of room occasion them to swarm, why do they not so when they stop out so long? However, it is not for want of room that they swarm; which I hope to make sufficiently evident in the course of the next chapter.

CHAP. XI.

OF THE SWARMING OF BEES, THE OCCASION THEREOF, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM SWARM.

I shall, in this chapter, endeavour to make my readers understand the true rea-

son of bees swarming. I have proved, by long experience, that it is not for want of room that they swarm; for they will continue in the hive as long as they want a governor; but, as soon as they have got one, they immediately prepare for a removal, and constitute an independent state of their own. But, if the weather be wet, showery, and cold, they will kill their governor, and then will not swarm for a good while, if they do that year.

As I flatter myself that I have, by long study and experience, become perfect in understanding the wonderful ways of these curious creatures, it is my intention to make them public, that the world may reap some benefit from my observations.

When one swarm robs another, and the swarm that is robbed makes no resistance, some means must be used to make them oppose the spoilers, or the swarm will be inevitably ruined.

On July 12th and 13th, 1765, I had two swarms, one in my own garden and one about half a land's length off, and one robbed the other, yet they never fought, or made any resistance against their lawless invaders.

People unacquainted with the nature of bees, might have seen them, and not

been able to judge what they were about; but I presently perceived there was mischief in the case. It was remarkable to see them let the robbers in and out peaceably, as though they were belonging to their own family: however, I knew that I must endeavour to make them resist their enemies, and protect their property, or else there would be more damage done than could easily be repaired; and the method I took to make them do so was this:—I laid my finger upon them, and pressed them softly against the hive, which made them enraged, and then they soon began to fight their plunderers very freely, and, at length, beat them quite off.

It is surprising to see how fierce they are when they go robbing. At first a bee or two come at a time, and hover about the mouth of the hive, to try what condition they are in; and, if they think they can overcome them, they go and inform their fellows of it, who, without farther hesitating or consultation, come in a large body upon them, with a full resolution to break into the hive, and so fall a fighting with great eagerness, like two armies, mortal enemies to each other, and make as great slaughter; for, in a small space of time, great numbers of them will be killed on both sides, by their poisonous darts, which make them fall in such in-

credible quantities that one would think they were resolved upon the utter extirpation of each other.

If they think they shall be overcome, they will yield themselves prisoners, and will not only give their honey to their enemies, but will assist them in carrying away their own stock, and when so done will stay with them, thinking to make it their home; but their enemies will by no means admit of it, but will still pursue them with unremitting vengeance; and not content with having robbed them of all their substance, they will now murder every one of them, if possible, and tumble them out headlong.

In the year 1763, I was sent for to Tysoe, in Warwickshire, to order a swarm a farmer had there, which had entered into a hollow tree. Several persons had endeavoured to get them out, but to no purpose. When I came to the place there was a great concourse of people gathered together, to see the performance of my getting them out. There was a broad hole cut in the tree, which I was glad to find. I went up the ladder, a hive being tied close to the hole of the tree, and began to stir them about, by which I perceived where their governor was, which I presently got hold of, and put into the

hive, and part of the bees with her, and then I came down again. Several of the spectators thought that I could do no more good with them than those who had attempted to remove them before; but I told them, if they would have a little patience, they would soon be convinced to the contrary. I then went along with the owner to a neighbouring house, leaving them as before stated.

When we came back again, which might be in about an hour, or scarcely so much, they were all got into the hive, to the great satisfaction of the owner, and astonishment of all the spectators, who little expected so difficult an affair to be managed with so much ease, and in such a manner as they could not in the least conceive, little expecting my method would be attended with such success; but, they being ignorant of the nature of bees, it was no more than might be expected.

The manner to know where the queen-bee is amongst a swarm, is this: First, observe particularly the motions of the bees, and where the governor is you may perceive a bunch extraordinary, where they will clamber one upon another, with a gentle movement of their wings, and thrusting one another up together, like a flock of sheep forced into a pen or fold,

running from one side of the bunch or cluster to the other; and when they come to the place where the governor is, they give their wings a quick hover or flutter.

These observations being strictly remarked, you may at any time find where the queen-bee is; as to the particular marks to know her from the rest, I have already given sufficient directions, whereby she may be easily distinguished from the others.

