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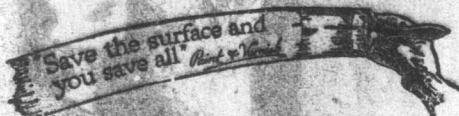
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The Man Who Wears a
Swarm of Bees in His Hat

"Just converse the bees of your good intentions, and they can be handled as safely as kittens"—such is the formula prescribed by E. H. Root, "the Ohio Bee King," who has astonished audiences all over the country by his success in training those fiery insects to make their stingers behave. Among important organizations before which he has appeared with his swarming pets, we learn, are the American Entomological Society, the California Horticultural and Bee Society, and the Chicago Bee Keepers' Association. Moreover he has used his honey-makers to illustrate lectures that he has delivered for fifteen years at Ohio State University, and recently made a triumphant Chautauqua tour with the busy little buzzers. Also Mr. Root is an acknowledged authority on bees and honey, we are told in an article by Eva H. Clark, and "in recognition of his services to the apian world has been made vice-president of the Apis Club of England." And he edits a magazine—Gleanings in Bee Culture. It is related that he "has washed his hands in hundreds of bees," and that "he has often put them nonchalantly in his mouth." Miss Clark adds, in the Philadelphia Public Ledger: "And all without incurring their enmity!" We read further:

Persons frequently criticize the bee exhibitions given by Root, saying he has his bees specially prepared or doped.

"I finally met the challenge one day," smiled Root, "by offering to handle the worst bees that could be found in the State. A bee-man was found who said that his bees the day before had 'let him up.' I demonstrated to the audience that I could handle even those with bare hands and face."

Just before a lecture given at Barberton, Ohio, it was announced that Root would give the Kiwanis Club, before which he spoke, a dollar for each time he was stung. A colony of very wild and vicious bees was brought in by a local man, and Root handled and tamed them.

"And the result?" I asked.

"I was not stung by the vicious bees at all," quietly returned Root. "I didn't lose a dollar."

"But how do you account for all the bees returning to you just when you wish?"

"Oh, that!" Root's eyes twinkled. "When the other bees fly into the air, the queen bee remains in the box. The bees fly around and start to swarm. When I see they are about ready to return to their container and to their queen, I simply wave my hand. However, to handle 5,000 bees before the footlights without a cage and without any one getting stung is in itself a trade, as you will find out if you try it."

Another stunt of Root's is to "feed" the bees. He makes them form in line like a lot of little pigs and they quickly lap up the syrup which he sets before them. They can consume half a pint in fifteen minutes. After the meal Root caused the bees to dance, a thing which they will do after feeding. "The dance," Root said, "is a joy signal to their fellows."

Only once, we are told, has the bee-master's confidence in his proteges been betrayed, and that was under unusual circumstances. As we read:

Some time ago he was lecturing at Cleveland, Ohio, and, following his usual custom, he asked that some one in the audience lend him a hat. "I did this," explained Root, "because some one would have been sure to think there was something tricky about the hat had I used my own for the stunt. There was something peculiar about the hat which was handed up to me, however, and I knew as soon as I saw it that I was in for it. For the hat was old and soiled and the inside was badly streaked with perspiration. However, I had to go through with it, so I put the hat full of bees on my head and no sooner was it on than I felt what was like a hundred little stings prick in my scalp. Bees are very cleanly little creatures and they were only resenting, in their own way, what we human beings would have disliked very much could we imagine ourselves in similar circumstances. They did not like the odor of the soiled hat. Never again have I used any one's hat but my own for that particular stunt."

During his lifetime study of bees and their habits, Root has learned that queen bees are rather like women of the human species in some respects. "For instance," he explained, "two queen bees do not get along peacefully in the same hive at the same time. Mother and daughter may, however, live together peacefully for some weeks, but mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, never. When two queens get to fighting they not only try to sting each other, but they will pull each other's hair in real woman fashion."

Bees as well as women, it appears, lay great stress on the little formalities of convention. It is seldom, according to Root, that a strange queen bee can be liberated in a queenless colony without being formally introduced.

Much like the splendor of Old World courts is the dignity of ceremony and pomp which attends the queen bee in her palace. For around her sits a group of worshipful worker bees, always facing the queen. These ladies-

In-waiting usually consist of the younger worker bees and their duty is many other interesting facts are cited by the bee king. A queen can lay her own weight of eggs in one day, says Root. She will lay in the first two months in the spring, from 300 to 1,000 eggs in a day; and in the next month, or just before the main honey flow, she may average 2,000 eggs, and on some days 3,000 eggs. Thus, strange as it may seem, a single queen bee can be the mother of 100,000 workers, or undeveloped females, in a hive. If the old bees did not die off at the age of a month or six weeks in the height of the honey flow, she might have twice that number.

