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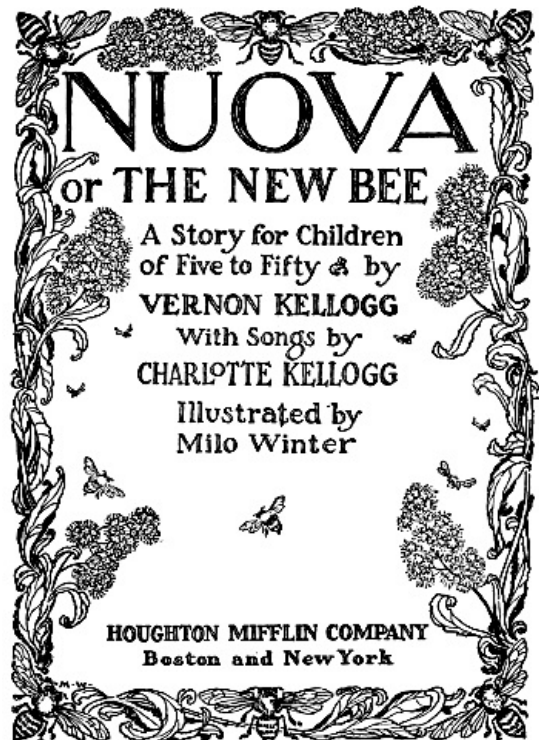
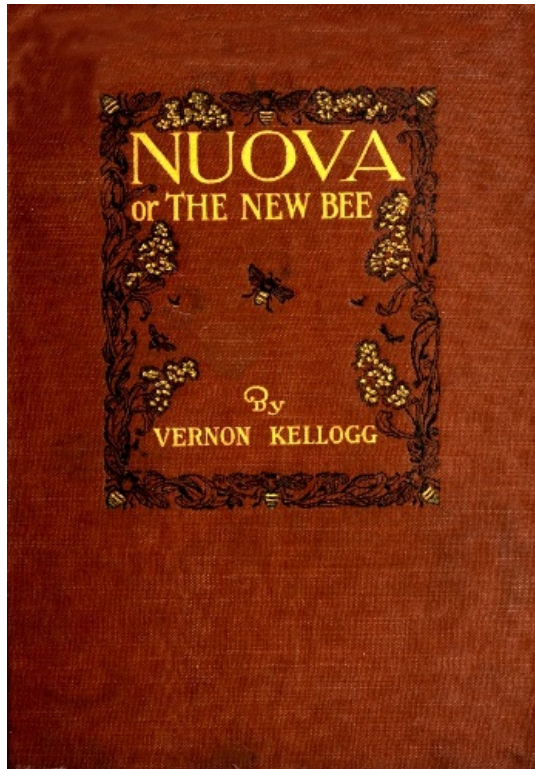
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Release date: March 24, 2012 [EBook #39248]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NUOVA; OR, THE NEW BEE ***



NUOVA

or THE NEW BEE

**A Story for Children
of Five to Fifty by**

VERNON KELLOGG

With Songs by
CHARLOTTE KELLOGG

Illustrated by
Milo Winter

TO
JEAN
WHO IS FIVE



"Nuova, I love you"

PREFATORY NOTE

Most of this that I have written about bees is true: what is not, does not pretend to be. Some of the true part sounds almost like a description of what human life might in some respects be, if certain social movements of to-day were followed out to their logical extreme. I suppose that in this likeness lies the moral of the book.

V. K.

CONTENTS

I. Nuova Appears	1
II. Nuova's First Experiences	7
III. Nuova as Nurse	16
IV. Nuova sees Some Other Things Done	29
V. Nuova sees Bee Moth and gets acquainted with Beffa	44
VI. Nuova and Hero, and the Birth of the Princess	60
VII. Nuova goes Outside	78
VIII. Nuova and Hero again, and a Battle	93
IX. Hero and Nuova once more, and the Great Courting Chase	10
X. Nuova in the Beautiful Garden	115

ILLUSTRATIONS

"Nuova, I love you"	<i>Colored Frontispiece</i>
The beginning of a new life for Nuova	4
Industriously cleaning the floor	12
"I am so tired," replied poor Nuova	26
She would like that kind of work	32
"What?" she cried. "Well, you really are a stupid bee"	42
"The stupid one! The faithless one!"	48
"Drones work? It isn't done, you know"	62
There came slowly forth ... the new Princess	74
"Beffa, you are sad," said Saggia	80
Nuova began to clean his wings	96
Nuova was among the fallen	104
In the Garden	116
Beffa settled down comfortably	128
"The Princess is lost!"	146

THE NAMES OF THE BEES

As all the bees of this story are Italian bees, they all, except one, have Italian names. And they should really be spoken as the Italians speak them. Besides, they are prettier that way. Therefore, a list of them, with the proper way to pronounce them, is given here.

Nuova (noo-o'va)
Uno (oo'no)
Due (doo'ay)
Tre (tray)
Saggia (saj'jia)
Mela (may'la)
Cera (chay'ra)
Fessa (fess'sa)
Aria (ah'ri-a)
Principessa (prin-chee-pess'sa)
Lotta (lawt'ta)

NUOVA

CHAPTER I

Nuova Appears

Nuova seemed to be gradually awakening. It would have seemed that way to any one who could have seen her just at this moment, and it seemed that way to Nuova herself. It was just as if one were in a comfortable, warm bed, and began to be conscious of a faint light outside and of soft voices and of other subdued sounds. The light and sounds grow stronger and louder, until, with a start, one is really awake, and sees that the light is the sunlight of a beautiful morning coming in at the curtained window, and recognizes the sounds to be those of the household already busy with a new day's work.

It was, indeed, an awakening for Nuova; but it was more. It was the beginning of a new life for her. Until now she had been in a sort of pollywog stage for a bee—a stage in which she had no legs nor wings, and in which she could do nothing for herself at all, not even as much as a pollywog can—and had lain all the time in a long, narrow, six-walled, waxen cell that was bed and room all in one. That is, we might say, she had always so far in her life been in bed.

For when she was born in her cell, she was just a tiny white thing, without wings or legs, blind, and quite helpless. Really about all she could do was to squirm a little in her horizontal cell, and keep opening her mouth when she was hungry to let somebody know she must be fed. She was immediately taken care of, however, by the nurse bees who kept near the nursery cells all the time except when they had to go to the pantry cells for more food for the babies. This food was flower nectar and pollen that had been brought into the hive by the active forager bees and stored in the pantry cells. The nurses made a sort of very good and nutritious jelly out of it which made Nuova grow very fast.

After she had been fed in this way for five days, she was many times larger than she had been at first. At the end of this time, however, the nurse bees did what might seem, at first thought, a rather heartless thing. They made a thin cap or cover of wax over the open mouth of Nuova's cell, thus shutting her up tight in her bedroom. She was so large that she almost filled her cell, but there was still a little room left, and this the nurses filled, just before putting the waxen cap on the cell, with pollen and nectar mixed. For a few days Nuova lay quietly in her dark, sealed-up cell, eating, when hungry, from the lump of pollen and nectar which lay by her side. And then she stopped eating and simply lay there in a sort of trance for several days more.

To Nuova herself all her life in the cell, from first day to last, must have seemed little more than a sort of dream; a confused dream of not being able to walk or fly, or see or hear, but only to squirm a little, and be hungry and then be fed, and to feel dimly strange growing pains from the rapidly growing legs and wings when they began to come, and of always being rather comfortably warm and sleepy.

But this sleeping time had come to an end now; this helpless pollywog stage was finished for Nuova. And the light she saw through the big eyes that had grown out on her head, during the last few days in the shut-up cell, was the faint but real light of a new day filtering its way through the crowded hive. And the sounds she heard by means of the many tiny little hearing organs on the long, delicate, sensitive feelers, or antennæ, that had also grown out near her eyes and were connected by fine nerves with her brain, were the humming and murmuring of the thousands of industrious bees of the hive who were already at work at their various duties all around her.

Nuova's awaking, then, was much more than the mere waking-up after a night's sleeping. It was the waking from a life of doing nothing but lying in bed and sleeping and eating and growing, to a life of taking care of one's self and helping to take care of others; it was the waking from a baby life to real bee life. For Nuova was now a full-grown bee, with all the wonderful body and all the wonderful instincts and the high intelligence that we know bees to have. But she was still shut up in her nursery cell.



The beginning of a new life for Nuova

However, to escape from it was not difficult. She could see that the faint light came in strongest through the capped end of the cell. The waxen cap was the thinnest part of the walls of her room,

and as Nuova's head was already lying close to the cap, it was a simple and easy matter for her to begin biting it away with her two strong, little, trowel-like teeth. In a few moments she had made a little hole in the cap, and the light and sounds came in suddenly much brighter and louder than before, although the light was really not bright at all nor the sounds loud, as we reckon such things. For the inside of a honeybee's house, the hive, is always pretty dark, and the sounds the bees make are not all loud, except occasionally when things are especially exciting and all the bees are buzzing together at once, or when a princess is about to come from her nursery cell and both she and the old queen do a lot of extraordinary trumpeting.

But to Nuova, biting her way out through the thin wax cap of her cell, having never heard nor seen anything at all through all of her baby life, things seemed very bright and noisy indeed. This, however, instead of frightening her, made her only the more anxious to get out and be a part of this exciting world around her, and so she worked away as fast as she could, until suddenly the hole was large enough for her to crawl out. This she did, feeling, we may imagine, rather strange at using her new legs for the first time, and finding her new wings all folded up and rather damp and heavy. But out she came and, with a long breath or two, she started to walk over the uneven surface of the waxen comb in which her nursery cell was situated. But after only a few steps she felt tired and limp. Indeed she *was* limp, for all the outer part of her body, that was later to be firm and strong, was still rather soft and damp and weak; her legs could not hold her up well yet, and her unexercised muscles needed a little practice to work together just right. So she soon stopped, trembling all over from her unwonted exertion, and let her big eyes gradually take in the strange sight about her.

