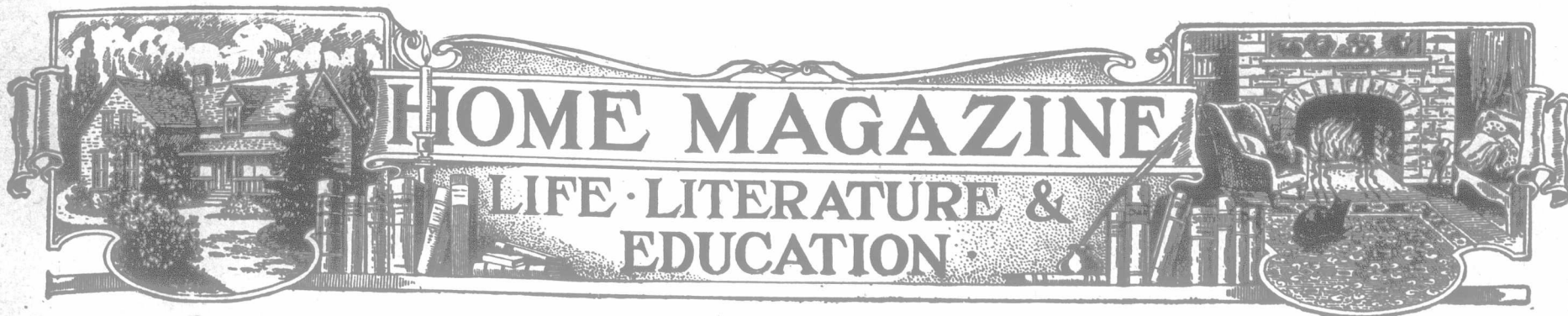




Indian Summer.

Red moons that wax and wane, and
in the air
A smell as of a fragrant smoke out-
poured
From thuribles that swing before
the Lord;
And little puffs of drowsy wind that bear
Tamarac odors, and the perfumes rare
Of pine and cedar! Rich as wine
long-stored
Soft sunlight fills the day. Than
mi er's hoard
The jewelled leaves flash out in tints
more fair.

The Red Gods call the woodsman; by
the streams
The Indian's wigwam lonely waits.
Afar
He seeks the happy hunting of his dreams
In magic vales beyond the horizon's
bar;
Through the calm ether falls a whisper
clear:
"Such peace is not of earth—God's
heaven is near."

(REV.) JAMES B. DOLLARD, in Canadian
Bookman.

Bee Keeping for Women.

BY ETHEL ROBSON.

[Miss Robson is one of the few women
in Ontario who have had extensive
experience with bees. She speaks
from the standpoint of the woman
who knows because she has done
the work herself.—E.]

Have you seen the meadows glowing
With the clover all abloom?
Have you smelled its fragrance blowing
Through the balmy month of June?
Have you heard the bees a humming
All the long and sultry days?
Have you seen their wings a flashing
In a busy, busy maze?

If you have, you've learned some secrets
From the golden summer days,
That take you near to Nature's heart
And teach you of her ways;
For the heart of all the summer
Is the humming of the bees
In the fragrant clover blossoms
And the whispering basswood trees.

Poetry, yes, but true nevertheless!
However, bee-keeping for women is
not an entirely poetical proposition,
as the writer very well knows, having
had ten years' experience at the work
and therefore being in a position to
speak with authority. Now the purpose
of this article is not to enter into a
detailed account of how to keep bees
—this can more profitably be read else-
where; nor yet to show that bee-keeping
is an occupation suitable for women,
—this is indisputable, nor to show that
it can be made commercially profitable,
—this is obvious; but rather to discuss
some of the ethical points which ten
years' experience has revealed. Ethics
may seem rather a formidable term;
however, any work to have a true value
must have an ethical basis, so it may
work out in a sufficiently commonplace
way after all.

There is no subject more fruitful
for discussion for the Institute speaker or
the farm journal than that of the problem
of keeping the boy on the farm; but
once the attention is drawn to the boy
it is very evident that it is not only
the boy who is leaving the farm. The
girl is going also, and to maintain the
necessary social life to keep the country
attractive some means must be found
whereby the girl will be held. It
is usually considered that economic
conditions are one of the chief reasons
for sending the girl from the farm.
On the farm, the family, not the individual,
is the economic unit, and ordinarily

there is little opportunity for the girl
to be independent. Away from the
farm her services have a definite cash
value, hence the ambitious girl goes
where her services are appreciated.
The conclusion is, if she can find op-
portunities for independent economic
development on the farm the girl will
remain there. Among the solutions of-
fered none makes a more picturesque
appeal than bee-keeping.