If two swarms at any time settle together, the method to part them is this: take four or five hives, and put a few of the bees into each, and then you may the more easily observe the governors; the more parts you put them in, the better you will find them; which when you have done, keep them until you have parted the bees equally; then put in your queen-bees, and by this means your swarms are parted without farther trouble.

If they chance to settle on the body of a tree, observe their motions, as before directed, and you will soon find their governor on the branch or cluster; then all you have to do in this case is, only to get off equal parcels of bees, as near as you can, into each hive, and so put the queen-bees in as before.

The best way to keep the governors safe the time you want, is to get a small box, and make a little hole in the lid, just in the middle, and put her into it. I have kept one in my waistcoat pocket for many days, just within my pocket, with the hole uppermost, giving the box a touch with a small matter of honey (about half a drop is sufficient) in two days; and observe only to touch one place with it, for fear of clogging her wings, and so making her unable to fly.

I have found out a most curious method of preserving queen-bees alive, and to have them ready at any time, to supply a stock, when they, by any misfortune, lose one, which is thus: provide yourself with a little wooden box, make it full of small holes, about so wide that a knitting pin of the larger sort will go in at them; into this box put the queen-bee, then tie a strong thread to it, and make a hole in the crown of the hive, so wide as to let down the box by the thread, and observe to let it down just between two of the middle combs, so will she receive the natural heat of the bees, by their getting round the box; and they cannot come at her to do her any manner of harm; for if they could they would not suffer her to be there, but would soon dispatch her. You may draw the box out when you

please, and put honey to her; and by this means you may have queen-bees by you ready when you want them. Sometimes the very best stock you have loses their governor; and if you have not one to supply her place, you have them to take out of the hive, which is far more troublesome and difficult.

I was sent for to go down to Lord Compton's to manage a swarm for his bailiff, that had lain out, seemingly for swarming, for three years, and yet had never swarmed; but, being now late in the swarming-time, I persuaded him that it might be hazardous whether they would stand or no; but he told me he would venture them; so I took a swarm out of it, set it up, and retired into his house and presently the gardener came in and acquainted us that the bees were busy at work already, which gave him great pleasure and satisfaction; and the gentleman told me, that it was the most surprising thing of the kind he ever saw in his life; and could not have believed it possible to have been done, unless he had seen it.

I told him I would come again in the season to examine what weight they were; which I did, about slaughter-time, and found them twenty-four pounds; and they both swarmed the next year, to their great satisfaction.

I have also found out such a curious method of increasing the number of bees, as I here do challenge all Europe to equal. It is not to be expressed what satisfaction I felt, when, after several difficult attempts, I at length found that I had succeeded; therefore, having had this art (together with many others) confined within my own breast, for fourteen years and upwards, I will now disclose the same, for the benefit of my countrymen and others.

But, according to my proposal, in respect to this curious method of preserving and increasing the number of bees, and making them swarm, &c. to their great satisfaction and advantage, be pleased to observe:—

To make them swarm, take the stock and turn it up, with the crown in a rare; the rare, cloth, and hive, that your swarm is to be put in, must all be set ready, at a distance from the place where they stand; the empty hive must be put on the stock as quick as possible, the cloth wrapped round both hives, and a little nail, or any such thing, must be used to fasten them in.

Take another empty hive, and set in the place where the stock stood, to employ the bees that come from the field; then go to the stock, and rap it with your hands

gently all round ; if you rap it hard, you will loosen the combs, and damage your stock ; but, by rapping gently, you will hear the bees run roaring up ; then you may unloose the cloth, and hold the hive hollow, and you may have the pleasure of seeing them run up, and with ease observe the Governor run up.

When you have got all the bees out, then take the hive away which was to receive the bees that had been abroad in the field, and set it just by ; then take the stock and set it in the place again, and take the swarm and prove it, thus:—take a cloth, and spread it on the ground, set another hive on it, and put a small stone under it to keep it hollow ; then, with a ladle, take them out of the hive, and lay them down by the other hive, and they will run in.

