

Cyprus; Bees and Bee-keeping.

(Continued from last week.)

THE way led us through badly paved and narrow streets until at length we arrived at the house, which was in a miserable condition. Through a low gateway he led us to his garden where a profusion of lemon trees, orange trees, pomegranates, and others were planted in a disorderly way. In the midst of the garden he had arranged his hives in a pyramidal shape above each other, with stone slabs closing up both ends of the two or three foot cylinders. A big entrance-hole (big enough to let the death-head moths and hornets fall upon unprotected hives) was in the lower part of the slab. The bees were working actively on cucumber, vegetable marrow, and other flowers of the *cucurbitaceae*, especially the "squirting cucumber" (*Ecballium elaterium*) which yields bitter honey. This plant grows wild all over the East but seems to prefer ruined places. Ashes and crumbled building material seem to be just the right thing to make them thrive. The plant very much resembles the cucumber at a distance, with its small yellow flowers; but coming nearer you find the leaves very prickly, much rougher than garden cucumbers, and the fruit a tiny cucumber growing at an angle of 45 degrees on an upright stalk. When we boys used to run about the ruins of Zion and Jerusalem we used to have great fun touching one of the ripe fruits, and off they go on the next person, sending out the juice and seeds right into the face or some part near the direction the fruit points. This is one of nature's curious ways of propagating its kind by sending off the seed to a great distance. The cactus was also yielding some honey; but as too few hedges grow around Larnaca, and the cactus yields honey very sparingly, this source is equally a poor one. Thistles also, of the carduus tribe, grow round the town; and the best of all honey plants for summer was just beginning to come into bloom—the thyme—of which we met four donkey-loads being brought to town from the mountains for the oven. I felt very fidgety about it, although not living in the place; still, in Palestine they are doing the same thing, and robbing bees of their pasturage in the near future. Plenty of carob-trees grow all over Cyprus, and these carobs form an important article of export, while the flowers yield honey of a dark brown color. In places where cotton and hemp are cultivated, the bees also get a chance to gather some surplus; but cultivation or agriculture is carried on in the most primitive way. The island having been chosen as an

abode for the gods by the ancients, Jupiter named the mountains Olympus, and

Sweet Venus, born of ocean's creamy foam,
Chooses the sea-kissed Paphos as her home.

In fact, a temple dedicated to Venus was dug up near Paphos, and is supposed by archaeologists to be one of the oldest temples in the world—at least the Greek world.

Old Neptune calls up from their ocean bed
His favorite Nereids to the mountain's head;
Shows them the sacred land, and bids each say
Where on the thirsty soil her streams shall play.

But the beauty and fruitfulness of this island have gone, partly by the carelessness of its inhabitants, by the past government, and the teeth of 250,000 goats roaming about the island. The British Government has done a good deal to make the island in some distant future what it was

When Ceres, bounteous giver of the store,
With lavish horn gave ever more and more.

But the heavy taxes which the British government levies on the poor inhabitants weigh so much on them that it will take a generation before the island will begin to show, before better methods to cultivate the soil, and manuring, will have come into vogue, so that every farmer will have found the usefulness of the plowman's toil,

Wrestling from the fruitful womb of mother
Earth,

Heaping the garner and dispelling dearth.

Here, as in Malta, I could find no statistics about bees or honey. Although the government levies two pence on each hive, nothing could be found out positively. Only approximately could we find a few numbers.

Bee-keepers here depend on wild honey-plants. No clover or such plants grow here. As we have very long and dry summers, the scattering of honey-plant seeds would avail little or nothing on hard, uncultivated sun-scorched grounds. And, again, neither Cypriote nor Syrian nor Palestinian would trouble himself or move a finger in such work. Cyprus would yield just as nice and as much honey if some intelligent bee-keeper would go ahead and put up his apiary in such places as afford pasture enough; but, to be sure, I would not change another locality to live among a degraded race, such as the Cyprians, so long as there are a good deal better places to live in.

Going round the town, a candle manufacturer was busy manufacturing pure wax candles (mixed with 50 per cent. of ceresin) for the churches, with which the island is well provided,