

COLOR AND BEES' TEMPER.

It is frequently claimed that bees have an antipathy to dark clothing and dark colors. They are said by some to detest garments according to their approach to a funeral shade, and many good housekeepers believe this. Lately saw it claimed that white leg-horn chickens and fowls could run about freely amongst the hives with perfect immunity; buff fowls got an occasional sting, but a dark chick was at once attacked on showing its black person. Following out the some reasoning, a black dog should pay a forfeit every time he came near the bees, and a light colored one should escape scot free. In reality the opposite is the case in one instance known to me. A white spaniel will not go within "miles" of the bees; a very dark terrier is always quite at home, shaggy though his coat is. In my observation bees make for the dog and not for the color.

I don't profess to be immune from stings, but they very rarely come my way, yet my garments are black or invariably of a dark hue. My veil is a piece of fine silk net, black as black can be, yet it never suffers; but if thrown loose over the head, as it generally is, it slips down off my cap, I know of one white spot near the back of the crown of the head that some bees seem to have a special fancy for. Also my wrists are white, and the garment reposing on them is generally of the same hue. Yet this is another favorite spot for the bees' favors. As I never wear gloves or gauntlets, they have full swing at times. A friend suggests that it may be the dark, and to them illimitable void further up which rises their ire, but a simple cause may be sought in the pressure brought to bear by the movement of the coat or shirt cuff. Whenever pressed, a bee invariably stings, whether

the pressure is brought about by black or white.

I note that the dark eye-brow is another favorite spot in which bees delight to leave their love tokens. That might give color to the contention that they hate black, but I fear that brown, red, or even white eye-brows would suffer alike. On second thoughts, too, a more substantial cause can be assigned for the partiality shown by bees for one's eyes. We wink without being conscious of it. The movement, however slight, does not escape the bees' vision, and so they take it as an insult—and a bee never forgives an insult. Try it!

My boots are always black, but even when I forget to be tender with bees which by any chance have been thrown down, they never to my knowledge make a dead set at the black object which may be unwittingly working destruction to numbers of them. Their treatment of fawn or tan, too, would be much the same.

Our editor, I presume, is generally clad in reverend black, so he should be able to say from experience whether bees in a temper are discriminating in regard to color, and if they show a preference for volding their vitriolic venom on robes of sable hue.

The height of evidence I am able to adduce is of a negative type. A further feature to one of an analytical mind is the question: "Do bees stop to think whether an object is black or white when it raises their ire?" That they do discriminate whether a thing is pervious or impervious, sensitive or insensible to their ire, I feel certain, but that they worry themselves over the particular shade of their master's shirt, or their mistress's stocking, as has been asserted, is more than I am prepared to admit without further proof, even although I may place myself in a small minority by taking such a stand.