

The Perfect Day.

God made a day of blue and gold,
Sweet as a violet,
As merry as a marigold;
It may be shining yet
In some blest dale, some dreamy dell
Among the heavenly hills,
Where, here and there, the asphodel
Is flicked by daffodils
And gentians, flowers that twinkled on
The fields our childhood knew,
Too lovely for oblivion,
Fed with immortal dew.

That summer day, all murmurous
With laughter of old mirth,
How tenderly 'twould comfort us,
Still homesick for the earth;
With what dear touch 'twould fold us in,
As to a mother's knee,
From those strange spaces crystalline of
vast-eternity.
A day God saw with smiling eyes,
The summer's coronet!
In His far cycles of surprise
It may be shining yet.
—Katharine Lee Bates, in "Suburban
Life."

A Prayer.

"O Thou that makest wars to cease in
all the world,
In accordance with Thine ancient name,
we beseech Thee,
Make war and tumult now to cease.
From the murmur and the subtlety of
suspicion with which we vex one
another
Give us rest.
Make a new beginning,
And mingle again the kindred of the
nations in the alchemy of Love.
And with some finer essence of fore-
bearance and forgiveness
Temper our mind.
For there shall be a new heaven and a
new earth,
And men shall not remember the former
ones,
Nor shall they so much as come to
mind,
But joy and gladness shall they find
therein."
—Prof. Alex. Nairne, (Adapted from
Aristophanes.)

Browsings Among The Books.

THE PASTORAL BEES.
(From Locusts and Wild Honey, By
John Burroughs.)

The honey-bee goes forth from the hive
in spring like the dove from Noah's ark,
and it is not till after many days that
she brings back the olive leaf, which in
this case is a pellet of golden pollen up-
on each hip, usually obtained from the
alder or swamp willow. In a country
where maple sugar is made the bees get
their first taste of sweet from the sap
as it flows from the spiles, or as it
dries and is condensed upon the sides of
the buckets. They will sometimes, in
their eagerness, come about the boiling
place and be overwhelmed by the steam
and the smoke. But bees appear to be
more eager for bread in the spring than
for honey; their supply of this article,
perhaps, does not keep as well as their
stores of the latter; hence, fresh bread,
in the shape of new pollen, is diligently
sought for. My bees get their first sup-
plies from the catkins of the willows.
How quickly they find them out. If but
one catkin opens anywhere within range
a bee is on hand that very hour to rifle
it, and it is a most pleasing experience
to stand near the hive some mild April
day and see them come pouring in with
their little baskets packed with this first
fruitage of the spring. They will have
new bread now, they have been to mill

in good earnest; see their dusty coats,
and the golden grist they bring home
with them.

When a bee brings pollen into the
hive, he advances to the cell in which it
is to be deposited and kicks it off as
one might his overalls or rubber boots,
making one foot help the other; then he
walks off without ever looking behind
him; another bee, one of the indoor
hands, comes along and rams it down
with his head, and packs it into the cell
as the dairymaid packs butter into a
firkin.

The first spring wild flowers, whose
shy faces among the dry leaves and
rocks are so welcome, yield no honey.
The anemone, the hepatica, the blood-
root, the arbutus, the numerous violets,
the spring beauty, the corydalis, etc.,
woo all lovers of nature, but do not
woo the honey-loving bee. It requires
more sun and warmth to develop the
saccharine element, and the beauty of
these pale striplings of the woods and
groves is their sole and sufficient excuse
for being. The arbutus, lying low and
keeping green all winter, attains to per-
fume, but not to honey.

The first honey is perhaps obtained
from the flowers of the red maple and
the golden willow. The latter sends
forth a wild delicious perfume. The
sugar-maple blooms a little later, and
from its silken tassels a rich nectar is
gathered. My bees will not label these
different varieties for me as I really
wish they would. Honey from the
maple, a tree so clean and wholesome,
and full of such virtues every way,
would be something to put one's tongue
to. Or that from the blossoms of the
apple, the peach, the cherry, the quince,
the currant—one would like a card of
each of these varieties to note their
peculiar qualities. The apple blossom
is very important to the bees. A single
swarm has been known to gain twenty
pounds in weight during its continuance.
Bees love the ripened fruit, too, and in
August and September will suck them-
selves tipsy upon varieties like the sops
of wine.

flower. A field of these berries in June
sends forth a continuous murmur, like
that of an enormous hive. The honey
is not so white as that obtained from
clover, but it is easier gathered; it is
in shallow cups, while that of the clover
is in deep tubes. The bees are up and
at it before sunrise, and it takes a brisk
shower to drive them in. But the
clover blooms later and blooms every-
where, and is the staple source of sup-
ply of the finest quality of honey. The
red clover yields up its stores only to
the longer proboscis of the bumble-bee,
else the bee pasturage of our agricul-
tural districts would be unequalled. I
do not know from what the famous
honey of Chamouni in the Alps is made,
but it can hardly surpass our best
products. The snow-white honey of
Anatolia in Asiatic Turkey, which is
regularly sent to Constantinople for the
use of the grand seignor and the ladies
of his seraglio, is obtained from the cot-
ton plant, which makes me think that
the white clover does not flourish there.
The white clover is indigenous with us;
its seeds seem latent in the ground, and
the application of certain stimulants to
the soil, like wood ashes, causes them
to germinate and spring up.

The rose, with all its beauty and per-
fume, yields no honey to the bee, unless
the wild species be sought by the
bumble-bee.

Among the humbler plants let me not
forget the dandelion that so early dots
the sunny slopes, and upon which the
bee languidly grazes, wallowing to the
knees in the golden but not over-succu-
lent pasturage. From the blooming rye
and wheat the bee gathers pollen, also
from the obscure blossoms of Indian
corn. Among weeds, catnip is the great
favorite. It lasts nearly the whole sea-
son, and yields richly. It could, no
doubt, be profitably cultivated in some
districts, and catnip honey would be a
novelty in the market. It would prob-
ably partake of the aromatic properties
of the plant from which it was derived.

