

## QUOTATION

### ON STUDYING THE INDIVIDUAL ORGANISM

This volume contains the record of various experiments made with ants, bees, and wasps during the past ten years. Other occupations and many interruptions, political and professional, have prevented me from making them so full and complete as I had hoped. My parliamentary duties, in particular, have absorbed most of my time just at the season of year when these insects can be most profitably studied. I have, therefore, whenever it seemed necessary, carefully recorded the month during which the observations were made; for the instincts and behaviour of ants, bees, and wasps are by no means the same throughout the year. My object has been not so much to describe the usual habits of these insects as to test their mental condition and powers of sense.

Although the observations of Huber, Forel, McCook, and others are no doubt perfectly trustworthy, there are a number of scattered stories about ants which are quite unworthy of credence; and there is also a large class in which, although the facts may be correctly recorded, the inferences drawn from them are very questionable. I have endeavoured, therefore, by actual experiments which any one may, and I hope others will, repeat and verify, to throw some light on these interesting questions.

*The principal point in which my mode of experimenting has differed from that of previous observers has been that I have carefully marked and watched particular insects; and secondly, that I have had nests under observation for long periods.* (Italics added.) No one before had ever kept an ants' nest for more than a few months. I have one now in my room which has been under constant observation ever since 1874, *i.e.* for more than seven years. [Footnote: I may add that these ants are still (March 1882) alive and well. The queens at least are now eight years old, if not more.]

I had intended to make my observations principally on bees; but I soon found that ants were more convenient for most experimental purposes, and I think they have also more power and flexibility of mind. They are certainly far calmer, and less excitable.

...

I am fully conscious that experiments conducted as mine have been leave much to be desired, and are scarcely fair upon the ants. In their native haunts and under natural conditions, more especially in warmer climates, they may well be expected not only to manifest a more vivid life, but to develop higher powers.

I think, however, that my volume will at least show the great interest of the subject, and the numerous problems which still remain to be solved.

High Elms, Down, Kent:  
October 18, 1881.

---

From: *Ants, Bees, and Wasps: A Record of Observations on the Habits of the Social Hymenoptera*, by Sir John Lubbock, Bart., M.P., F.R.S., D.C.L., LL.D. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882. From the Preface. Contributed by Murray Sidman, Department of Psychology, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.