CHAPTER II

Nuova's First Experiences

It was truly a remarkable sight. She found that she was part way up a vertical wall or comb of waxen cells, each of six sides and all lying horizontally in the wall. This wall of cells towered far above her even to the very roof of the hive, and below her it stretched away down to the floor. Facing it towered another similar wall of cells, and there was but little more space between the two than was needed for the free movement of the scores, aye, even hundreds of bees that were clambering about over the opposite faces of the walls.

In each wall some of the cells were open and some capped over. In the open ones were either baby bees lying on their stomachs with their heads near the opening of the cells, and their mouths opening and shutting in a most comical way, or there was some pollen or honey; or there was nothing at all. The cells with babies in them were those in the middle part of the wall, while around these were the food cells. Near the open nursery cells were many capped ones, and Nuova saw that some of these caps were being gnawed through from the inside. She knew what that meant; she had just been doing that herself. But also near the open and half-filled pollen and honey cells were other capped ones, and Nuova guessed, and quite rightly, that these were filled and sealed-up honey cells. The open pollen cells were pretty to look at because the pollen in them was of different colors, yellow, orange, red, etc., and they made a sort of uneven but attractive color-pattern on the face of the great vertical wall.

Nuova was a little dizzy at first, with looking up and down the towering wall, and she had to hang on tightly to keep from falling. But she soon grew accustomed to the great heights above and below her, and even began to feel quite at home in her peculiar situation. A pang of hunger came to her as she saw a bee walk up to an open honey cell and take a long drink. She started to walk toward the same cell, when she felt a tug at one of her wings, and heard an impatient voice, evidently addressing her.

"Here, wait a minute; we haven't got you clean yet; and your wings aren't half dry. Don't be in a hurry!"

Nuova was startled; remember, it was the first bee-talking, or any kind of talking, she had ever heard. Yet she understood it perfectly, and understood at once, too, just what was going on. For as she turned her head to see who was speaking, she saw that two nurse bees were most industriously cleaning her body all over, and unfolding and smoothing out her wings, so that they would dry rapidly, and dry all properly spread out. Sometimes young bees do not get their wings properly spread before they dry, and then their wings are crumpled up and useless all through their lives.

Nuova had, indeed, for some time rather vaguely felt this gentle cleaning and wing-spreading operation going on, but at first she had felt so dizzy and faint, and then when she felt better had become so intent on looking up and down the two great walls of wax, with their various cells and the many active bees moving about over them, that she had paid no attention to the gentle rubbing and pulling and stretching. Indeed, it was done so gently that unless she had started to walk away, or had accidentally looked around, she might not have known that it was going on at all. It was a performance much like that a just-born kitten goes through at the hands, or rather tongue, of its mother. The pollen and honey, put into her cell when it was capped, had, of course, rather soiled Nuova's body and much of her hair was stuck together by it. So like every young bee, just come from its nursery cell, she needed a good cleaning. And she was getting it.

Without thinking twice about it Nuova did a very surprising thing. Or rather it was not surprising for a bee to do, but it would have been if one of us, just born, as it were, and without any teaching or practice or chance of hearing any one else first, should do it. For we always call surprising, in bees or other creatures, what would be surprising in us, which is a rather silly way of judging things, but one we are all very much given to. As we think we are the most important kind of creatures on earth—as certainly we are, to ourselves—we think our ways of doing things are the usual or normal or even best ways, and all other ways "surprising." But we shall find, the more we learn about Nuova, that bees have their own manner of life and ways of doing things, and one of the most important many differences between their ways and our ways is that they know so many things right off without any learning or practice or imitating of others. They are born knowing how; they do not have to be taught.

For example, the surprising thing that Nuova did right away, without thinking twice about it, was to begin talking to the two nurse bees who were cleaning her. What Nuova said, and what was said to her in return, is of no particular interest to us. It was simply commonplace talk, for Nuova's coming out of her cell, her first dizziness, the high walls of cells, the many bees moving about, the spreading-out of Nuova's wings and cleaning her body, and even Nuova's ability to understand things about her and to begin talking right away—all these were taken for granted in the hive as the most usual things in the world, which therefore needed no special exclaiming or talking about. In fact Nuova felt already that, as soon as she was properly clean and dry, she must join the other active bees, who were all busy with the different kinds of work they were doing, and begin work herself. And she felt that she knew just what this first work for her should be. It should be the work of a nurse. And the nurse bees cleaning her seemed to take this for granted too. For one of them soon said:

"I think you had better begin on the other side of the comb; there are enough of us on this side already."

Nuova looked up and down the great comb and then to right and left. The nurse noted this, and added:

"You can get around by going either to the top or the bottom, or to either end."

Nuova thanked her, and decided to crawl down to the bottom, for she could see, far down there, a number of bees moving about industriously cleaning the floor and some others that stood still, apparently on their heads, and kept their wings buzzing like mad. She was not quite sure what this performance meant; and the floor-cleaning, too, seemed a little curious. The fact is that, although bees do seem to know right off about things, they know these things one at a time, as it were; that is, when it is time for them to do a thing, they know pretty well, without any telling, how to do it, but they do not seem to know about other things at the same time. They seem to know things only as the time comes for each special thing to be done. Nuova seemed to know that she should begin working as a nurse, and to know how to do the work, for as soon as she started she did just about as well as any of the nurses, but floor-cleaning, and standing on one's head and fanning one's wings like mad, were not things she knew about yet.



Industriously cleaning the floor

She worked her way carefully down to the bottom of the comb and found herself in a very busy place indeed. There was a free place under this comb and under the one opposite to it as well. When she looked under the comb which she had just walked down, she saw a great, low-ceilinged place stretching away in all directions, rather dim and getting darker the farther away it extended, except in one direction. In this direction, however, it was lighter, and the farther the distance the lighter it was. From this lightest part many bees were hurrying toward her with great loads of vari-colored pollen in their pollen baskets, or with their honey sacs filled to overflowing with fresh nectar. They hurried on, paying no attention to any one, and disappeared one by one by climbing up and out of sight, except the few that climbed up the face of either of the combs that towered just over her. These bees she could still watch, and she could see that they carried their loads far up to the open food cells into which they emptied the food they had brought. Also she saw other bees, without loads, hurrying along the floor toward the light, and she had a wonderful thrill as she saw them, and something within her urged her to run with them toward the distant light; something inside her that sang of sunshine, blue sky, green grass and bushes, and many-hued fragrant flowers. But something else, even stronger, within her, told her not to go; that her work awaited her close at hand; that she must nurse bee-babies here in the dimly lighted hive.

So she turned away from the alluring light with only a glance at the floor-cleaners and the silly bees on their heads with their wings going like mad. So strong within her had grown the feeling that there was just one thing for her now, that she walked under the broad, lower edge of the comb from whose high wall she had descended and came into the bottom of another high space between two other towering walls of waxen cells.

CHAPTER III

Nuova as Nurse

When Nuova had come into this new high space, she looked up and realized that one of its side walls was simply the other side of the comb in which her nursery cell had been, while the other was that of another comb opposite it, just as she had seen that there was another comb opposite its other side. Nuova, seeing this, easily understood that probably this was the arrangement all through the hive, and that the broad and long, low, free space running through the whole hive just above the floor was a space just underneath the lower edges of many great vertical combs standing side by side. Which, of course, was true.

Right away, however, Nuova saw that one of the walls above her was incomplete; it did not reach, along its whole length, from the ceiling clear to the floor, but at one end, the end toward the lighter end of the hive, it came down but a little way from the ceiling. Clinging to this unfinished part of the wall was a great mass of bees, the upper ones hanging to the free edge of the wall, but the ones below clinging to them and to each other, thus forming a festoon or curtain of bees hanging down from the lower edge of the incomplete wall. Many bees in this living curtain were buzzing their wings violently, while others were quiet, with thin sheets or plates of some shining, silver-yellowish substance forming on the under side of their bodies.

Beneath the lower edge of the bee-curtain there was a broad, free space beyond which the vertical wall of another more distant comb appeared. On the floor in this open space were gathered many bees, most of which appeared to be picking up little pieces of the shining, silver-yellowish substance that had broken off from the bees in the festoon above, and fallen to the floor.

As this open space was lighter than the space she had come from, Nuova could see everything quite clearly here, and the activity of all the bees and their concentration on whatever they were doing impressed her very much. No one so much as spoke to her; no one spoke to any one else; but every one worked away for dear life. It made her feel that she must get at her own work just as soon as possible.

She glanced up the part of the wall that was all finished, and saw toward its middle a group of nurse bees, and a lot of open and capped nursery cells. She could even see, sticking out of some of the open ones, the comical heads of the babies, each with its mouth regularly opening and shutting. And then she heard a song, a gentle lullaby sort of song. It was the nurse bees singing as they worked. This is the song they sang:

We watch beside the cradles
When the bee-babies sleep;
We guard the shining pantries
Where the bee-milk we keep.

And when the countless tiny
Bee-mouths open wide,
We rush with drink and bee-bread
And drop them inside.

Our bread's the daintiest morsel
A wee babe could eat;
We knead it of soft pollen
And flower nectar sweet.

When ends our busy bee-day
The nurseries we right,
Then wash our countless bee-mites
And tuck them in tight.