But observe well that you let not the queen-bees escape your notice ; the first which you see do not interrupt ; but when you perceive a second, catch her, and put her into the old stock, and set the swarm up : but if you find more than two governors, then you may make more swarms ; sometimes they will breed ten or twelve governors ; on the contrary, if there is but one in a stock, you must have one by you ready, when you are putting them into the hive where the swarm is to

continue: when the bees are running in, then put the governor amongst them, and they will all run up together; so, with running, and the heat of the bees, she receives the same smell with their breath, and they receive and accept her as their own, as if she had been bred amongst them: sometimes, by chance, they may dislike her; and if they should do so, let them have their own governor, and let the old stock be without one for a whole day, then put the stranger into it, and they will receive her.

If you set the swarm in the same garden that the old stock is in, you must have a watchful eye over them; and if you find that your swarm gets less, then take the old stock, and set it down on the ground about the space of three minutes, and do the same with the swarm; then set the old stock in the swarm's place, and remove them backwards and forwards until you make them equal, according to your own mind.

But if the swarm be carried to a distance, it is much less trouble, for then they go on without any interruption; but when they are set in the same garden, they go eager to work, and on their return they forget their new habitation, and so go to the stock; yet this is only the case when

you make them swarm, for when they swarm themselves, it is a thing designed by them for some time before they can accomplish it, and what they are fully resolved to do; so, when they come out, they are as careless of the old stock, as though they had never seen it: but when they are compelled to swarm in this manner, it is not designed of themselves, but is brought suddenly upon them, and they, for that reason, are apt to forget themselves when they come from work, and go to the old stock; but if changed as directed, you bring satisfaction on all sides, and may have as good swarms in this manner as any in the world, if rightly managed; for, by experience I speak it, I have, by this method, had as good swarms as I ever could wish to have.

The best way to prevent all this trouble, is to carry the swarms about half a mile off, for then they will ease the owner of the trouble of changing them, as when in the same garden, &c.

If they should chance to dislike their governor at any time, take the swarm and turn them all down upon a cloth, and set a fresh hive just by the cluster of bees; then stir amongst them and disturb them a little, so as they may run in gradually: their running in together never fails to make them reconciled to their new go-

vernor. By this method you will prevent them from destroying their governor at any time: if they should dislike her, it will be known in about ten or fifteen minutes; if they do not disagree in this time they never will, but will go eager to work, as well as any natural swarm.

I have sometimes been blamed, by ignorant people, on account of forcing bees to swarm; for they have let them lay out one week after another, till such time as the honey season has been almost over: and then they have come and desired me to make them swarm, by which they do not get honey sufficient to enable them to stand, which makes these people believe that made swarms are good for nothing; but it is their ignorance of the nature of bees, which makes them think so; otherwise, their own reason might be convinced by the bees working; for if there was honey to be got, they would certainly get it.

I have had made swarms weigh forty pounds and upwards; and if those inexperienced people had some of that weight, it would convince them to the contrary.

I will here give an account of a very strange circumstance which happened to a neighbouring miller's bees; it was as follows:—he had three swarms, which came

out all at one time, and settled round the body of a crab-tree together, which appeared a surprising heap of bees; so being immediately sent for, I began to part them, which being done, by finding their governors, I then divided them equally, and three large swarms they were; after which they went on very well; but what is most surprising, on the eleventh day after they all swarmed together again; two of them went together, and one single; but the made swarms were heavy enough to stand, which was almost unprecedented, and extremely worthy of remark.

CHAP. XII.

OF BEES' ENEMIES, AND HOW TO PREVENT THEM FROM BEING PLUNDERED.

When you find that bees have done getting honey, take care to make the holes of your hives about so wide as your little finger may go in at, for at this time there are many thieves abroad; and some years produce great numbers of wasps, which are the very worst enemies to bees; for when the mornings and evenings become cool, and the bees begin to huddle together, the wasps will come in and out, and in a little time will take off great part of their honey; for one wasp will

carry away as much honey at once as a bee will at twice, and they will endure the cold considerably more than the bees, and will work very sharp when the bees do not stir out; this makes them come frequently at mornings and evenings, when the bees are still; and they are very searching at that time, for they will try and prove the bees if they think they can get anything from them, and will seize them very sharp; so if the holes be left too wide, and the wasps come in a large body, it will be almost impossible to keep them out, for they come so eager and so fast, resolving to put the bees to utter destruction, that they will fill the hole entirely up, by thronging to get in.