There are two classes of women to
whom bee-keeping should make an
appeal: the farmer's daughter desiring
to make a little money for her own use,
and the woman who is looking for a
means of livelihood. The former, by far
the largest and most important class,
we will consider first: To anyone driving
along on Ontario roads the latter part
of June and early in July the most
striking thing is the almost over-powering
fragrance of the clover, while the eye
is dazzled by the continuous procession
of blossoms. Don't you recollect when
you were a youngster tearing the blossoms
apart and sucking out the tiny drop
of nectar at the bottom of the flower-
cups? It was only a tiny, tiny drop,
but "little drops of water" you re-
member what they do, and there are
just millions and millions of drops of
nectar in the clover, and kind mother
Nature has provided a means whereby
we may have it gathered and stored
for our own use. The little honey bee
actually wears herself out in her efforts
to gather the nectar and bear it to the
hive. No doubt hundreds, nay thousands
of tons of honey are lost every year
because there are not enough bees in
the country to gather it. Not only
is the nectar lost, but the bees are neces-
sary for the full production of clover
seed, and a very valuable asset to our
country. When we consider that the
work with bees is all done in the summer-
time and during the nice weather,
we would ask what more attractive
field could be found for our women
to develop.

Now, in the early days of our county
almost every farm had its straw skeps
of bees and the honey formed an im-
portant part of household supplies.
To-day, with vastly improved methods
of production and a consequent im-
provement in the product, it is only
rarely that we find bees a part of the
farm equipment. Honey is usually
bought but sparingly, yet the average
family could easily consume two or
three hundred pounds in the year and
be the better for it. Surely here is a
home market that any girl might take
satisfaction in supplying.

Yet the actual fact is, that in spite
of all that has been written in the papers,
up to the present comparatively few
women are actively interested in bee-
keeping. Occasionally inquiries are
made by enthusiasts, but very rarely do
these materialize in actual work. To the
uninitiated a certain amount of mystery,
not to say necromancy overshadows
the management of bees, and the
dread of the stings hangs like a dark
cloud over the industry. It must be
confessed that bees do sting, also
that it hurts; however you can get
used to it. Some people have an
idea that bees get to know the person
who works with them, but this is
doubtful; at any rate my bees have
never learned any particular regard
for me, though I have learned when
and how to work with them. We
hear of people whom the bees will
not sting, but experience has failed
to make me personally acquainted
with any. The gifted ones seem to
belong largely to a generation that
is passing away. So, while not doubt-
ing the truth of this at all, it would
hardly be advisable to lay much stress
on immunity. With a veil to protect
the face and reasonable care in dress-
ing, the bee-stings need be no very

great menace, though an occasional
expletive of a doubtful nature might
be pardonable in extreme cases.

Now, the difficulty of the stings
disposed of, there still remain the
swarms. "Do you have the swarms
yourself?" is a question that is often
asked. Why, of course, else half the
fun of bee-keeping would be lost,
but by proper management and giving
plenty of room, swarming can usually
be kept to a minimum. If there
are no high trees, swarming is not
a very formidable affair anyway, but
if there is an old orchard near it some-
times takes a good deal of manoeuvring
to locate the ladder within working
distance of the swarm, and a good-
natured man is exceedingly useful at
this point in the operations. Your
ladder safely located, there is a certain
exhilaration in going up into the tree
tops and bringing down your booty.

Have you heard the mad vibration
Of a myriad wings in air,
Which tells you very clearly
That a swarm is surely there?
In a high, old orchard tree
Seen it cluster, rich and brown?
Have you climbed a wobbly ladder
And brought it safely down?

But an undue amount of swarming
means a depleted honey crop, so
you learn the part of wisdom and
endeavor to keep the swarming down
as much as possible. It is the ambition
of many beekeepers to produce a non-
swarming strain of bees, but so far
they have not succeeded.

