

season, at least in America, as has been stated on a former occasion,* is a season in which insects are full of life, yet the observation, that ants may store up provisions in warm countries, is confirmed by an account sent me by Col. Sykes, with respect to another species, which appears to belong to the same genus as the celebrated *ant of visitation*,† by which the houses of the inhabitants of Surinam were said to be cleared periodically of their cock-roaches, mice, and even rats.‡ The present species has been named by Mr. Hope, the *provident ant*.§ These ants, after long-continued rains during the monsoon, were found to bring up and lay, on the surface of the earth, on a fine day, their stores of grass-seeds, and grains of Guinea-corn, for the purpose of drying them. Many scores of these hoards were frequently observable on the extensive Parade at Poona. This account clearly proves that, where the climate and their circumstances require it, these industrious creatures do store up provisions.

From these very interesting communications we may remark how the functions of animals are varied, the same function being often given in charge to tribes perfectly different in different climates. In temperate regions, the principal agents in disinfecting the air by devouring or removing excrement, belong to the Order of *beetles*, but in India, where probably more hands are wanted to effect this purpose of Providence, the *tree-ants* are called in to aid the beetles, by building their nests of this fœtid mortar, and thus clear the surface of innumerable nuisances, which probably soon dry and become scentless. In Europe, again, no ants are found to verify Solomon's observation, literally interpreted; but in India we see, and probably it may also be

* See above, p. 183.

‡ De Geer. iii. 607.

† *Atta cephalotes*.

A. providens.