

gently but quickly opened the pane, and endeavoured to seize her. But as soon as the removal of the glass afforded room (while shut it was almost in contact with her back) and, before we could accomplish our purpose, they threw their bodies upon her to the number of at least a hundred, and formed a cone over her of such magnitude, that she could not be less than two inches distant from any part of the surface. We dispersed the mass with our finger, and got hold of her precious person, and kept looking at her for some minutes, before we restored the captive to her alarmed defenders. It is remarkable that this violence was not resented by them; though they coursed over our hands in scores, while we kept hold of their mistress, not one individual used its sting. The all-engrossing object was the queen.

"The mutual aversion of queens is a striking feature in the natural history of this insect. Their mutual enmity may be said to be an in-born disposition with them; for no sooner has the first of the race in a hive about to throw off a second swarm, escaped from her cradle, than she hurries away in search of her rivals, and exerts herself with the utmost eagerness to destroy them.

The workers, to the number of 10,000, 20,000, and even 30,000, constitute the great mass of the population, and on them devolve the whole labours of the establishment. Theirs is the office of searching for, and collecting the precious fluid, which not only furnishes their daily food, as well as that of their young, and the surplus of which is laid up for winter stores, but also the materials from which they extract their beautiful combs. In the little basket-shaped cavity of their hind legs, they bring home the pollen or ferineous dust of flowers kneaded by the help of the morning dew into tiny balls, which forms an important ingredient in the nourishment of the brood; and also the propolis or adhesive gum extracted from willows, &c., with which they attach their combs to the upper part and sides of the hive, and stop

every crevice that might admit the winter's cold.

"The natural term of the worker's existence does not extend, we think, beyond six or eight months. It is the opinion of Dr. Brevan, that all the bees brought into existence at the queen's great laying in spring, die before winter. But many never reach that period. Showers of rain, violent blasts of wind, sudden changes of atmosphere, destroy them in hundreds. In the clear cold mornings and evenings of autumn, their eagerness for foraging entices them abroad early and late; when, alighting on the ground, many are chilled and quickly perish. And, should they escape the blighting atmosphere at the close of autumn, a bright sunshine in a winter day, when the ground perhaps is covered with snow, brings them abroad in multitudes, and the half of them never return."

Many anecdotes might be given, illustrative of the peculiar sagacity of the bee. The following may serve to shew that something of this is to be found in a reptile which has never been noted for the possession of much instinct. "A resident of Puckington," says an English paper, "near Ilminster, hearing that his bees were more than commonly noisy and very busy, watched their proceedings, when he discovered that they were actively engaged in killing the drones and throwing them from the hive. His attention was presently directed to a still more extraordinary fact, for underneath the stool on which the hive rested, he observed a large toad eagerly devouring the drones as fast as they fell to the ground; but when two came together, the toad placed his paw upon one of them until he had eaten the other; and when any length of time elapsed before one fell to the ground, he would apparently hearken and look upwards, in eager anticipation of a further supply!"

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LIFE OF DR. JOHN ERSKINE.

[FOR THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.]

John Erskine was the son of the celebrated John Erskine of Carnock, Professor of Scots Law in the University of Edinburgh, and author of the Institutes of Scots Law, a work of great learning and high authority with the gentlemen of the legal profession. By his mother's side, he was connected with the family of Melvill, who, at an early period, espoused the cause of

Presbytery in Scotland,—and, as all the christian world knows, by the good hand of the Lord, Episcopacy fell before it, and the friends of Presbytery, from being a persecuted people, came to honour. The fourth Lord Melvill, grandfather to Mrs. Erskine, held a distinguished office under the government of King William, in 1690. Dr. Erskine was born in 1720