Just try to feed our family,
And swiftly you'll see
That never were there nurses
So busy as we.

So she started to climb up to them. Just as she had gone a little way up, however, her attention was called to a very active and apparently excited group of bees crowding about a very different sort of cell from the ones that made up all the rest of the comb. This was five or six times as large as any of the others, and not six-sided, but shaped something like a pear with its small end down. It did not lie horizontal in the comb, but vertical, or nearly so, and had a rough, thick wall, and was open at its smaller, lower end. Nuova could not see what was in it, for she was already as high or higher than it was, as it was near the lower edge of the comb, its lower end, indeed, being but a little way above the floor.

As she hesitated a moment, attracted by the sight of the strange cell and the many excited bees about it, most of whom were nurses, she heard a bee, hurrying away from the cell, say to another hurrying toward it:

"How fast the princess is growing!"

This did not enlighten Nuova much, but the feeling inside of her was now so strong that she must begin work at once that she hurried on up to the nursery cells lying a little way above the curious large cell without trying to find out anything about it. Which shows again, of course, how different bees are from us.

When Nuova got to the nursery cells with their hungry babies she went right to work. She seemed to know just what to do; to go to the pollen and honey cells and drink honey and eat pollen and swallow them, but not too far, and then wait a few minutes, and then give this food up again, all properly mixed, through her mouth right into the open mouths of the hungry babies. And she knew just what babies were ready to have their cells capped with wax—with a nice little lump of food stored inside first, of course—and how to call some bee with a pellet of wax in its mouth to do the capping. She understood at once that the shining, silver-yellowish plates on the bodies of the bees in the festoon at the end of the comb were wax, and that the pieces being picked up by other bees from the floor underneath the festoon were to be used for capping cells, and for making new cells where the vertical wall of comb was still incomplete.

All these things, and whatever other new ones came up in the next few days in connection with taking care of the babies, she seemed to understand right away, and indeed she seemed to know how to do all her work without having to reason about it, or to observe and draw conclusions; in fact, without even once really having to think about it at all. And because it was all so simple, and so easy to understand, an extraordinary thing came to pass with Nuova; that is, an extraordinary thing for a bee. The thing was that *Nuova got tired of her work!*

Yes, she got tired of it; tired physically, which is not perhaps so extraordinary, for bees sometimes fall dead from being over-tired physically; but she also got tired and impatient of the simplicity and monotony of what she was doing. She got, I suppose we may fairly say, mentally and spiritually tired of it. Which happening marks Nuova as a bee of a strange and rare kind: a bee that is—is—well, all I can say is, a bee that is different. Other bees, if they had known of it, would have called her a "funny" bee, or a "peculiar" bee; or perhaps something worse. Indeed, this something worse is just what she was soon called. For Nuova, after a few days of this steady care of babies, one hot afternoon—the hive was so set in the garden that it was quite exposed to the sun—Nuova, I say, one hot afternoon stopped working, and crawled slowly down past the great pear-shaped cell clear to the lower edge of the comb and there she sat and simply did nothing!

Pretty soon Uno, one of the nurse bees in Nuova's group, who had already shown herself to have a rather spiteful nature, noticed that Nuova was not working, was not, indeed, to be seen anywhere about the nurse cells. So she touched another nurse bee near her, named Due, with her antennæ so as to call her attention, and said in a low voice: "Where is Nuova?"

Due looked around, and not seeing Nuova, said: "Why, where is she?" Then both bees touched a third nurse bee, named Tre, with their antennæ. She turned around and joined them.

"What's the matter?" she said. Then looking at the group of nurses, she added: "Where is Nuova?"

"That's it," said Uno and Due together. "Where is Nuova? She isn't here—she has stopped working."

"Exactly," said Tre. "I thought she would come to that—I've been noticing her lately. She doesn't

seem to like to work."

"Whoever heard of such a bee!" exclaimed Uno and Due together.

"Let us find her," said Tre.

So all three started to move around over the comb looking for Nuova. They made wider and wider journeys from the nursery cells, until Uno, who had got down almost to the very bottom of the comb and was quite close to Nuova but had not yet seen her, heard a low voice murmuring, "I am so tired."

Uno turned quickly and saw Nuova. She was sitting with her head hanging down on her breast, and she looked very tired and dejected. But that aroused no sympathy in Uno, who, together with Due and Tre, had taken a strong dislike to Nuova, feeling in her, some way, a rather different, even a rather superior sort of bee. Nuova was so unusually pretty, for one thing. And she had such a lively interest in everything around her. Uno, Due, and Tre, who were bees almost exactly like each other, and like most other bees, felt an instinctive malice toward her, probably based on a certain envy which they did not, however, even admit to themselves.

Uno quickly called Due and Tre, and the three stared malevolently at Nuova for a moment and then said together, speaking loudly so that the other bees near by could hear: "Well, what a bee! To stop work! Just think of it!"

Then Uno leaned over her and called to her: "Lazy!"

And Due stepped up to her and said: "Loafer!"

And Tre came up on the other side of her and hissed: "Shirk!"

Then all three, lifting their wings to strike poor Nuova, who had sat very still through all this, shrinking from the vicious bees, called out: "We'll teach her!" And then they began to strike her all over with their strong wings.

It was going pretty badly with Nuova, when an old floor-cleaner named Saggia stepping up to the group shouldered off the three angry nurse bees. Saggia had noticed at other times that Nuova went rather slowly back and forth between the nursery cells and the food cells, but she had a good heart and thought it was because Nuova was sick, perhaps, for bees often get ill just as we do. She spoke to Nuova rather sharply, but still in a kindly way.

"Nuova! what are you doing here? You mustn't stop."

"But I am so tired," replied poor Nuova. "Thank you for driving them away," she added.



"I am so tired," replied poor Nuova

"Tired, nonsense," said Saggia. "That's nothing. Of course you are tired. We all are. But what

difference does that make? Go back to the babies, and keep on with your work."

"That is what they all say," cried Nuova, bitterly and half angrily. "Here am I a full week out of my nursery cell, and I haven't had a bit of rest or fun yet. It is time I began to have some. Doesn't any one ever rest or have a good time?"

Saggia was painfully surprised to hear Nuova talk in this manner. She began to fear that Nuova's tiredness was not just physical tiredness. She answered her therefore in a strongly reproving manner. "Of course nobody rests, and of course every one has a good time. Look at them all," and she waved an antenna toward the workers at the nursery cells, "don't you see what a good time they are having? It is having a good time to be always working; always working for each other and for our children."

"But they aren't our children," Nuova broke in, "yours and mine, that is, nor anybody's but the Queen's children. She is the mother of them all. And she keeps on having more. And we have to take care of them all, and all the time."

"They *are* our children," Saggia interrupted, speaking very positively and still more reprovingly. "They are the children of the community; the children of the race. It is our race we are working for; the children of the race. Think of it!"

Nuova made a little face. "Well, I am tired of the race and the race's children," she said. "I want some children of my own."

Old Saggia was dreadfully shocked by this. And she was terrified on Nuova's account for fear some other bees might have heard her. It was, indeed, about as rebellious a thing as a bee can say.

"Hush, child," said Saggia in a whisper. "You mustn't say such things. You mustn't even think them. Other bees don't. And you must hurry back to your work before the others miss you." She helped Nuova up, and urged her to begin climbing back up to the nurse cells. "If you are tired of taking care of the babies you can do something else next week. You will be old enough then to make wax and build cells or help clean the hive. And then in another week you can go out and gather pollen and nectar from the flowers. But go back now to the babies; the other nurses are looking for you." She urged Nuova along again, and this time Nuova started up, but she went very reluctantly and slowly.

"No," she said, "they pay no attention to me. Nobody but you pays any attention to me, except when I stop working. They never notice me when I am hard at work."

"Why, of course not," replied Saggia gently. "Why should you be noticed then? That is what we all do all the time; just keep everlastingly at it. That is what makes the bees such a great people. There is something wrong about a bee that doesn't want to work all the time; you mustn't be different from the others. I am afraid you are sick."

All the time she was saying this Saggia was urging Nuova along up the comb toward the nursery cells, and now they had quite reached the group of nurses. As Uno, Due, and Tre saw Nuova again they closed in around her so as to strike or pinch her. But Saggia kept them off. And Nuova slipped into her place again in front of a hungry baby.

CHAPTER IV

Nuova sees Some Other Things Done

Just as Nuova took her place again, however, she heard in the distance a joyful singing. It came from the lightest place in the hive, and looking in this direction Nuova saw a whole group of nectar gatherers coming along together, half-dancing and turning about, and all singing together in the happiest way possible. This is what they sang:

Take a peep into the pail,
Nectar to the brim,
Carried over down and dale
Till the ways were dim.

On a dawn-ray forth we sped,
A thousand wings in tune,
By a new-born wind were led
Down the paths of June.

Silvery world of buzz and whirr,
Fragrance on the wing,
Sod and root and blade astir,
Sped our garnering.

Long in Nature's honey-room
We dipped and drank at will;

Brushed the purple lilac plume,
Sipped from thyme and dill.

Till when evening softly bore
Over dune and dell,
Hastened we with golden store
Home to Queen and cell.

And then she heard another song, and saw a group of pollen gatherers following the nectar gatherers. And this is what they sang:

Here's saffron dust and crimson dust,
And dust of rarest blue;
In lavish Nature's pollen mines
Each mines his favorite hue.