If there are several stocks of bees in a garden, and one of them should go robbing, when the rest hear the conquering sound, they will immediately join the victors with all their strength and might.

Some time ago, I went a few miles to visit a relation, and stayed a few days; returning home, before I got to my house, I perceived there was mischief broke out among my bees: and upon going into my garden, I soon perceived the matter, which was as follows:—

One of my neighbours had five stocks,

nine of mine had joined them, and had killed four stocks out of the five, which I was very sorry to see, as I could have prevented it if I had been at home.

When you have this misfortune, make the hole of the stock that is robbed so small that it will only allow one bee to come out at a time, and plaster some very soft cow-dung all round the hole, as wide as you can cover with both your hands, and that will keep them off as soon as anything; if they continue coming, keep the cow-dung very soft, by wetting it frequently; for being soft, and their feet rough, it sticks to them, so that when they go to settle upon it, they will start back, as though they had flown against a sword, for it is very offensive to them: by keeping to this, you may drive them off; for they do not like to be stopped quite in; nor is it proper to do so, for you will then keep many of your own bees out as well as the robbers. I was acquainted with a neighbour that had a stock robbed, and falling in a passion on that account, he threatened to kill all the robbers, be as it would; so he stopped them quite up, and made a fire before the hive, by which improper method numbers of poor industrious creatures perished in the flames; which was a barbarous action, for he not only killed the robbers, but also a great

number of his own bees, for he had several other stocks ; but this may be imputed to nothing but want of judgment, as it might have been remedied by a much better method than so cruel a one as the putting such a number of industrious useful creatures to a grievous death ; for there is no one action of their lives but tends to the manifest benefit of mankind.

If you stop them quite up, be sure to open them towards the evening, or you will keep several of your bees out, and the coldness of the night will certainly kill them ; by this means your stock will be much lessened, and of course less able to resist their enemies.

CHAP. XIII.

HOW TO INCREASE BEES.

The following method I would recommend, as the most proper to increase bees, much to the advantage of the owner :—

If at any time you have a cast come out, first prove how many governors such a stock has, thus:—Take a cloth, and spread it upon the ground, then take an empty hive, and raise it a small matter from the ground, by putting a thin stone or some such thing under it; then take a few bees, lay them down close by it, and stir them,

and then they will run in with remarkable cheerfulness; then turn out the rest of the bees upon the cloth, a few at a time, about as many as you can hold in both your hands, and about a foot from the hive; then you will have an opportunity of seeing them run, as it were sheep into a fold; and may easily discern their governors running stately along the cloth, but, if there are more than one, take the super-numerary ones up, and put them into a box, with a hole in the lid, as before directed, until you have them all. sometimes there will be three, sometimes four, sometimes six. When you have got them all, divide the bees into as many parts as there are governors, then put the governors to the parts of bees so divided; this being done, take stocks that are full of bees, and strike them gently on the outside of the hive, and so turn them all out into empty hives, the same as a swarm, and set them again where they were before; by this means you will have larger swarms than you can have by any single swarm, by reason you have all the bees in the hive: then take the parts of your cast, and put each part into the respective hives, where the other bees came out: you need not concern yourself about the smallness of the parcels, for when they come into a large brood, and honey, and that brood comes out, they will be full of bees again.

The method of putting the parcels into the honey and combs is thus:—

Wrap the honey and combs up close, and keep it as warm as you can till night, and tie your bees up close, and keep them in till night; then take a rare or bucket, and turn the crown of the hive into it; then set the hive of brood and honey upon it, and fasten a cloth round them both, so as not one bee can come out: they will have run up by the morning, and then place them where you think proper.

This is a most curious method to increase them; for, by this method, you will have six swarms out of one cast, which is sufficient, in my opinion, for any reasonable person to expect: by chance some of those stocks might have swarmed; but of that no one is sure; but when you have a cast, an opportunity offers to increase them; and the sooner that business is done the better; for if you keep a cast by itself, it too often happens that it cannot be made to stand.

I have had several good stocks in this manner, produced from no more bees than might be contained within an egg-shell.

I have also increased them by the following method, when I have been at a loss, for want of Governors, or queen-bees.

