

## The Apiary.

### Caprices of Bees.

It is a peculiarity of bees that they will suffer someone to handle them with impunity. Wildman was a man who seems to have had unusual attraction for them, or command over them, as he termed it, though it is not easy to comprehend how a man could have command over four or five thousand insects. On one occasion he paid a visit to Dr. Templeton, the then secretary of the society for the encouragement of arts, to prove to him how completely bees submitted to his influence. He was brought to the city in a sedan chair, and it is presumed, into the doctor's room, for when he presented himself his head and face were covered with bees, and a huge cluster of them hung down like a beard from his chin. Notwithstanding this novel appendage, he conversed with the ladies and gentlemen who were present for a considerable length of time without disturbing the insects, and finally dismissed them to the hive, without anybody being stung. The fame of his performance having reached Lord Spencer, he invited him to Wimbledon to meet a large party of his friends. The countess had provided three stocks for the occasion. He first took one of the hives, and emptied the living occupants into his hat to show it was not necessary to destroy the bees in order to deprive them of their honey. He next presented himself with a colony hanging about his head and from his chin, and then stepping out of a window on the lawn, where he had directed a table covered with a clean cloth to be placed, he put them back into the hive. He then made them come back again and swarm in the air, after which he caused them to settle on the table, and from thence he took them up by the handfuls and poured them out of his hands as if they had no more feeling than pebbles, and finally concluded this portion of the entertainment by causing them to re-enter their hives. His lordship was too unwell to be present at these experiments, so late in the afternoon he was taken into his lordship's room, with all the three stocks hanging about him at the same time, one on his head, one on his breast, and the other from his arm, from which place he afterwards transferred them to his head and face so he was quite blinded, and was led in this condition to the lawn in front of his lordship's window. He next requested that a horse might be brought around, which was done, the horse having first been well clothed to guard against accident. First taking the bees out of his eyes that he might see what he was about, he mounted the horse with the bees hanging about him, and rode backwards and forwards repeatedly until the company had seen enough of his performance, when he dismounted and placed the bees on the table, from which he dismissed them to their respective hives. It is worthy of remark that, though there were a great many persons present on this occasion, yet nobody was stung. It is in reality impossible to explain why they should favour one individual more than another, but they certainly do so. It is related of a Duchess of Rutland that a swarm followed her all the way from the country to a house in Berkeley Square, where they were hived. Accident has sometimes led to what wisdom did not design. A woman named Bonnet, living near Birmingham, was beating a frying-pan with a key, to keep the swarm from going away, when they all at once settled upon her head, neck and shoulders. Luckily for her she was a woman of nerve, and instead of making efforts to shake them off, which would probably have caused her to be stung to death, she kept quiet, notwithstanding an occasional sting from bees which had crawled underneath her clothes, and which were probably irritated from being unable to get out. When evening came they were hived in the usual way.—*All the Year Round*.

**BEES AND HONEY.**—The agricultural population cannot be too strongly impressed with the expediency of keeping bees. In many parts of Russia the peasants have each 400 or 500 beehives, and make more profit of their bees than of corn; and, in Spain, the number of hives is incredible; a single parish priest, I was informed, possessed 5000. Honey possesses astonishing restorative power; at the point of death, when all stimulants and tonics fail, a teaspoonful or two, will, if given every hour, rally and save the patient's life. "My son, eat thou honey, because it is good, and the honey-comb which is sweet to thy taste."—Prov. xxiv. 13. In a recent communication to "The Times' Bee Masters," I have advised a trial of it in hydrophobia, in its concrete state, every hour, for relieving the constriction of the throat and abdomen, present in this most formidable disease.—*JAMES BROCK, in Scottish Farmer*.



## Chess & Rye: The Transmutation Theory.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER.

SIR,—As I know that new facts upon any agricultural question are generally acceptable, I send you one which is new, at least, to me. Last fall I sowed a piece of rye for spring feed, the first I ever sowed in my life, and as I have repeatedly heard the assertion that if you sow no fall wheat you will never have chess, I was curious to see whether there would be any among the rye. I observed this spring, that there was one spot, just the very place for it, and I felt that if there should be no chess upon that spot, I should be half inclined to become a proselyte to the transmutation theory, and to the idea that it is only wheat that will turn to chess. I cut my rye the third and fifth of June for fodder, at that time there was no chess headed out, but I noticed that there was plenty just ready to head out, and now June the 21st the rye has again headed out, and so has the chess. As I had commenced to plough the land, I sent for a neighbour (a firm believer in the transmutation doctrine) to witness the fact before I should plough it in. He could not dispute the existence of the chess, but he asked, "Does it come from the rye?" I replied, "That is the very question we want settled, in the case of chess among wheat, and I have as strong a reason to answer in the affirmative as you have with your wheat. But in both cases I should be inclined to answer in the negative." I had peas on the same land last year, and it is four years since there was fall wheat upon it, and then there was not half so much chess as there is this year among the rye. I can only account, in one of two ways, for the existence of chess upon that particular spot. Either both wheat and rye will, under favourable circumstances, turn to chess, or, it comes like any other weed, to fill up where the grain has been partially killed out. The last I think the easiest way of getting out of the difficulty. For if we grant that both wheat and rye may degenerate, it would be strange indeed if they should both produce the same thing, and we should be more perplexed than ever. I should like to see wheat or rye turn to chess in soil that has been boiled for an hour or two.

