

vantage; that an excessively hot or an extremely cold season is a favorable one; that bees will do well in a season of severe drought or great humidity, or with little sunshine to enliven them. The point is not alone the abundance of honey to be collected, but the condition and inclination of the bees to gather it. Bees prefer to be undisturbed, require harmony in the hive, and a favorable condition of the atmosphere. There are many other things that have an influence on bees, so that we see that it is not alone good pasturage that is required. However much honey there is to be gathered, on a wet day little is done. The same is the case with an extreme of cold, and to a certain extent with excessive heat; but not so much with the latter, as bees on the wing or in collecting honey feel less the solar influence. This brings me back to my point, the locality, the habitation of the bees, which is different from its range. The one has air and freedom; the other combines heat, if the hive is placed in the sun, and especially on a southern inclination with the wind warded off. Such a situation I have found generally to be unfavorable. I say generally, as there are cool and otherwise favorable seasons that are exceptions, in which colonies so situated have done well. But how can the favorable atmospheric conditions be secured? Nothing is easier. An orchard or a grove will do it. It needs only part shade and part sunshine. This tempers the rays of the sun, and secures the necessary moisture in a drought, and also leaves a chance for the escape of an excess of humidity. There is protection, and the encouragement which bees seem to derive from the presence of trees—perhaps from their long habit of association with them. Here there is no melting heat concentrated on the hive. It is comparatively cool inside and pleasant without. The best success I have ever known with bees has been in orchards and shaded door-yards, unless I except a few cases in the woods, where wild swarms turned out the most honey. Now there are some seasons in which the exposed hives will do as well as those protected by trees, and even better sometimes—where there is a lack of sun, for instance. But take the seasons on an average, and the difference is decidedly in favor of protection. I am persuaded also that an elevated range is, on the whole, better than a low place or valley.

A Poet on Bees.

The following quotation from the poems of the late Thomas Aird, editor of the *Dumfries Herald*, will show that the accomplished author was also a good apiarian:—

But let us see our bees,
Before we turn into our iced porch.
The little honey-folk, how wise are they!
Their polity, their industry, their work!
The help they take from man, and what they give
Of fragrant nectar, sea-green, clear, and sweet,
Invest them almost with the dignity
Of human neighborhood, without the intrusion.
Coming and going, what a hum and stir!
The dewy morn they love, the sunny day,
Softened with showery drops, ignoring the flowers,
In every vein and eye. But when the heavens
Grow cloudy, and the quick engendered blasts
Darken and whiten as they skip along,
The mountain tops, till all the nearer air,
Seized with the gloom, is turbid, dense, and cold,
Back from their far-off foraging, the bees,
In myriads, saddened into small black notes,
Strike through the troubled air, sharp past your head,
And almost hitting you, their lives of light
Conveying, thickening as they draw near home;
So much they fear the storms, so much they love
The safety of their straw-built citadels.

ITALIAN BEES IN BAD ODOR.—We have a report of a meeting of the German agriculturists of Ober Hess, conveying an unfavorable account of Italian bees. Herr Dorr, of Mettenheim, said he had kept Italian bees since 1857, and taking the utmost pains with them, he became possessed of many fine, pure colonies, and also some crosses in the first and second degrees. As a result of his experience, he would not give a straw for the foreign races. There seem to be two great drawbacks; one the foul brood and the other the strong propensity to swarm. With foul brood he had lost heavy colonies, and on the whole many large apiaries have gone entirely to ruin from these causes. Some who started with 20 to 30 stocks have not now an ounce of honey. He acknowledged, however, that half-breeds are now doing well, and he thinks that if the money expended on Italian and other bees had been devoted to improving such native stocks as had distinguished themselves, a great progress would have been made. Many bee-keepers in this country as well have become disgusted with their experience with the Italians, and especially in their purchases from persons who ought to be above deceit and sharp practice; and it looks now as though there would be a decided reaction against Italian bee culture.—*N. Y. Tribune*.

Poetry.

Song of the Flail.

In the autumn, when the hollows
All are filled with flying leaves,
And the colonies of swallows
Quit the quaintly stuccoed eaves,
And a silver mantle glistens
Over all the misty vale,
Sits the little wife and listens
To the beating of the flail,
To the pounding of the flail—
By her cradle sits and listens
To the flapping of the flail.

The bright summer days are over,
And her eye no longer sees
The red bloom upon the clover,
The deep green upon the trees,
Hushed the songs of finch and robin,
With the whistle of the quail;
But she hears the mellow throbbing
Of the thunder of the flail,
The low thunder of the flail—
Through the amber air the throbbing
And reverberating flail.

In the barn the stout young threshers
Stooping stands with rolled-up sleeves,
Beating out his golden treasure
From the ripped and rustling sheaves;
Oh, was ever knight in armor—
Warrior all in shining mail—
Half so handsome as her farmer
As he plies the flying flail?
As he wields the flashing flail?
The bare-throated, brown young farmer,
As he swings the sounding flail?

All the hopes that saw the sowing,
All the sweet desire of gain,
All the joy that watched the growing
And the yellowing of the grain,
And the love that went to woo her,
And the faith that shall not fail—
All are speaking softly to her
In the pulses of the flail,
Of the palpitating flail—
Past and future whisper to her
In the music of the flail.