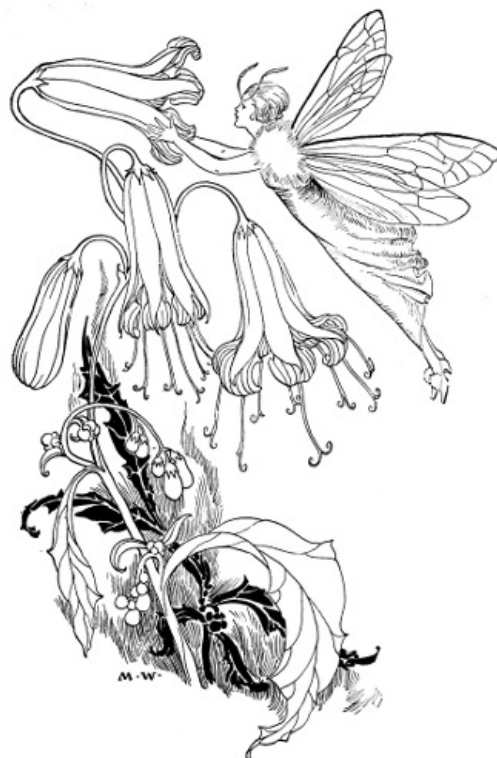
Some buzzed and burrowed all the morn
Within a clover hold,
Till fuzzy backs were powdered fine
And thigh-bags bulged with gold.

And some delved deep in lily cups,
Or hung from blossomy bells—
The story of their mazy flight
The rainbow treasure tells.

There's pollen sweet for roof and wall,
And more for soft bee-bread;
For all, from wondrous Mother-Queen
To bee-mite, must be fed.

Here's palest pink and lilac dust,
And green and brown and blue;
In lavish Nature's pollen fields
Each finds his favorite hue.

They liked their work, these foragers, that was sure, and Nuova felt that she would like that kind of work too. Just then Mela, one of the pollen gatherers, climbing up the comb where Nuova was, with her pollen baskets filled by two great masses of golden yellow pollen, stopped for a moment for breath. Nuova stretched her antenna toward Mela and touched her, attracting her attention.



She would like that kind of work.

"Oh, Mela, tell me about it," she said to her eagerly. "Do you hear the birds sing and see the butterflies dance out there? Mela, take me with you when you go back."

Mela was very much astonished to hear a pretty young nurse bee talk to her this way, and she looked first sharply and then rather contemptuously at Nuova.

"You upstart young thing," she said, "take you out with us? Well, I rather think not until you have finished your nursing work. And you are loafing now! Well, you will do your work better in the hive or you can never go out at all, that's sure."

And Uno, Due, and Tre, who had overheard this conversation, buzzed at her one after another: "Lazy! Loafer! Shirk!" and they tried to strike her once more, but Saggia, who had not yet gone down to the floor, again kept them off and whispered rapidly to Nuova:

"Yes, you shall go out some time. But you must be a good bee and do your work in the hive first, nurse the babies, then help make wax and build cells. So go on with your work now. Hurry, the soldiers are coming, and they have their stings all ready for loafing bees as well as for wasps and black bees that come to rob us. Hurry, hurry!"

Saggia pushed Nuova back into her place, and Uno, Due, and Tre also hurried to their own places as the marching song of the Amazons was heard. Into the hive and down the long aisles between the great vertical walls of comb they came marching rapidly and brandishing their long, sharp lances all ready for use. This was their song:

Now fierce black bee and yellow wasp
With cunning seek to rush the hive;
Up warriors, aim the poisoned dart,
Let no bold hornet pass alive!

Defenders of the golden stores,
Swoop down upon the robber band,
No foe escapes the Amazon spears,
For Hive and Queen we make our stand!

As they finished their song the files of the Amazons broke up and the soldiers scattered themselves through the hive, although most of them kept in the lighter part near the entrance.

In the special quiet that followed the cessation of the song Nuova heard a voice calling loudly from a group of bees near the wax-making festoon at the unfinished end of the comb. This group was busily engaged in moulding new cells, using the wax which was being made by the bees in the living festoon.

"Look here," called the voice, which was that of Cera, chief of the cell-builders and wax-makers, "we must have more wax-makers." She waved an antenna toward the festoon. "They can't furnish us wax fast enough. Some of you older nurses come here."

Nuova who had stopped working and stepped a little out from the group of nurses at Cera's first words, now started quickly to go over to her. Uno, Due, and Tre all called angrily to her and tried to stop her but Nuova easily evaded them and hurried over, with several other nurses following, to Cera.

"Let me make wax," she said eagerly to Cera.

Cera looked at her, then away and to the others. "You! No, you are too young," she said. Then more loudly to the others: "More wax-makers, I say, and right away."

But Nuova insisted. "Take me," she urged. "Teach me to make wax."

Cera stared at her. "What a funny bee! Teach you! That shows you are not old enough. If you were you would know without any teaching. Bees don't have to be taught. They simply know how to do everything they need to when the right time comes for doing it. And if they don't know it is because the right time hasn't come."

But Nuova still stood squarely in front of her. Cera stared at her more and more surprised and more and more angry. "Here," she said finally, and very roughly, "keep out of the way. Go back to your babies."

Nuova fluttered her wings angrily and her sensitive antennæ trembled. "I won't," she said. "I won't be nurse any more; I'll make wax or go out for pollen. Yes, I'll go out into the garden."

Then she actually started to run toward the hive entrance, but was promptly stopped by Saggia, who had noticed her altercation with Cera and had hurried over.

Cera who had only half heard Nuova's angry outburst was nevertheless greatly astonished, and was about to make an indignant reply and to call the attention of the other bees to the audacious little rebel, but the candidates to make wax crowded about her so closely and chattered so distractingly to her that all thought of Nuova was, fortunately, immediately driven out of her mind.

In the meantime Nuova was tugging away from Saggia, and had even dragged her a little along toward the entrance. But Saggia held fast to one wing, and at the same time talked to her rapidly.

"Nuova, stop!" she said in a low voice, at the same time glancing back to see if the crowd around Cera was noticing them. "You mustn't say such things. Bees never do. Listen, you can make wax. Listen to me, I'll tell you what to do."

Nuova stopped tugging at the poor old bee, who was getting rather breathless and could hardly go on with her speaking. What she had last said, however, made Nuova want to hear more.

So as Nuova stopped pulling away Saggia went on talking. "The first thing the wax-makers do is to go to the pantry cells and eat all the honey and pollen they can. Then they all crowd together in close rows like that," pointing to the festoon of wax-makers, "so as to get very warm, and pretty soon the wax begins to come. It comes out in little drops on your wax-plates"—touching one of the ten curious little five-sided plates on the under side of Nuova's body—"and hardens right away into a thin sheet of wax on each one of the plates. Now all you have to do is to keep quiet and just mix with the others when they go to the food cells to eat and drink. Say nothing to any one, and nobody will pay any attention to you, not even Cera, as long as you are busy. There, see, they are going," she added, as the group around Cera began to break up, some of the bees going back to the babies while others, who had been accepted by Cera, moved to the open food cells and began eating pollen greedily and taking long drinks of honey.

"Slip over among them," said Saggia in a whisper, "and stuff yourself. Then go when they do to the festoon and hang on to it."

Nuova was so eager to try this new experience that she hardly paused to thank Saggia, although she did let a grateful smile flit over her pretty fresh face as she hurried away.

Just as she reached the food cells she heard a gentle, rather monotonous singing, and glancing in the direction of the group of cell-builders and wax-makers from which it came she saw that under the direction of Cera who had already rejoined her workers, the cell-builders were going through a sort of dance or rhythmic gymnastics, moving their bodies and waving their wings and legs in a sort of exaggerated imitation of moulding and building, and that the wax-makers in the festoon were buzzing their wings to make their bodies warmer and swinging back and forth, and that all of them together were singing a pretty song about their work. This is the song they sang:

Cling close in living curtain,
One thousand swing as one,
Now ooze the amber jellies—
The work has just begun.

Haste, mould the dainty wax flakes
And ply the trowels swift;
Pat, pat—the floors spread wider;
Tap, tap—the light walls lift.

Through all the long hive-twilight,
The patterned cell draw true;—
Tap, tap, with tiny trowel,
We've neither nail nor screw.

Ten thousand honey pantries
And rooms for pollen store;—
Build high the whole bee-city,
And still there's need of more.

As the song and motion dance ceased, Cera called loudly again. This time she wanted cleaners to come. "Here," she cried. "Cleaners! Let a cleaner come. We are getting too much dust on the floor. Cleaners! Cleaners!"

But no one came. Cera, looking impatiently about, saw Nuova glancing up from the food cell over which she was standing, and motioned to her. "Here, you," she said, without seeming to remember that it was with Nuova that she had just had a dispute, "you don't seem to be doing much. You run down to those cleaners," pointing to several cleaners on the floor near the great pear-shaped cell, "and tell one to come here right away. Look lively, now."

Nuova, who seemed always ready for a new thing, gladly ran down the comb to the floor and danced happily across it to a bee that was busily cleaning and touched her with her antennæ. As the cleaner looked up Nuova said: "Cera wants you; they are making too much dust over there."

The cleaner straightened up a little and without a word shuffled slowly across to a place just under the festoon and began to clean the floor there. Nuova started to follow her, rather dawdling along, for the prospect of hanging motionless in a wax-making festoon was not especially attractive to her, when she was startled by the falling at her feet of a lump of something soft and sticky-looking. She looked up and saw far up on the vertical wall of the comb rising above her a bee peering down at her and the lump. This bee was indeed right up by the roof of the hive. As the bee saw Nuova look up she called to her loudly and rather gruffly, "I say, pretty young bee, bring me up that lump of propolis, won't you?"