Yarmouth, Elgin Co., JONATHAN GLOVER.  
June 21st, 1865.

## A Plea for the Rook.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR,—In your issue of 1st May I noticed with much pleasure a communication on the subject of "Insect Destruction and Bird Preservation." It is very satisfactory to see that both sections of the Province agree in attributing the increase of grubs, flies, &c., to the wanton destruction of small birds; since, as we agree in the premises, we may perhaps arrive at similar conclusions. I cannot, however, agree in the opinion expressed, that legislation is useless, for, if enforced, the statute of 1861 will, in many districts, be very serviceable. Here it has already stopped the open sale in our markets of small birds, in cages, and thus the main object of those who trapped has been defeated; and, when it is considered how few of the captives survive long enough to reach a market, this point is more important than it may at first seem. It is a great pity that so few persons can be found willing to assist in enforcing the game laws in Canada, because the only object sought by our legislators is to give protection during the breeding season. Every one who has given attention to this subject knows how greatly such protection is needed. Thousands of wild fowl are destroyed every spring, in both sections of the Province, just when the breeding season is commencing. Other kinds of birds suffer largely also. The Jewish law\* protects the dam, although the taking of eggs and young birds does not seem to have been prohibited.

In the letter above referred to, your contributor goes on to remark that the scarcity of small birds "is entirely attributable to our common black crow," whose numbers have also largely increased among "us, and which is quite a different bird to the rook of the old country. The crow here is entirely carnivorous." Now, I should like, as Mr. Midshipman Easy says, to argue that point. The common crow of Canada should not, I think, be too hastily confounded with the carrion crow of the old country. In the United Kingdom there are the rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), the carrion crow (*Corvus corone*), the hooded, or Royston crow (*Corvus cornix*), besides the raven (*Corvus corax*), and Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*). In the Northern United States and Canadas we have the raven, the common crow (*Corvus Americanus*), and, on the coast, the fish crow (*Corvus ossifragus*). Of the above, the carrion crow and the hooded, grey, or Royston crow, are well known to all sportsmen in the old country to be very destructive to game, and are, consequently, shot and trapped whenever and wherever it can be done. But the common crow of the Northern States and Canadas is held by Audubon, no mean authority, to be a species different from the carrion crow of Europe, and has, accordingly, been named *Corvus Americanus*. Audubon's opinion is supported by another writer on American ornithology, who says "it seems a species more intermediate between the common rook *C. frugilegus* and *C. corone*; their gregarious habits and feeding so much on grain are quite at variance with the characteristics of the carrion crow."

Now, the rook is not always able to resist the temptation to suck a few eggs (pheasants' or partridges' chiefly), if we may give credence to the statements of several well-known sportsmen of Britain; do not, therefore, be too ready to condemn my glossy-coated friend, for though somewhat noisy, it may be even indifferent honest. He has many good qualities, and, as the writer just quoted says, in speaking of the farmer's wrath when his grain is felled, "the myriads of worms, moles, mice, caterpillars, grubs, and beetles which he has destroyed" are altogether overlooked on these occasions."

CORACOPHILUS.

Quebec, June 27th, 1865.

\*DECE, chap. 22, verses 6 and 7

## Imported Wheat.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER

SIR,—You published a communication from me last year (See CANADA FARMER, April 1, 1864), wherein I set forth the advantage of importing seed from abroad, and more particularly of getting it from certain districts in Central Europe. Acting on my own suggestion, I procured five different kinds of wheat from Switzerland, three of them being winter wheat and two spring wheat—the total quantity being less than half a peck. The winter wheat was sown at the same time and on land adjoining Soules wheat. There was little difference to be remarked between them till the snow cleared off in the spring, when the Soules wheat was found to be much winter-killed, whilst the other was full of life, not a plant having suffered. In a few days both will be ready for the reaper. The Soules wheat contains about a tenth part of smut, whilst the other is entirely free from any appearance of it. Last year my crop of Soules wheat was half chess. I have sent to Switzerland for three bushels of winter-wheat for fall sowing, and shall continue from time to time to import seed, as I am convinced that it is the only way to ensure a crop. Will not our government set about getting seed? The loss of Canada from the present defective system of sowing worn out seed is enormous, and, if persisted in, will work ruin to many a farmer.

G. RICHARDSON.

Arva, Middlesex, July 7, 1865.

**THE DRAINAGE PRIZE SCHEME.**—"Edwin Brown," Trafalgar, Co. Halton, recommends the prize scheme proposed by Mr. Osborne, in our issue of June 1st, to the careful consideration of farmers. At the same time he is of opinion that a 2-inch tile is sufficiently large. His dollar, however, is ready at any time to aid in forming the fund. He extends Mr. Osborne's proposal by the following spirited and generous offer of his own:—"If twenty farmers will subscribe one dollar each, I will give ten more, to be awarded at the County Show held at Milton in 1866, to the farmer who will put in the greatest extent of tile drains in the year ending September 1st, 1866, the tile to be not less than 2-inch bore, nor the drains less than 30 inches deep; to be open for competition to all farmers in the County of Halton."