In its crib their babe is sleeping,
And the sunshine from the door
All the afternoon is creeping
Slowly round upon the floor;
And the shadows soon will darken,
And the daylight soon must pale,
When the wife no more shall hearken
To the tramping of the flail,
To the dancing of the flail—
When her heart no more shall hearken
To the footfall of the flail.

And the babe shall grow and strengthen,
Be a maiden, be a wife,
While the moving shadows lengthen
Round the dial of their life;
Theirs the trust of friend and neighbor,
And an age serene and hale,
When machines shall do the labor
Of the strong arm and the flail,
Of the stout heart and the flail—
Great machines perform the labor
Of the good old fashioned flail.

But when, blessed among women,
And when, honored among men,
They look round them, can the brimming
Of their utmost wishes then
Give them happiness complete?
And can ease and wealth avail
To make any music sweeter
Than the pounding of the flail?
Oh, the sounding of the flail!—
Never music can be sweeter
Than the music of the flail!

Miscellaneous.

Sparrows on a Picnic.

A Question for Scientists.

Whoever might have happened to pass through the Common and the Public Garden in Boston—and probably the same was true of other city squares—on Sunday afternoon, between three and four o'clock, would have noticed that the "sparrows were all missing." Not a sight of them was to be seen, not a sound of them was to be heard. The style of their habitations indicating strong religious proclivities, might have prompted the suggestion that they had gone to meeting. But that they never do in the afternoon. Besides, the liberal churches of the Free Religious Association, for which they are known to have a preference, were not then holding services. The preaching in Park Street is sometimes after their taste, but their instincts lead them to avoid all associations with a sportsman. They might, from their love of ablutions, have been supposed to be in attendance at the Tremont Temple, but again, we

have to remember that ablution is with them a morning exercise. Where, then, could they be?

The mystery would have been solved for any one who about that time had crossed Dartmouth Street bridge at the railroad tracks. There he would have seen the sparrows, seemingly formed into two distinct flocks, in numbers which it would have been impossible to count. They were evidently very happy and on pleasant terms with each other. At intervals they would rest in long lines and groups, well crowded, on the top and the trimmings of the neighboring fences. Then they would rise with one consent and seek the tall, rank, withered weeds, which have been growing so luxuriantly in that particular spot. These are now about to shed a full crop of ripened seed. This was the attraction. The feast was an abundant one. The sparrows all stood on their good behavior. There was no pecking, except at seed. Speeches and congratulations were heartily exchanged, and so many seemed to speak at once that the lookers-on might have inferred that only one sex was represented there. An Irishman who was watching the scene from the bridge suggested that the sparrows were waiting to take the Sunday evening train for the south, and were laying in a substantial lunch. Before the first evening gloom gathered the birds had all gone back to their respective homes.

Now will some one, starting with Professor Tyndall's backward vision of the promise and potency of every form and manifestation of life in matter, be so kind as to trace out for us the workings of that prompting or faculty or guidance which led those happy little creatures together in two flocks, evidently comprised of two cliques or social circles, to go after that sumptuous repast? Did one venturesome stroller happen to discover it and summon his fellows? Or did some subtle odor from the seed get wafted up to the common and garden? But the wind was in the opposite direction.—*Boston Transcript*.

French Eggs.

An impression prevails in some quarters, says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, that by dipping a hen in a pail of water and then chasing her round the poultry yard with a stick, she will be induced on emergencies to lay two eggs a day. Consul Hotham, on the other hand, in his commercial report on Calais for last year, lately printed, expresses his opinion that the whole secret of the liberality of egg-laying displayed by French hens lies in the quality of the soil of those districts in which hens are renowned for their laying qualities. Attempts have, he says, been not unfrequently made to introduce French poultry into England, under the impression that with proper care and management these fowls may become a fair source of profit—so far, at least, as eggs are concerned. The French hen, however, removed from her native land, does not, as a rule, behave herself with that productive alacrity which distinguishes her in many, though not in all, parts of France. This is accounted for by the fact that in the neighborhood of Calais, as well as near Boulogne, there exists a marked quantity of silex in the soil, highly favorable for egg-laying purposes, and when the fowls are removed from this particular soil there is a marked diminution in their laying propensities. At Amiens, again, this same quality of soil is found, and the poultry from that district are remarkable for their laying qualities; they are indeed perhaps the most celebrated layers in France. If, therefore, the same breed lay better in one part of France than another—as, for instance, the fowls in the neighborhood of Calais—it is not unreasonable to suppose that the change of soil is the principal cause of attempts having hitherto failed to transplant French poultry into England for commercial purposes. Otherwise, as Consul Hotham points out, it surely would be worth our while in this country to turn our attention seriously to the subject instead of importing hundreds of millions of eggs yearly from France. The reason sometimes given of our climate not being suitable for poultry is more fanciful than real, for there are districts in the south of England which, without a doubt, might compare favorably with the north coast of France, and as to the expense of keeping poultry, the French egg-dealers hardly feed them at all, but let the fowls run about and pick up what they please in the fields and hedgerows. The difference in the quality of the soil might possibly, Consul Hotham suggests, be made up to the French fowls in England by artificial means.

By PLANTING several Limberger cheeses about his potato patch, a farmer in Linn County, Ia., drove off all the potato bugs, while his neighbors suffered severely from their ravages.