Nuova picked up the soft brownish ball in her mouth and climbed quickly up to the top of the comb with it. As she offered it to the waiting bee on the ceiling, she found it sticking to her teeth in a very uncomfortable way.

"Oh, the sticky stuff," she said in disgust, "and how it tastes and smells!"

The bee to whom she was awkwardly trying to give it, whose name was Fessa, and who was a crack-filler, replied disgustedly and wonderingly: "Oh, the stupid bee. And it smells like what it is. And that's propolis. And when you've worked with it day and night for a week, as you will sometime, you will learn how to handle it, and not be sickened by its smell. It has really a good healthy smell, for it comes from beautiful great pine trees and balsam firs."

"Oh," cried Nuova, "from outdoors? From the garden where the flowers and butterflies are? Shan't I go out and get you some?" And she turned as if to start right away.

Fessa was much astonished, and as she was an irritable bee, she was angry too. "What?" she cried. "Well, you really are a stupid bee. Go out? You—you silly young thing. Don't you know you can't go out until it is time for you to go? And then you'll have to go whether you want to or not. Don't you know that bees do things according to custom? You don't do what you like: you like what you do. That's the bee way, you stupid. What kind of bee are you, anyway? Here now, hand over that stuff, and go back to your work." And Fessa took the last of the propolis from her very roughly.



"What?" she cried, "Well, you really are a stupid Bee"

Nuova, who did not like to be handled so roughly, and talked to so sharply, was almost in tears. She seemed to be always getting reprimanded. However, she said rather maliciously to Fessa: "Well, do you like to work with that sticky stuff? What do you do with it, anyway?"

But Fessa had already turned back to her work and paid no attention to her. In fact she had already begun, with her two or three other crack-filling companions, to sing a slow, "sticky" sort of song, as they kept stuffing propolis into a crack in the roof. Although I cannot give you the strange, monotonous melody of the song, I can give you the words. They were these:

We're the soft putty crew,
Dripping the oozy glue,
Squeezing our resins through
Cranny and crack.

Stuffing with pure cement
Crevice and chink and rent,
Where creeping airs have sent
Warning of Bee Moth bent
On sly attack.

Yes, we are the safety crew,
Spreading with trowel true
Fragrant and golden glue,

CHAPTER V

Nuova sees Bee Moth and gets acquainted with Beffa

As the crack-fillers kept on singing their monotonous song over and over while they worked, and as they paid no attention whatever to Nuova, she turned away after a few minutes of listening to them, and stared around her.

It was the first time she had been clear up to the roof of the hive and she saw that here, as at the bottom, there was a low, free space for the whole length and breadth of the hive. It was rather dark up here, and very warm and stuffy, for the warm air rising from the body of the hive could not escape, as the propolis workers had filled all of the crevices and cracks in the roof and where the great flat roof-board rested on the vertical sides of the hive.

Nuova felt glad she was not a crack-filler, and turned to go down to the wax-making group where she belonged, when she saw a curious, dusky-gray creature, not a bee, although with big eyes and long antennæ and wings, which are all things that bees have also. But this creature's body was much slenderer than a bee's, its antennæ very much longer and slenderer, and its wings not only longer, but covered over, as was the body, with myriads of small scales and hairs. These wings were so folded that they covered all the back and most of the sides of the body and trailed out beyond the tip of the body. The creature was walking rapidly and nervously along the broad, upper edge of the comb on which Nuova stood, and seemed to be quite at home in the dim light of this space just under the roof.

Nuova stared at the creature a moment, and then began to approach her. But the creature had stepped quickly over the edge and was now running rapidly down the face of the comb. In this lighter place Nuova could see that she was engaged in hiding every here and there small, white eggs that she seemed to carry somewhere in her body. She would dart nervously in one direction and then another, hesitating a moment after each swift movement long enough to drop an egg in an open cell or squeeze it into a crack in the comb.

Nuova, not being able to catch up with the creature, called loudly to her a couple of times. "Who are you? What are you doing?" she cried; but the creature did not reply, but only worked at her egg-hiding the more rapidly. Nuova called to her again, this time so loudly that the attention of several bees in the group of nurses was attracted.

The minute they saw the creature, they set up a great shouting and began racing after her.

"Bee Moth! Bee Moth! After her!" they cried. "Call the soldiers! Amazons! here! here!"

Nuova was amazed at the uproar, and then she was shocked to see how the Amazons and all the bees in fact dashed at the poor Bee Moth and began to tear her literally to pieces. First her long antennæ and then her wings were torn off and brandished in the air victoriously, and then her delicate body was stung and hacked into bits, and the fragments tossed down to the floor to be picked up and thrown out of the hive by the cleaners. And during all this violent scene, which horrified Nuova because, strange as it may seem, she really did not understand the reason for it, all the bees kept up the most excited buzzing and exclaiming.

"The villain!" they cried; "when did she get in? Has she laid any eggs? How did she get in? Who saw her first? Where did she lay her eggs?"

Some began now to peer about for the eggs, while others continued to talk and gesticulate.

Uno, who had been standing silent for a moment as if in thought, suddenly spoke up loudly, while she looked significantly at Nuova.

"Nuova saw her first," she said; "she called to us."

At that several of the bees turned to Nuova.

"Nuova, Nuova, saw her first!" they cried. "Did she lay any eggs? Why didn't you call us sooner? *Did* she lay any eggs, we say?"

"Why, yes," Nuova answered innocently, "a good many; all the way from up there"—indicating the top of the comb—"clear down to—to—" and Nuova shuddered so she could not finish.

With this the bees burst out into a new, violent excitement, and they seemed to be very angry with poor Nuova. "Bee Moth laid a lot of eggs!" they shouted. "Nuova saw her! Nuova let her! The stupid one! The faithless one! Kill her! Kill her!" And they crowded around Nuova in a most threatening manner, some trying to strike her, and two or three Amazons trying to reach her with their lances. Nuova thought her fate was to be that of Bee Moth's, and it really seemed so for a moment. And then Saggia was heard calling loudly.



"The stupid one! The faithless one!"

"A crack! There must be a *crack!* She must have come in through a crack! She couldn't have come in past the guards at the door."

This distracted the attention of the bees from Nuova, for at once they all turned toward Saggia and began shouting all together: "A crack! There's a crack somewhere! Why haven't the crack-fillers found it?"

Then they all began to crowd toward and clamor at the propolis-workers, who, up on their scaffolding, scowled down on the mob, seemingly unafraid and unexcited.

"Well," said Fessa roughly, "find the crack and we'll fill it. That's all we've got to say. Find the crack."

"Yes, that's right," spoke up Saggia loudly. "Some of us hunt for the crack, and some hunt for the eggs and break them or throw them out. Every one that isn't found and hatches in the hive means danger for us. Find them all."

At this the bees all began hunting about for the crack and the eggs. Every now and then an egg would be found and with a loud shout it would be seized and thrown down to the floor of the hive. Nuova, disheveled and still trembling from the fright caused by the attack of the bees on her, crept down to the floor at the side of the hive just under the wax-makers, who had paid no attention to all the hubbub. From here she was looking on at the search for the eggs with astonishment, when Saggia, who had been looking anxiously about for her, saw her and came over close to her.

"Go up and get back into your place in the wax-curtain, and they'll forget all about you," she whispered. "But why didn't you shout out about the Bee Moth when you first saw her?"

"But why should I?" answered Nuova blankly and rather bitterly. "She was such a pretty and such an interesting creature."

Saggia raised her antennæ in astonishment and despair. "Nuova, you *are* a funny bee. You are so different. What *is* the matter with you anyway? Don't you know—but, of course, for some extraordinary reason you don't—that your 'pretty and interesting creature' is one of the most dangerous enemies we have? From any of her eggs that we don't find and break, there will hatch a horrible little grub that will keep hidden in the cracks or dark places in the hive, feeding on the wax of the cells and on the pollen and honey, too, and spinning wherever it goes a terrible, sticky, silken web that catches our feet and wings and interferes with our getting around easily. And if there are enough of the Bee Moth's grubs they spin so much web that finally we can't carry on our work in the hive at all, and all our babies starve and the Queen starves, and the whole community goes to ruin. 'Pretty and interesting,' indeed; she is sneaky and despicable, that's what she is. And if you ever see another, rush for her at once and call everybody. Being pretty doesn't necessarily mean being good."

"Yes; but, Saggia," said Nuova slowly, "if her grubs have to have wax and pollen and honey for food, and if there is nobody but Bee Moth to get them for them, and she can't, of course, doesn't

she rather have to lay her eggs in a bee-hive where, when her grubby babies hatch out, there will be enough food for them? And don't they have to spin the web to keep us bees from killing them as soon as we see them?"

Saggia stared at her; and then, strange as it may seem, even this old bee began to understand a little that Nuova's mind was a bit different from that of the other bees in the hive, and that she had a heart that could be hurt even by the killing of a dangerous enemy of the hive. However, Saggia contented herself with repeating, "Well, you *are* a funny bee!" and then she urged Nuova again to start up the comb to the group of wax-makers, and went back to see how the search for Bee Moth's eggs was getting on.

Just as Nuova was about to begin climbing up, she heard a strong, buzzing sound near her and found that she was almost stumbling over a bee that was standing in a most odd position, with its head down and almost touching the floor, and its body lifted up at an angle of forty or fifty degrees, and all of its wings going like mad, although it was not, of course, beating its wings to fly, for it remained constantly in the same position. There were two or three other bees near this one doing the same thing, and farther away, nearer the hive entrance, were two or three more.

The wing-buzzing bee nearest Nuova, whose name was Aria, seemed to be quite vexed with Nuova, for she said to her sharply: "Look out where you are going, you stupid! Are you blind and deaf?"

