

to work and make honey and money for us, and we wouldn't hoe 'em, nor milk 'em, nor weed 'em, nor churn 'em, nor nothing, but just let them set in the sun and work. One of the neighbors want to sell some, and we bought a dozen swarms and set 'em over there." Mr. McFinney indicated the place vaguely with his thumb. "A little book came with 'em that told how to work 'em."

"Well, yesterday my wife thought they'd been making honey for home consumption long enough, and said I must put in some honey boxes. I went to my son Melville—he was making a fish pole—and told him to put 'em in, but he said he was too busy to fool with bees, so I had to do it. I am afraid of bees and snakes. The book says to proceed boldly. I proceeded boldly and took off a cover, but the bees came out and I went away. The book said, if one were timid, to wear a veil and gloves, so I put on this rig; but it makes a man want to dodge when he sees a dozen just outside making for his eyes. The book said to blow a little smoke into the hive to quiet the bees; but the very first time I tried that the bees got as mad as the—as mad," concluded my McFinney mildly.

"They went for me on all sides. Luckily I remembered that the book said: 'If persistently assailed, retreat to the shade,' and I retreated to the shade. But I got a few boxes in. By and by my wife came out and said the way to manage the bees was not to be afraid of them. Some bees came out and argued with her, and she went back for a veil. We tried a few more and slapped them in boxes in a way that made the interesting and intelligent creatures swear like blue blazes, till pretty soon a hive swarmed out, and my wife said 'I must be getting back to my work.' I thought I would, too, for quite a number had taken up their quarters in my ear. My wife bragged that she put the boxes in any way. This morning I went out and found the corner on cornerwise and the bees just red hot and boiling over because the boxes were in bottom side up and one of the glasses was stove in. I told my wife that taking care of bees was nice pretty girl's work, and we'd leave it to Jenny when she got home from school."

Mr. McFinney paused.

"Have they swarmed any yet?" the reporter asked, sympathetically.

An ominous light gleamed in Mr. McFinney's eye. He had evidently been touched in a tender point, but he answered gently:

"Yes, they swarmed to-day. Yes, I think they swarmed this morning. I was hilling the corn when my wife blew the horn for me, and I

went down to the house. It was about 9 o'clock. My wife said that the bees were swarming, and she had a hive and a sheet and a brush and some sweetened water. Way up in the tiptop of an apple tree there were a lot of bees making an awful circus about a big black bunch that hung from a limb, and when I looked at I saw it was one crawling mass of bees. My wife said to go up a ladder and knock them into the basket and let it down. So when they had all settled I climbed up the ladder, but I thought it might soothe them to sprinkle some of the sweetened water on them, and when I came down I found that the puppy had drank it up and tipped over the hive and chewed up the sheet and hid the basket. Well, we got 'em all ready again, and then I went up and sprinkled the bees, and came down and got the basket and long handled egg beater.

"What!" said the reporter.

"It was a patent thing that we couldn't make work, and Mrs. McFinney thought I could poke them off the branch with it. I couldn't get near enough on the ladder, so I climbed up in the tree and held the basket under the swarm and scraped them into the basket! I don't believe the water had soothed them much; they hissed just like snakes when they fell into the basket, and my wife made me nervous. She kept telling me I was smashing them against the limb. Then I began to let the basket down, but it turned over in the air, and they all came out and flew most every way, but chiefly my way. They seemed to think it was all my fault. One 'gentle Italian worker' got under my veil and shut up my eye."

The reported had noticed the peculiar expression given to Mr. McFinney's face by the mishap.

"Pretty soon," he went on, "they all went back to the same place, and just exactly the same thing happened over again; only this time the whole swarm went for me and I tumbled out of the tree. I hit the hive as I came down, and hurt my shoulder some, and the sweetened water got all over my hair. My wife said she didn't see what was the idea in tipping the basket over every time. They flew into another tree this time, and we set up the hive, and I got up in the tree and sawed off the limb. It was a big limb up in the top again, and my wife was to steady it with a pitchfork as it fell. Well, she missed it, and the fork scraped off every blamed bee. They doubled up and turned all colors, they were so mad; but finally they flew off again, and we were pretty tired and had our dinner."

"After dinner I went out again and found