Among your stores of honey gathered
before midsummer you may chance upon

It is a homely old stanza current
among bee folk that:

"A swarm of bees in May
Is worth a load of hay;
A swarm of bees in June
Is worth a silver spoon;
But a swarm in July
Is not worth a fly."

A swarm in May is indeed a treasure;
it is, like an April baby, sure to thrive,
and will very likely itself send out a
swarm a month or two later; but a
swarm in July is not to be despised; it
will store no clover or linden honey for
the "grand seignor and his ladies of his
seraglio," but plenty of the rank and
wholesome poor man's nectar, the sun-
tanned product of the plebeian buckwheat.
Buckwheat honey is the black sheep
in the white flock, but there is spirit
and character in it. It lays hold of the
taste in no equivocal manner, especially
when at a winter breakfast it meets its
fellow, the russet buckwheat cake.
Bread with honey to cover it from the
same stalk is double good fortune. It
is not black, either, but nut-brown, and
belongs to the same class of goods as
Herrick's

"Nut-brown mirth and russet wit."

How the bees love it, and they bring
the delicious odor of the blooming plant
to the hive with them, so that in the
moist warm twilight the apiary is re-
dolent with the perfume of buckwheat.

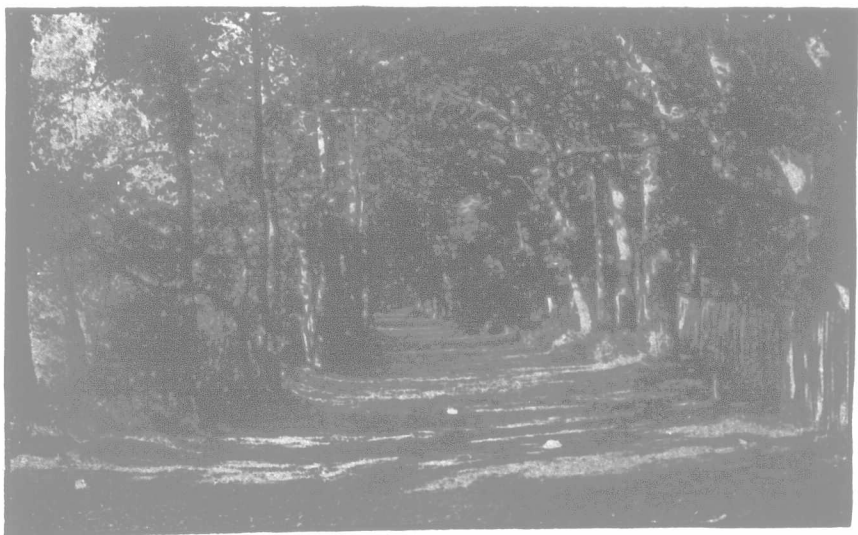
Yet evidently it is not the perfume of
any flower that attracts the bees; they
pay no attention to the sweet-scented
lilac, or to heliotrope, but work upon
sumach, silk weed and the hateful snap-
dragon. In September they are hard
pressed, and do well if they pick up
enough sweet to pay the running ex-
penses of their establishment. The
purple asters and the golden rod are
about all that are left to them.

A Letter from England.

Our old friend, H. A. B. sends us the
following interesting letter from a
correspondent in Hertfordshire, England,
who, with many others in his neighbor-
hood, has seldom been without soldier
guests ever since the beginning of the
war

Watford, Herts,
Friday, April 30th, 1915.

Dear Mrs. B.—The two soldiers we had
with us are now in Flanders right in the
thick of the fighting. The 7th City of
London Territorial regiment left here
early in March. The men did not have
much notice before leaving and our two
were disappointed, for they fully ex-
pected 5 days' leave before starting.
Watford was all astir when they left and
gave them a good send-off, although the
departure took place at midnight. Loo
and I were out, and it was 3 a.m. be-
fore we returned home. The next day
the town was very quiet, for, with the
exception of a few men left to settle
up at the various orderly rooms, all the
soldiers had gone, and as there were
some thousands of them you can im-
agine how they were missed. The shop-
keepers had never had such times. The
watchmakers and jewellers were the most
remarkably busy, making brooches and
pins of the buttons and badges of the
various regiments. One man told me
he had made some hundreds the week I
met him, and expected to be at work
night and day until the men left. Men
and women alike wore these pins—of
course, they were not the real buttons
in all cases or no soldier would have
any left, but would have had to go to
the front buttonless. There were only
a few days of quiet, and then more
soldiers began to arrive, and now the



The Gullett Woods, Watford, Eng.

The interval between the blooming of
the fruit trees and that of the clover
and raspberry is bridged over in many
localities by the honey-locust. What a
delightful summer murmur these trees
send forth at this season. I know noth-
ing about the quality of the honey, but
it ought to keep well. But when the
red raspberry blooms the fountains of
plenty are unsealed indeed; what a com-
plicity about the hives then. The
delicate white clover, which begins to
bloom about the same time is neglected;
even honey itself is passed by for this
modest, colorless, all but odorless

a card, or mayhap only a square inch
or two of comb, in which the liquid is
as transparent as water, of a delicious
quality, with a slight flavor of mint.
This is the product of the linden or
basswood, of all the trees in our
forest the one most beloved by the
bees. Melissa the goddess of honey, has
placed her seal upon this tree. The
wild swarms in the woods frequently
reap a choice harvest from it. I have
seen a mountainside thickly studded
with it, its straight, tall, smooth, light-
grey shaft carrying its deep-green crown
far aloft, like the tulip or maple.