Nuova was startled, and rather frightened, too, by the sharp speech, but her curiosity was even stronger than her fear. "Good gracious!" she said; "what are you doing?"

"What matter to you what I am doing?" said Aria, in a thick, "buzzy" voice. "I am doing my work—which is more than you seem to be doing. Aren't you bee enough yet to know that each of us has her own appointed work and does it without worrying about what others are doing? If we all do our work, then the whole community gets on all right. So if you will look out for your work, I'll look out for mine."

Here Aria buzzed more energetically than ever for a moment without saying anything. Then she began speaking again, "Still if you have to be told, you pretty little stupid bee, I'll tell you that I and my companions are ventilating the hive, and if we should stop to loaf and moon about like you, you and all the rest of us would suffocate, that's what you'd do." And she stopped talking. But in a moment she began to sing a curious little song which was partly made up of just buzzing and humming, and partly of words. These were the words of her song, in which all the other ventilating bees joined:

Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz;
Back and forth, back and forth,
Fanning and stirring and driving and churning;
Old air we're forcing forth, new air's returning.
On our heads all the day;
This is the only way
We can keep sweet the hive
And our dear bees alive.

Whirr, whirr, whirr, whirr;
Roundabout, roundabout,
Living fans ceaselessly driving and churning;
Foul air we're forcing forth, fresh air's returning.
Upside down all the day;
Beating our wings away;
So we keep sweet the hive
And our dear bees alive.

While the ventilating bees were singing and Nuova stood idly watching and listening to them, a small, old drone bee with crumpled-up, that is, deformed wings, came, half walking and half comically hopping, down the long aisle between the vertical combs from the back and darker part of the hive. He was humming a song to himself as he came along. Beffa was the name of the deformed bee, and he was the jester of the hive, as could be guessed by his hopping way of walking, and by the words of his song.

When Nuova heard Beffa singing, she turned toward him, but did not interrupt him. She was ever so much interested in his appearance, and by his sort of hopping dance which he kept up all the time he was singing, and by the song itself, which told her something about him, but not enough. As he stopped singing, Nuova spoke, speaking to herself at first, and then to him.

"Oh, what a funny bee," she said. "You *are* a bee, aren't you?"

Beffa stared at her a moment, then made her a deep, mocking bow and gave a hop or two. "Yes, pretty one, which is, of course, to say, stupid one, I be a bee—just as you be, only not just so, for I be doing my work, which I don't see that you be." Then he hopped comically about, humming to himself the refrain of his song.

No one, however, paid any attention to him except Nuova, who exclaimed rather petulantly: "Oh, work, work, work; always that word!"

"Yes," said Beffa, mockingly bowing and hopping about her, "but not always that work"; imitating grotesquely for a moment Nuova's idle attitude.

"Do you call that hopping and singing work?" indignantly exclaimed Nuova. "Why don't you go and nurse babies?"

Beffa, who was again at his hopping and humming, stopped a moment to stare at her in surprise; then replied, in a sing-song: "I can't, oh, I can't nurse babies."

"Then make wax," said Nuova.

"I can't, oh, I can't make wax," hummed Beffa.

"Then build a comb, or fill cracks, or clean the floor, or"—and she pointed to the ventilating bees near them—"ventilate," persisted Nuova.

"I can't," sang again Beffa, "oh, I can't build cells, or fill cracks, or scrub floors, or—" and he broke off suddenly with a sort of catch in his voice.

But Nuova blindly persisted. "Well, then, why don't you go out and gather pollen and bring nectar; out into the sunshine, out into the garden."

The poor, deformed bee, now angry, indeed, began jumping up and down violently right in front of Nuova, and then suddenly whirled around, bringing his back and crumpled wings fairly in her face. "Oh, silly little pretty, pretty little silly!" he cried; "which is to say, blind one, stupid one, heartless one, *would* I like to go out, out into the warm sunshine, out into the fragrant garden! Would I like to go! Blind, stupid, brutal one!"

When Nuova saw the poor, crumpled-up, useless wings, she suddenly understood, and she felt like striking herself in the face as she realized all the stupid, brutal things she had said. "Oh, you poor, poor bee!" she cried as she touched Beffa caressingly again and again with her antennæ. "I didn't see; I didn't understand; I am so sorry! Won't you forgive me? Please?"

Beffa, though partly appeased, was still half angry, and still spoke bitterly. "Oh, you *do* understand now! You *do* understand why I hop and sing; why I dance for the Queen; and why I do anything I can do when I can't do other things; can't do what a drone ought to do, fly wide and high in the Great Courting Chase after the Princess. I am glad you understand now. But hush, listen!" He whirled around, facing toward the great pear-shaped cell in the lower center of the comb. "Hark! Principessa, the new Princess, calls. Hark!"

Beffa and Nuova stood silent and expectant, facing toward the Princess's cell as did all the other bees. There was a tense excitement everywhere. Nuova felt that something very important was happening. And then came a strange sound, first faint and low, then louder and shriller. It was the piping of the young Princess shut up in her great cell, but ready now to come out. It sent a shiver of excitement through all the bees. Ventilators stopped buzzing and wax-makers and comb-builders turned their faces intently toward the sound, and even the crack-fillers, far up at the roof, stopped their work and peered down excitedly.

There had come, indeed, one of the most exciting and tense moments that ever come to a bee community. It was the moment that precedes the birth of a new royal bee, a Princess who is destined to be the new Queen of the hive, or to go out from the hive with many of the workers to establish a new community of her own.

Again came the shrill piping of the Princess in the royal cell. Another wave of excitement ran over the hive. And again and again the weird sound came. Suddenly the royal nurses began excitedly to plaster wax on the outside of the great cell, especially over its mouth.

Beffa whispered to Nuova: "She is trying to work her way out, but they don't want to let her out yet. See, the drones are coming."

And even as he spoke a gay song was heard, in voices very different from any that Nuova had yet heard in the hive; and suddenly, as the song grew louder, there came a half-dancing, half-marching file of splendid-looking, robust bees, moving spiritedly directly toward the royal cell. They were a fine-looking lot, these drones, these dandy drones, and Nuova had a thrill she had never felt before. She gazed at them entranced.

The drones made a half-circle about the cell of the Princess and lined up there, strutting and dancing and singing loudly. This is the song they sang:

We are the courtiers, the beaux of the hive;
Of the dandy drones surely you've heard!
Our wings are a rainbow, our bodies are gold,
To soil them would be most absurd.

No, we never mix up with the common hive stuff,
Neither garner, nor plaster, nor clean;
'Tis superior far to be just what we are,
And do naught but make love to the Queen.

CHAPTER VI

Nuova and Hero, and the Birth of the Princess

All through their song Nuova had given the drones her absorbed attention. She admired them greatly for their fine appearance, and when she learned from their song that they did no work, but had all day only to follow their own sweet will, she became especially interested in them. She was a little puzzled, too, for, from what she had heard from Saggia and the others, and from all she had seen, she had come to believe that all bees worked all the time. And here were all these stout-bodied, vigorous bees proudly singing that they loafed all the days through. She was so much interested in this that she approached one end of the line of drones and spoke to the one nearest her.

"What a fine time you drones must have," she said. "Don't you ever have to do any work?"

The drone did not hear her at first and paid no attention to her, but as she repeated her question louder and more insistently, he turned and stared at her amazed.

"Well, well, bless my eyes!" he said, stammering in his amazement at being addressed by a common worker bee. "Bless my eyes! I say, work? Work? Me work? Who ever heard such a question? What sort of a bee are you? Who are you, anyway?" He touched the drone next to him to call his attention. "Look here, who is this bee?"

Nuova was nettled by his manner and by what he said. She answered, rather sharply, "Well, I'll tell you who I am. I am a bee that works; anyway, I am the kind of a bee that works, like all the others except you, and you" (looking defiantly at the second drone, who was staring insolently at her) "and I want to know why you do not work—you and you others that loaf around all the time and eat what we bring in, and do nothing but sing and dance in the hive, or fly around doing nothing in the garden, and keep all dressed up and just look handsome."

The drone was more and more astonished, but he was also a little flattered by her reference to his clothes and appearance.

"Well, you are a silly little bee," he said; "that's what we are here for. Drones work? It isn't done, you know. Our business is to love. And singing and dancing and looking handsome, and not getting all dusty with pollen and sticky with wax and dirty with cleaning, is part of it. That's our work; not working, but loving."



"Drones work? It isn't done, you know."

Nuova was so astonished by hearing this, and so excited to learn that some bees did not have to work, and also so angry to think that these bees were allowed to live without working, while she was always being told to work, and scolded for resting for even the shortest time, that when she

answered him she spoke so loudly as to attract the attention of other bees near her, including Saggia, who was moving around near by, cleaning the floor.

"So that is what you call your work, is it?" she burst out. "Well, I am glad to know there is some kind of bee work besides feeding babies and sweating out wax and filling up cracks and scrubbing up floors. Loving, you call it; well, I want to do some of that; show me how."

The two drones were stupefied with astonishment by Nuova's words, but the one nearest her, to whom she was speaking directly, was rather taken by the audacity of the pretty little bee's demand, and he involuntarily strutted and swaggered a little and eyed her with special attention. He even smiled down at her rather pleasantly, and seemed to be about to speak to her again when Saggia and three or four other bees, who had heard her last words and were scandalized to see and hear her talking with the drone, especially in such a manner, bustled up to her.

This last unheard-of behavior of Nuova was too much for Saggia. Her patience and sympathy with her were exhausted, and she broke out in a tirade of scolding.

