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POPULAR AND ECONOMIC ENTOMOLOGY.

SOME CURIOUS OLD BELIEFS ABOUT INSECTS.

BY HARRY B. WEISS, NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

"Oft from the putrid gore of cattle slain
Bees have been bred A narrow place,
And for that use contracted, first they choose,
Then more contract it, in a narrower room,
Wall'd round, and covered with a low built roof,
And add four windows, of a slanting light
From the four winds. A bullock then is sought,
His horns just bending in their second year;
Him, much reluctant, with o'erpowering force,
They bind; his mouth and nostrils stop, and all
The avenues of respiration close:
And buffet him to death: his hide no wound
Receives; his battered entrails burst within,
Thus spent they leave him, and beneath his sides
Lay shreds of boughs, fresh lavender and thyme.
This, when soft zephyr's breeze first curls the wave,
And prattling swallows hang their nests on high.
Meanwhile the juices in the tender bones
Heated, ferment; and wondrous to behold,
Small animals in clusters, thick are seen,
Short of their legs at first; on filmy wings,
Humming at length they rise; and more and more
Fan the thin air; 't ll numberless as drops
Pour'd down in rain from summer clouds, they fly."

Such is the fabulous, poetic method given by Virgil in his *Georgics* for generating a swarm of bees. These erroneous ideas of ancient naturalists, philosophers and poets were not by any means confined to insects. For instance, Kircher, a learned man