Now a word for the delights of
bee-keeping, and here the pen might
indeed run away,—the joy of peeping
into the hive in the spring and seeing
the bees boil up over the frames,
to see them coming in laden with
pollen from the willow and maple,
to watch the combs whiten as the
glistening nectar is brought in, to taste
the first fresh honey with the fragrance
of the blossoms still in it, and finally
to pack them away securely for the
winter! However it isn't all delight
by any means. There are times in
the spring when the bees do not boil
up over the frames because they are
lying lifeless in the hive; there are
seasons when the blossoms almost
fail to secrete nectar; and when feeding
time comes in the fall you have perhaps
to spend a larger part of the season's
profits in sugar, or if it is very bad
maybe last year's profits, or if it
is worse still next year's profits, to
tide them over the winter. But
no matter what the discouragements
may be, and the beekeeper usually
meets with plenty, nothing can rob
you of the days spent in the open
air, the joy of the sun and the wind,
the memory of the bees in the
blossoms and the close communion
that comes from walking hand in
hand with nature.

So far the all-important questions
"How much money could a girl hope
to make from bees? And how much
would it cost her to start?" have
been left unanswered. To the latter
question, unless the girl falls heir to
the bees in some way the initial expense
is considerable. A fully equipped hive
with honey super costs \$5.00 from
the factory and then you have to
get your bees besides, though there
are cases in which these are accommodat-
ing enough to come to you. If not they
can be bought by the pound from
various dealers, though one would
not recommend this as a means
of starting. Bees in the hive can
ordinarily be bought at from \$5 to
\$10 per hive; no set price can be given
as the market is limited and some-
times bees can be picked up for a
song. However, if you are buying
from a dealer the price will be close

to \$10 for a hive of bees in the spring,
which is the best time to buy as then
you run no danger of winter loss and
have a reasonable chance to secure
some honey the first year, which is
a great encouragement. If you are
going into bees to any extent you
will also need an extractor. A small
hand machine suitable for from 10
to 25 colonies can be had for about
\$12.00. The expense of an extractor
can be avoided by producing only
comb honey, but unless you are situated
where you have a good market this
is not profitable. Moreover we often
have times when bees will work freely
on the large extracting combs while
they positively refuse to do anything
on sections; the flow must be good
and the colony strong before they
will work on these. There are in-
numerable other expenses into which
you will no doubt be tempted; how-
ever once you have the fever you
will make the expenditure willingly
enough.

Now for the profits: These will
depend on the girl, the location, and
the weatherman. The girl who suc-
ceeds must be willing to put her
heart into her work and attend to
her bees when they require attention.
Ordinarily they work along so un-
obtrusively that there is much danger of
neglecting them, and at the critical
time neglect means the difference
between success and failure. You must
learn to know your bees and their
needs. We had a girl living near here
who used to average \$100 per year
from 10 to 15 colonies, but then
she had no expense for equipment,
her father having been a beekeeper be-
fore her. Nineteen fourteen and fifteen
were off years for the beekeepers
in this district and practically nothing
was made, but it is unusual to have
two such poor years in succession,
and we hope not to have them re-
peated for some time. The season
just ended was a record one; indeed
had it been a failure, as at one time it
promised, we should have completely
lost heart in the bees. In a good
alsike clover district the profits will
be much greater than where little clover
is grown; where there is buckwheat,
while the quality of the honey may
not be so good, there is ordinarily
little expense in feeding for winter,
as the buckwheat usually gives a good
fall flow. Basswood is a precarious
yielder and now so few of the trees
remain that it is only locally that
it can be counted on to any extent.
The main honey harvest is usually of
short duration and if unfavorable weather
is encountered—as too much wet,
continued drought, too cold or windy
—the blossoms will not secrete the
nectar; but under ideal weather con-
ditions it is unbelievable what quanti-
ties of nectar a single colony will bring in.
This last year it was nothing unusual
for a single colony to store from 12
to 15 lbs. of nectar in a day. Of
course this would be evaporated
considerably before it became ripened
honey. To say definitely what can
be made from bees is impossible and
for the first few years after starting
a goodly part of the profits will have
to go into equipment.

As to bees offering a solution to the
economic problems of the farm girl,
this is uncertain. If she is a lover
of the out-of-doors and not afraid
of a little hard work it may do so;
however, it is usually a desire for
change of environment as well as
for money of her own that tempts
the girl away, and the bees will not
provide the former unless she is able
to enter zestfully into the work, and
so discover a newer and brighter
horizon as she follows the flight
of her bees in their search for the
hidden sweetness of the flowers.