"Well, I never in my life!" she exclaimed, grasping Nuova and jerking her around; "what in the world are you doing and saying? Talking to a drone about love! You don't know anything about love. You can't know anything about it. Only drones and princesses know what love is, or can know. You are worse than a silly bee; you are a bad bee!" She jerked her again and again; at the same time she went on with her scolding. "Well, I wash my hands of you! If you can't be a sensible bee we don't want you! Our thinking has all been done for us long, long ago. All we have to do is what custom tells us to. And if you can't behave as the rest of us do, you are useless. Here, take her, throw her out of the hive!"

Again Saggia jerked her vigorously, and other bees, especially Uno, Due, and Tre, hustled her and struck at her. A couple of soldiers even came up and began jabbing at her with their lances. Poor Nuova seemed about to be torn piecemeal, like the Bee Moth, and turned out of the hive, when one of the drones, who was in the line some little distance from Nuova and Saggia, was attracted by the uproar. He came over to the group in a lordly and leisurely manner, shouldering his way through the crowd and carelessly driving off the jostling bees. They left Nuova reluctantly, casting dark looks and making malevolent gestures toward her as they turned their attention again to the excitement still raging about the cell of the Princess. Poor Nuova, half dead from her ill-treatment, could hardly utter her thanks to her rescuer. In a weak voice she attempted to say something, but finding it too much of an effort she contented herself with looking up gratefully into the face of the newcomer. He looked down at her curiously.

"What is the matter with you?" he said, not unkindly. "Can you not do as other bees do? What are you—a nurse, a wax-maker, or what? Why don't you stick to your work? Why don't you do what you are expected to do? Are you one of those dreadful creatures they call 'new bees'?"

Nuova, although still weak and faint from her jostling and fright, was made angry again by these questions. "I do not know what I am," she said, "but I'd rather die than be just a puppet in this hive. Is all my life cut out for me, and not according to what I want to do and can do, but just according to rules made by somebody I don't know anything about and who doesn't know anything about me?"

She tried to say more, but a faintness came over her, and she staggered a little and would have fallen if the drone had not unconsciously put a wing behind her and supported her. She looked up at him, unable to thank him in words, but expressing her gratitude in her eyes.

As she rested this way, leaning heavily against him, she closed her eyes, happy to be protected, and even feeling strange little thrills running over her body that were mysteriously enjoyable. Without opening her eyes she murmured: "I am very grateful to you. You are very good." He said nothing, but looked with more and more interest at the sweet-faced little bee beside him.

Soon she opened her eyes again, and this time a pathetic little smile ran over her face. Indeed, it grew to be a roguish smile as an interesting idea formed more and more clearly in her brain.

"But you," she said—"aren't you rather breaking bee tradition by helping me? If I am a useless bee, and only in the way, and a trouble to the community, shouldn't you let them sting me and throw me out of the hive? Are you" (she smiled again)—"are you, a—new bee, too?"

The drone, whose name was Hero, and who was truly the handsomest and finest drone in the hive, was first surprised and then a little embarrassed by what Nuova was saying. He looked rather fearfully around to see if other bees were observing them and tried gently to take his wing from behind Nuova, who, however, on realizing his intention, gave new signs of weakness and leaned more heavily than ever on it. In fact, it must be confessed, she nestled as closely against him, enclosed by his protecting wings, as she could.

"No, I am not a new bee," he said, rather stiffly. "I know my duty, and I try to do it." He looked again into his companion's pretty face, and then spoke more gently.

"Still, I admit that some of our ways are old-fashioned, rather absurd in fact," he said, with a manner and voice growing more and more confidential. "I have often had a curious feeling as if I should like to work." He smiled down at her. "Terrible, isn't it? And sometimes it is pretty hard to work up a violent love for a Princess you never see until you are just about to dash after her in the Great Courting Chase. Still, that's something worth while. One such flight is excitement and exertion enough for a whole life."

"Have you ever done it?" asked Nuova, curiously and even a little enviously. "And did you win?"

"Yes," said Hero, "I have been in one chase. But I was so young my wings were hardly dry and, of course, I didn't win, or I shouldn't be here now. Don't you know that the winner always dies in the winning?"

"Oh, how dreadful!" cried Nuova, shocked. "And how silly! To die just as you become King. How is it worth it?"

"What!" said Hero, surprised, and in a reproving and even stern voice. "Not worth while to win in the Great Courting Chase? To prove yourself the fastest and strongest and boldest of all the drones, and to be the consort of the Queen, the father of all the Queen's children? Not worth while dying for? What do I live for but that?"

"Ah, yes," cried Nuova, carried away for the moment by his enthusiasm, "that *is* something to live for!"

Suddenly, however, she realized that if Hero won in the Great Chase that was soon to occur—that is, would take place when the Princess, already trying to get out of her cell, was really out and ready for her wedding flight—he would really have to die for a bee, so far unseen and unknown, and who had done nothing to deserve such a sacrifice, and who would give her love as well to any other drone as to Hero, this handsome and kind new friend.

This made her angry and bitter again, and very sad, too, for she was beginning to realize that she liked this beautiful, strong bee much more than she liked Saggia or Beffa. He was different from all the other bees she knew, and her liking for him was different. She wanted to be with him all the time, and to have him talk to her or even just to look at her. This must be loving, she thought, or part of it, anyway. She began to dislike this Princess that was soon to come out of her cell. Probably she would be very beautiful. When she thought of that she disliked her more than ever. She could not bear to think of Hero's loving her or of her loving Hero.

She looked keenly at Hero, and then spoke to him slowly and cautiously, growing suddenly wise because of her new feeling for him.

"But how do you know you will love the new Princess?" she said. "Is she certain to be beautiful and sweet? And will she certainly love you?"

Hero looked at her curiously. It was strange how this pretty little bee attracted him. And it was strange that she seemed to have very clearly certain thoughts that were already rather hazily in his own mind.

"Oh, well," he said musingly, "I shall not see much of her. It is not, in a sense, love for her, but the response to the call of the race, the fulfilling of my duty to our community, that will drive me to my best effort to win her. But, of course, it is love for her, too; that is, so far as there is love at all among bees. We can love only Princesses, you know, we drones; that is honey-bee tradition."

Hero had seen no betrayal of Nuova's real feeling in her questions. He only saw in them the expression of her odd, independent way of looking at things and thinking about them. Nuova realized this and so became bolder by his blindness. And she was made bitter, too, by hearing this hero of hers repeat that always irritating phrase of "honey-bee tradition."

"Oh, yes," she exclaimed, "you can only do what your grandfathers and your great-grandfathers did! You must keep your eyes closed and your heart cold and loll and loaf through all your life until they tell you to go and love—love a Princess—love her, sight unseen—love her so hard that if you win her you kill yourself! You are not *you*; you are not a bee with a heart and brain and strong body of your own, to live and strive and suffer and succeed after your own way and your own desires, but you are a machine, an automaton, to do what custom has fashioned you to do! You are not a bee; you are a clock-work; big and strong and handsome—and hollow!"

Hero, amazed at her vehemence and her breaking of all bee tradition, looked at her more and more interestedly. He found a responsive feeling in himself, not only to the ideas expressed by her words, but to her own attractiveness and boldness.

"Well," he said amazedly, but also sympathetically—"well, you *are* a silly little bee!"

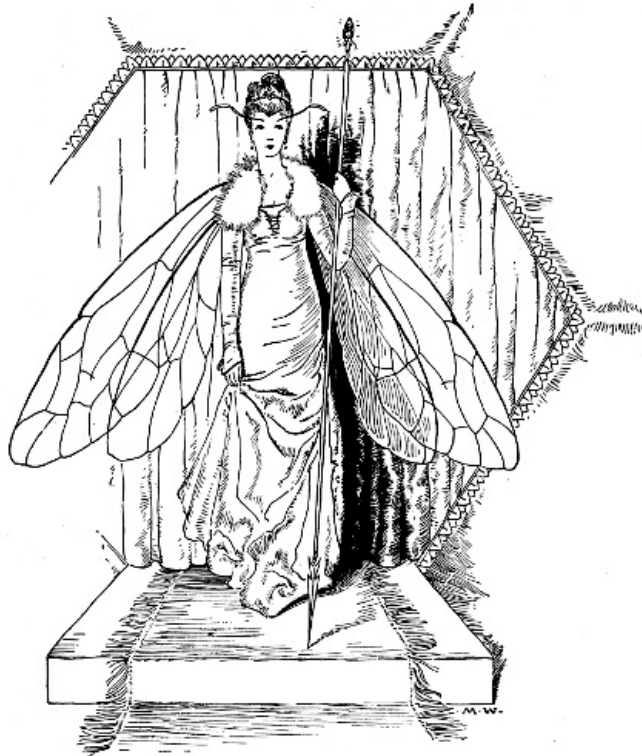
But now the excitement around the Princess's cell broke out afresh. She was evidently about to come forth. From inside her cell she piped more loudly and more often than ever. Suddenly a loud, answering trumpeting was heard, and Beffa came hopping and humming to announce the approach of the old Queen. It was the Queen who was making the answering trumpeting. She came majestically along toward the cell of the Princess with a group of attendant bees about her. These attendants always kept circling slowly, but animatedly, about her, facing toward her, and although constantly shifting and changing places, always maintaining a complete circle around her. Every now and then she gave a loud trumpeting, and each time she was answered by a shrill piping from the cell. Or perhaps it was the old Queen who was defiantly answering the challenges of the Princess.

All the bees were enormously excited. They moved about constantly, buzzing and grouping in dense masses, now here, now there, but mostly close to the great cell. They were, however, plainly divided in their feeling, for some of the groups were intent on keeping near the Queen.

