

pharise his arguments and awaken the apathetic from their slumbers. A hive of bumble-bees had built their nest in the pulpit. A particularly hefty blow on the pulpit top brought forth results in the form of a horde of angry bees and of course these attacked the preacher. Giving vent to a distracting yell he cleared the pulpit at a bound and made for the exit. Those in the pews thought their pastor had suddenly gone insane, but when the bees began to widen the extent of their operations, the congregation, too, stood not on the order of their going, but went pell-mell.

That fine old Quaker poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, among other gems of verse left behind an exquisite little poem entitled, "Telling the Bees." This remarkable custom of "Telling the Bees" prevailed in the rural districts of New England in Whittier's days. The custom was brought from the Old Country. On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event and their hives dressed in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home.

In earlier days it was not unusual for a woodsman to find a "bee" tree in the winter—that is a tree where a colony of bees had made their home—and there was often much honey to be had from such trees. It was, of course, quite safe to harvest the honey as the bees would be in a dormant condition.