The temperament and habits of bees, and the economic law under which the hive is governed, are then touched upon. We are told:

There are three kinds of bees in a hive—the worker bee, the queen, and the drone. The worker bees gather honey, nurse the young bees and do all of the housework around the hive. The only function of the queen is to lay the eggs and so produce new bees. Quite useless would be the drone, for he does no work at all, were it not for the fact that he mates with the queen. He brings in no honey, and so might be called a consumer and not a producer.

Bees realize that the drone is somewhat of a parasite, so they have adopted the policy of Capt. John Smith, who said, when some of his Jamestown colonists refused to do their share of the community work, "Those who do not work shall not eat." For after the main honey flow the drones, or male bees, are always killed off by the bees themselves, unless the hive is queenless or has an unmated queen.

Contrary to general opinion, the sweet water which the bees gather in flowers is not honey. It is called "nectar" by bee-keepers. Honey itself is the nectar of flowers gathered, evaporated and modified by the bees, Root told me. Nectar, or the sweet as it is found in the flowers, is chemically the same as cane-sugar; but when the bees store it in their combs, and seal it over, it is then real honey. It consists of what is known as invert sugar, or about equal parts of levulose and dextrose, which means that it is in a form so that it can be absorbed without change into the human system.

"Then," I remarked, "according to what you have just said, bees do not gather honey, they make it. What do you mean when you say that the bees evaporate and modify the collected nectar?"

"The transformation of nectar into honey is a most interesting process," replied Root. "When a bee returns laden with nectar it may rest for a while or roam about the hive for a bit. Finally, however, it deposits the nectar in a cell. When the afternoon draws to a close the bees have what is called a 'period of fanning'—that is, they spread themselves out over the comb and fan the air with their wings. This causes the air to circulate through the hive and so evaporation of the water in the nectar is secured. When the evaporation of the water content is accomplished, the heat created by the bodies of the bees cures or ripens the stored-up honey. Unless the bees plan to eat the honey at once, they then seal over the cells full of the sweet liquid."

Actual weighings, the "Bee King" declared, have shown that "it takes about 20,000 bees to bring a pound of nectar, which is about four times the bulk of honey."—Literary Digest.

Important to Housewives

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July 9, th,tf

All About Cement.

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Chalk and clay are needed chiefly to make this building material, and Great Britain has these in England. As a matter of fact, English cement has been for the past hundred years the best in the world.

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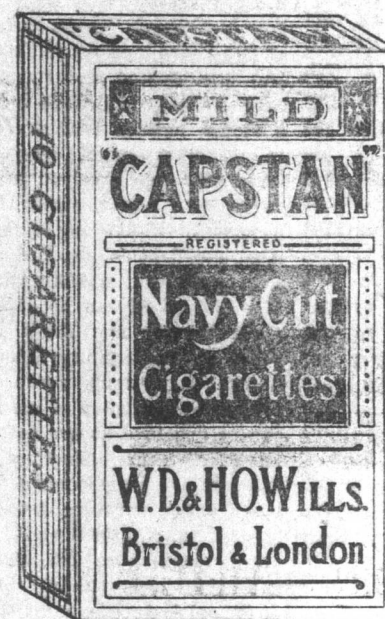
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Making the Python Eat

When kept in captivity, pythons often refuse food and go on a prolonged "hunger-strike," which frequently results in death.

To obviate this it is necessary to feed the big snakes by forcible means and a writer in the Wide World Magazine gives a very interesting description of how this is done.

"It is a very simple process," he says. "Our python was carried out to a sunlit grassy lawn. One man held the snake's tail, a second bestrided its middle, while a third gripped its head and forced open its jaws. Involuntarily it squinted in front and, taking a pound of meat, gently thrust it into the snake's capacious throat, and with a smooth, round stick, about a foot in length, pressed the meat into the reptile's gullet. It was now the second man's job to caress the meat and massage it a yard down the long road lane. No. 3 then took charge and carefully worked the lump down to the pocket where the stomach is located."

Household Notes

Stuff tomatoes with finely chopped nuts and buttered breadcrumbs and bake.

Lamb chops cooked en casserole make a nice luncheon dish. Serve water

with fruit salad, baked custard and coffee.

Try filling cream puffs with sweetened whipped cream, or fruit preserves.

Use camphor to remove fruit stains from linen, before dropping it into water.