Take a stock that is full of bees, and put

them in an empty hive, which set in the stock's place ; then set the old stock upon the crown of it, and they will work in both hives ; and if it be fine weather, they will both stand : but if you keep both, be sure that the old stock is provided with a governor at the slaughter-time.

You may drop a stock that is to be taken up, by a small piece of puff, according to Mr. Thorby's direction ; put them together in the same manner as you were directed to do the parts of casts : but you may be assured that there is but one time of the year when they will work without a master, and that is in honey-time.

If you take governors from stocks in the honey-season, they will work as well as those that have a governor, their minds being so intent upon gathering honey.

When you have stocks that are not promising to stand, and you are desirous that they should, and you have other stocks that are heavy enough to stand, then treat them according to the following directions:

Take the stock that is of sufficient weight to stand, and set it upon the ground ; set likewise the little stock upon the ground, where let it stand about three minutes ; when that time is expired, take it up, and set it in the heavy stock's place ; at the same time taking your heavy stock, and setting it in your light stock's place ; by

this method they will be both heavy enough to stand; but take care that it be done when the weather is promising, and about ten o'clock in the morning, for then they will work together all the day after, and not trouble themselves about fighting, but receive each other as fellow-helpers. Sometimes, when the weather does not prove fine, and they consequently cannot come out, they will fight a little; but if they can come out to work that day, they will by no means quarrel or fight.

Great care should be taken that this be done before the honey-season be too near expired; and be sure not to change them, in the middle of the day, because the governor generally goes abroad about that time; and if she should be gone out, and come in soon after you have removed them, they may perhaps fall upon her and slay her, which will be an irretrievable loss; but if you order them at the time above directed, you need not fear, for after Old Midsummer, the time of casting in their young being mostly over, they take their pleasure, but seldom go very far abroad; and they are also very difficult in their coming out, for if it be not fine warm temperate weather, they are afraid to trust themselves in the open air.

It is admirable to see the queen-bee's coming out; when she comes forth, there

is always a select detachment to attend her to the door of the hive, where they wait, with silent respect, till she takes wing, and then they all go in again and return quietly to their respective places.

Here let us pause, and admire the wonderful works of the Omnipotent Creator of the universe; how He has endued these minute animals with a sagacity almost equal to rationality! how He has imparted to them a knowledge of times and seasons, and how to provide for futurity! how they are equally concerned in propagating their species, and supporting their own existence; for about Old Midsummer they leave off breeding, because they would then have the combs empty to deposit their honey in.

If we consider their government, it will convey a very mortifying reflection to beings who style themselves rational. In their state, they yield an implicit obedience to the laws made for the good of the community.—Alas! not so with us!—Their rulers have no sinister purpose to answer: their happiness centring in the happiness of the public.—Happy if all rulers would act upon the same principle!—They maintain no animosity against nor party disputes with one another, but labour lovingly in the common cause, and carefully lay up for the public what provisions they

collect as individuals. Observe the bees
in the summer and blush, O ye idle and
indolent! * * * * *

CONCLUSION.

I cannot conclude this small, but valuable treatise, without desiring the readers to notice, that what I have here written for their instruction and advantage is not pillaged from former writers, but the real result of my own experience; which I have proved, to the satisfaction of several persons, in this and neighbouring counties. I have made the nature of bees my principal study for upwards of thirty years; and my desire was, if possible, to find out all their ways and motions, which, by God's assistance and an unwearied perseverance, I hope I have at length obtained; and I am convinced, that the methods herein set forth are of such advantage that all persons who are concerned in KEEPING BEES, and choose to reduce my directions to practice, will find them turn out to their benefit and satisfaction.

THE END OF WHITE'S GUIDE.

▲

PRACTICAL MONTHLY

BEE-MASTER'S CALENDAR,

BY THE LATE

JAMES BEESLEY, OF BANBURY.

OCTOBER

MAY be properly called the BEE-KEEPER'S FIRST MONTH. See that your stock has sufficient food to stand; its weight ought not to be less than 25lbs.

Cover the hive properly, so that it may be well protected from the effects of approaching winter; narrow a little the mouth of the hive.

NOVEMBER :—

But little attention will be required this month. See that no vermin or insects are harboured about your stands.

