

Of course there are principles which I such as keeping only hens at the heads of g away for winter in young bees, win-syrup, keeping the n Spring, etc.; but property, and a part th a little more sys-ess accomplish vastly amount of labor; on aves me with a mind Now you know every done anything with of management, and meet the various bee-are always very ready ne the advantages of thod. I, having au listen sympathetically at eventually, out of us systems so gener-shall evolve a perfect ve done so I shall be lk to you about "My ing bees." For the be content to tell you of bee-keeping, which a wider appeal, as a gonism, the pleasures to any particular sys-erent in the work.

ter I took a walk out e snow was piled high re was no sign of life in sight to stir the e-keeping. From the over to the hen-house scratching away con-as full of their con-if there is any sound ich is almost as good hum of the bees, es-are no bees to hear, he hens in winter; in e warm, new-laid eggs I was in love with ere was something of

February, 1912

interest for every day of the year. From the poultry house I passed to the stable. The air was warm and moist with the breath of feeding cattle; yonder were the young cattle munching away contentedly; here the homely cows with their copious udders; in the horse stable the man was putting on a few last touches with the brush preparatory to taking his team out—how proud he was of their strength and their intelligence! And as the spirit of it all entered into me it seemed that here indeed was something big enough to absorb the whole of a man's interest, and bee-keeping seemed a very poor business in comparison. But in a few days the weather changed. The sun shone out warmly and melted the snow from the entrances of the hives. Again the air was filled with the hum of bees. Soon it was warm enough to open up the hives and peep in to see if there were sufficient stores, and as the living brown mass boiled up warmly over the frames I knew that the bees have a subtle, compelling charm of their own which to those who have worked with them through the seasons, nothing else can equal; they might hold with a gossamer thread, but it had the strength of a grip of steel.

Perhaps one of the main charms of the bees is their remoteness from us; though we work with them and handle them, they remain practically indifferent to us, returning no affection for the care bestowed upon them, and under their swarming instinct, going back without regret to their primitive condition in the woods. Their world is a different world from ours, ruled over by different laws; as different as the fairyland of our childhood—and quite as enchanting. When we think of them elaborating the wax for their comb in their own bodies; their consummate skill in building it into lines of symmetrical beauty; the mathematical exactness of their angles, which we have tried to explain in a

hundred different ways, without in the least detracting from the wonder; the absolute subservience of every individual to the good of the whole; the wonderful and specialized economy of the hive; the tremendous sacrifice they make of garnered stores in swarming; the problem of sex worked out in queens and drones and workers. All so exact, so clearly defined, so obedient to law in comparison to our haphazard methods, that we are compelled to do reverence to them, even while bending them to the selfish purpose of getting a living.

And working with the bees has its influence on bee-keepers, tending, I think, to keep them pure and simple in heart, interested in many things, perhaps just a little crotchety but always enthusiastic, always delightful to meet. I think, being a woman, I have missed some of the whole-souled interest because I have not been able to rid myself entirely of my feminine house-keeping instincts. Hence, many a time the bees have been sacrificed to the house, of course to the loss of my pocket. The influence of the bees has made too of all bee-keepers a great brotherhood; it has given them a true freemasonry of spirit, and when bee-keeper meets bee-keeper it is as the meeting of old friends, and they always talk bees. We have at home one of our most successful bee-keepers, the first real bee-keeper I ever met; other men may keep more bees, make more money, but he will always remain to me my ideal bee-keeper, because nowhere will you find one whose heart is more wrapped up in the bees, or who, through the years has made more of a real success with them. I have gone out with him with a lantern to see how he did certain things, and Mr. Chalmers has told me that while staying there over night while on inspection work that Mr. McEwen was tapping at his door at five o'clock in the morning, telling him that he was now ready for a chat—of course