DECEMBER :—

If the weather prove very severe, secure your hives with effectual coverings, but do not quite close up the mouth; a small vacancy must be left for fresh air. In mild seasons, it is not unusual for the bees to come out in the middle of the day, even in this month, as late as Christmas.

It may not be amiss to weigh your hives and, if any deficiency of food be apprehended, feed them.

JANUARY :—

The directions for the two preceding months will be found applicable for this month. Take care that your bees do not come out while snow remains on the ground, or the loss of many lives will be occasioned: they must not however be entirely stopped in; small holes must be left, sufficient to admit air.

FEBRUARY :—

In this month breeding frequently commences. Clear away all dirt and filth from your hives; ascertain the weight of the stocks, and feed those that are light, and do not so niggardly. A trough or two of food given to the strong stocks will be found useful in forwarding the brood. It will be well to lift up your hives, and clear the floor boards from dead bees and filth.

MARCH :—

This month is generally a brisk one, and the musical hum of the bees and the loads of yellow pollen, or bee bread, which they carry in, will satisfy you that breeding is rapidly going on; do not however leave off feeding the light stocks.

APRIL :—

If the weather prove fine, the flowers this month abound with honey, and the feeding trough may be safely thrown aside. Open the mouths of your hives to their utmost extent, so that the bees may have "Free ingress, egress, and regress," as the lawyers say.

MAY :—

Not unfrequently this month, “The merry month of May,” as our forefathers called it, proves wet and cold ; when this is the case, resume the feeding of your light stocks, or famine will be the consequence of your neglecting to do so.

In favourable seasons, swarming commences this month ; a swarm generally rises between 11 and 2. The indications of a swarm, are the appearance of the drones, the extraordinary activity and bustle of the hive, and a peculiar odour, resembling that of heated wax. Hanging out at the mouth of the hive is considered by some a sign of swarming, but this is by no means to be depended upon :—not unfrequently it denotes that the bees are ready, but that the Queen is not.

A swarm should never be put into an old rotten hive ; many swarms, if not altogether ruined, are much injured by this practice.

A second swarm, usually called a cast, will sometimes issue from strong stocks, at the expiration of about eight or nine days after the prime swarm. Casts should be added to previous swarms, or two casts joined together ; they seldom do much good if left to stand alone.

JUNE:—

Attend to the stocks which have not swarmed.

Add an eke or riser to the stocks which hang out day after day without swarming.

Never place hives under a SLATED shed: The slates attract the heat, and the bees, instead of swarming, hang out in clusters at the mouth of the hive for many days together, and thus perhaps, the best honey-gathering days pass away, whilst the bees are idly clustering at the hives.

JULY:—

Swarms often rise in this month, but they seldom get honey enough to stand through the winter: many experienced bee-keepers prefer joining them again to the parent stocks.

If the weather should be very hot, screen the hives from the mid-day sun.

The drones, in early seasons, are despatched in this month. It is a certain sign of a strong stock, when the drones are killed early.

AUGUST:—

This is the robbing month:—strong hives will attack weak ones, and, in some seasons, wasps are particularly dangerous, frequently ruining hives that would otherwise stand through the winter. Narrow the mouths of the attacked hives, so as not to admit more than one or two bees at a time. Phial bottles, filled with beer and sugar, placed near the hives, attract and destroy many wasps.

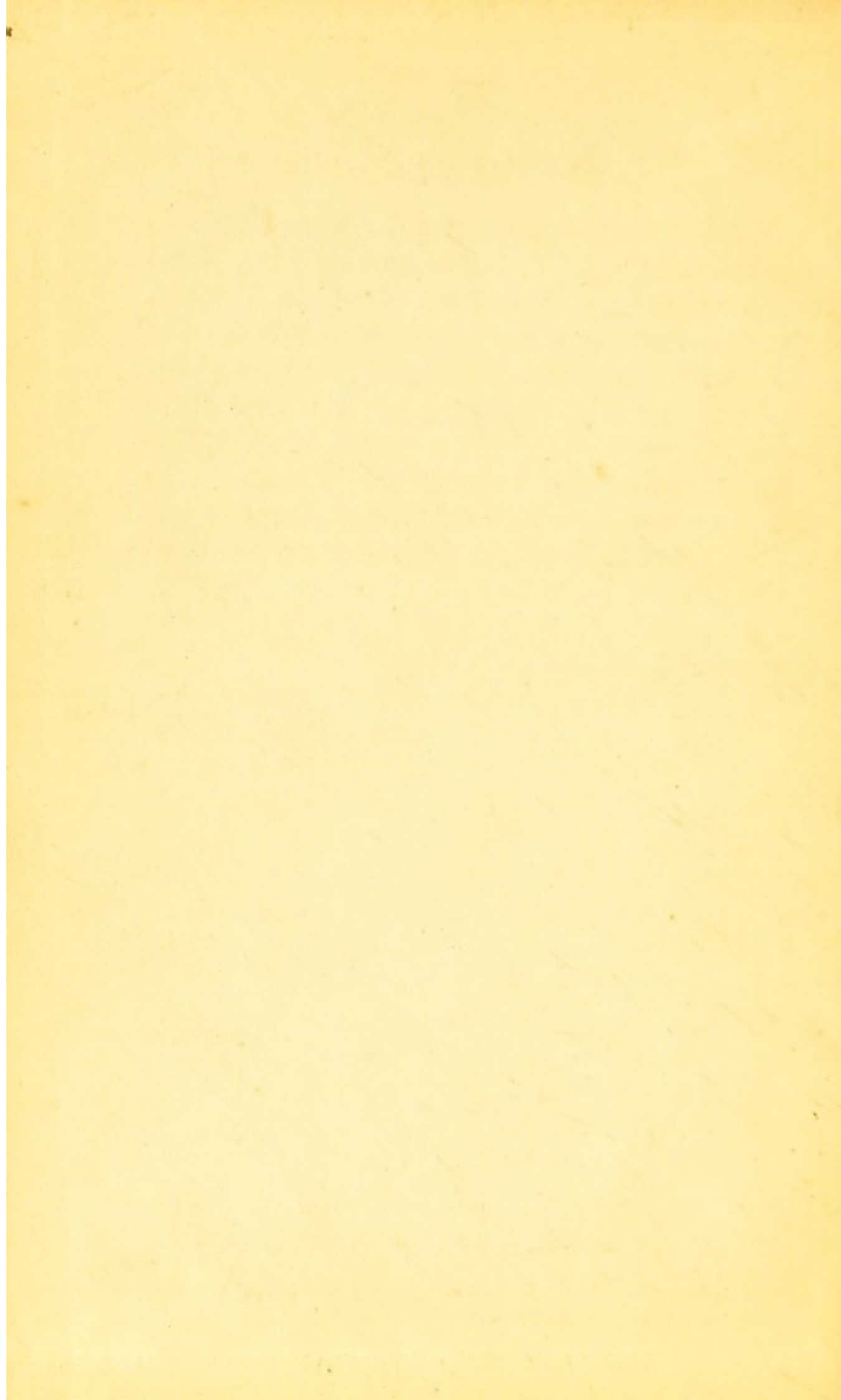
This month is the taking-up season. Would that every bee-keeper would use the doubling board, described in "The Bee-keepers' Manual," by Mr. Taylor, then might the honey be taken without destroying a single life, and the stock preserved for future swarming and honey-gathering; whilst the brimstone pit destroys thousands of these industrious and interesting insects, after they have laboured all the season for their cruel and merciless masters.

SEPTEMBER :—

Continue to be watchful of the robbers this month, and, towards the end, feed light stocks. The best food is honey, coarse sugar, and beer, simmered over the fire into a syrup, but it should not be given warm. Evening is the best time for feeding, and, with common hives, the best apparatus to use is a small tin trough, made to go into the mouth of the hive ; put into it bits of straw to prevent the bees from being clogged or drowned.

BANBURY, $\frac{1844}{1852}$





COMPLETE GUIDE
TO THE
MANAGEMENT OF
BEES,

BY
WILLIAM WHITE

AND
JAMES BEESLEY.

PRINTED WITH RUSHER'S PATENT TYPE.

Title & copyright on
front cover.

24ColorCard CameraFax.com

COMPLETE GUIDE
TO THE
MANAGEMENT OF
BEES,

BY
WILLIAM WHITE

AND
JAMES BEESLEY.

PRINTED WITH RUSHER'S PATENT TYPE.