All the drones, however, clustered around the Princess's cell. Only Hero, who still stood by the

side of Nuova a little to one side, had not joined the group of drones which was giving all its attention to the awaited appearance of the Princess. None of them paid the slightest attention to the Queen.

The excitement steadily increased. It was evident that the climax was at hand. Suddenly a breathless silence succeeded the buzzing whir. All the bees stood still with eyes fastened on the royal cell, and there came slowly forth from it, with beautiful but cold, set face and slow automatic movement, the new Princess.



There came slowly forth—the new Princess

As she stepped clear of her cell, with long, slender body erect, and shining delicate wings already nearly dry and straight, the whole mass of the bees quivered with renewed excitement. She carried a long, shining silver lance which she held point upward and used to support her first rather uncertain steps.

The old Queen, staring defiantly at the shining Princess, seemed to realize that the end of her reign had come. But she lifted her own long lance threateningly in the air and gave out a challenging trumpet call that sounded loud through all the hive.

The Princess, though obviously not yet in full control of her movements because of her long confinement in the cell, nevertheless faced the threatening old Queen with full defiance, and piped back a vigorous answer.

The Queen seemed to lose all her self-control at this, and stooping a little, and putting her lance in place so that it pointed directly at the Princess, started to rush at her. But a mass of bees threw themselves in front of her, blocking her way and pushing her lance up.

Thwarted in her intention of killing the Princess or putting her to flight, the old Queen hesitated a moment, and then with a loud cry of "Who loves me, follow me to make a new home," she rushed for the opening of the hive followed by a great swarm of worker bees.

Nuova turned anxiously to Hero to see if he were going to follow the old Queen from the hive. Her own inclination was to go with her, for she detested the haughty, cold-faced new Princess, both because of her appearance and insolent manner and because she felt that Hero would surely win in the Great Courting Chase and hence become the Royal Consort of the Princess and have to die for her sake. So she timidly touched him with one of her antennæ to attract his attention, which was all being given to the stirring scene before them.

"Are you going to follow the old Queen?" she asked, "or stay with the Princess?"

Hero started, as she spoke, as if awakened from a daze. He looked down at her curiously, as if only half recognizing her. Then he turned again to look intently at the Princess and the group of drones about her. With a quick turn back to Nuova he answered her as if astonished by her question:

"I shall stay with the Princess of course." Then he straightened up proudly and added: "Indeed, I think she will be my Princess; my Queen."

He looked toward the Princess again, this time eagerly and bending rather toward her as if impatient to go to her. And even as he looked toward her, her eyes, moving slowly and proudly over the whole group of bees who had elected to remain in the hive with her, rested on him, and stopped there. As she saw the handsome drone bending toward her with his eager eyes fixed on her, a slow smile came over her face. It was the first appearance of anything but defiance or cold insolence to which she had yet given expression. Both Hero and Nuova saw it. Poor Nuova! It was too much for her. She could hardly stand. Hero felt her trembling at his side. He turned his face to look down at her, and was astonished and then suddenly touched and even moved to see in her wet eyes the revealed love of this pretty little worker bee for him.

He spoke to her half curiously, half tenderly. "And are you going with the old Queen, or will you stay here with the Princess?" he asked.

"Stay, stay," whispered Nuova, almost sobbing. "I think—she will be—my—Queen, also."

As she said this she turned away. Just then the old Queen and the swarm of bees about her rushed from the hive. All the bees remaining began to sing a loud song of gladness and welcome to the Princess who was to be their new Queen. And they all joined in a mad dance of joy—except Nuova, who hid her tear-stained face and limp body behind the nearest great honeycomb.

CHAPTER VII

Nuova goes Outside

When Nuova felt that she could face again the scene near the cell, she left her hiding-place and came slowly out into the open space where she had left Hero. He was gone. She knew, without looking, that he was now with the other drones pressing about the cold, proud Princess. She looked rather for her old friends Saggia and Beffa. Though Saggia had lost all patience with her because she had spoken to the drones, and had punished her, and even given her over to Uno, Due, Tre, and the other bees who disliked her, she still liked Saggia and believed that Saggia liked her.

So she looked around for them. But they were not in the mass about the Princess nor in any of the groups which were beginning to take up again the different kinds of work of the hive.

Nuova noticed some bees going in and out the entrance hole of the hive, and although she knew, by instinct, that she was still too young to leave the hive, yet that strange driving spirit in her, which was always impelling her to do things against bee traditions and custom, urged her to the bright opening. Once there she hesitated. The brilliant sunshine outside was blinding to her eyes, accustomed so far only to the half-light of the hive. She had a curious sensation too, half of fear of this unknown world outside, half of fascination to plunge recklessly into it to see and learn the new things there must be in it, and to escape from the automatic, heartless life of the hive, and the latest and bitterest unhappiness this life had just brought to her.

As she stood, uncertain, at the edge of the opening, she heard a familiar humming just outside the opening, and at once stepped out. She found herself on a broad platform as wide as the hive and extending forward for what seemed to her a long distance, but which was in reality only a few inches. On either side of the platform and beyond it were grass and flowers and bushes, and still farther away some great trees, all new and wonderful things to her. Above was the blue sky, and she heard birds twittering, and far away the song of a woman working in the garden. And it was all very light and fresh and fragrant. Nuova liked it.

She heard the familiar humming again. She turned her attention to the entrance platform. There were only a few bees on it. A few guards moved easily and half-lazily around, and a few foraging bees were coming and going with loads of pollen and honey or with pollen baskets and honey sacs empty. But suddenly she saw Beffa. It was he who was making the familiar humming. With tired, drawn face and with only grimaces for smiles, he was slowly hopping and humming near the front edge of the platform. He often came to a standstill to look with fixed gaze out into the distance. Beffa was a sad bee, for his Queen had gone and he could not follow her. Poor Beffa! It made Nuova sad, too, to see him.

And then she saw Saggia, too. She was at one side of the platform with dustpan and brush, and occasionally stooping over to brush up something. She, too, seemed sad and tired. She looked older than Nuova had seen her look before. Saggia, like Beffa, every now and then stood quite still and gazed far away into the garden or sky as if hoping to see again the old Queen whom they had lost. Saggia and Beffa had come close together without noticing each other or Nuova, so occupied with their own thoughts were they. But soon Saggia noticed Beffa and moved up close to him.

"Beffa, you are sad," said Saggia, in a low voice so that only Beffa should hear.



"Beffa, you are sad," said Saggia

Even Beffa did not hear her at first, or, at least, he did not heed her. But when Saggia repeated what she had said, Beffa came out of his reverie with a jerk, and awkwardly made a little hop and grimace.

"Sad," said he. "Great Apis forfend. Haven't we a shining new Princess to our hive; a virgin new Princess to wed and be a new Queen to us all? Why should we mourn for an old Queen that's gone? Why be sad with a new Queen to come? Ha-ha," he laughed sardonically and bitterly.

"Yes, sad," repeated Saggia again, still speaking low and significantly, "when we have just lost our old Queen who liked her jester, Beffa, and even her old floor-cleaner, Saggia, who neither of them know whether the new Queen will like them or not. Oh, sad, sad! Ha-ha!" And she half-imitated Beffa's sardonic laugh and his hop and grimace.

Beffa turned and faced Saggia squarely, surprised to find wise old Saggia troubled and depressed just as he was. After a long, keen look at her, he made a solemn gesture to the distance, and then a mocking bow toward the hive entrance.

"The Queen has passed: long live the Queen!" he exclaimed.

Several of the guard and forager bees near him heard his cry and called out after him—

"The Queen has passed: long live the Queen!"

But one old guard of testy temper added, speaking rather roughly to Beffa: "What are you doing here? Doesn't the Princess laugh at your old tricks? Can't you find some new ones?"

Beffa turned angrily toward the guard, as if to answer sharply, but suddenly checked himself and began capering and humming. Then he sang in a bitter voice:

"Let the guards guard, and the jester jest,
Let Saggia clean, and the new queen wed,
Let all the bees do all they did,
For life is doing what we're bid.
Oh, life is doing what we're bid.
Ha-ha!"

Saggia felt a little anxious on Beffa's account, for his song seemed bitter, and she saw that the guard was looking both puzzled and sour as she listened to it. So Saggia spoke to her hurriedly.

"The odor from our full pantries comes strong from the hives this morning," she said. "I hope it won't attract the Black Bees."

"Oh, the Black Bees," said the guard, superiorly. "Let them come. We'll show them how robbers are treated."

Just as the guard finished speaking, a commotion began on the other side of the platform, and Nuova saw a large black-and-yellow-striped creature with a long spear lunging fiercely toward

the entrance of the hive. It was a Yellow Jacket. She knew it at once, because she had heard some of the nurse bees one day talking about these fierce black-and-yellow-banded robbers that sometimes fought their way into the hive to steal honey.

The guard near Saggia and Beffa hurried across the platform brandishing her lance. But already three or four other guards had thrown themselves on the intruder and were beating it back, striking it viciously with their lances. The Yellow Jacket made a good fight, but the bee Amazons were too many for it. It was wounded, began to weaken, and soon was hustled back off the platform and on through the grass behind a near-by bush.

The guard who had been talking with Saggia came back proudly to her, still brandishing her long lance.

"That's the way we do it," she said. "And a Yellow Jacket is stronger than a Black Bee."

"Yes," replied Saggia, wagging her old head wisely, "but not stronger than ten Black Bees, or a hundred, and that is the way *they* come."

As Saggia finished speaking, the guards who had driven the Yellow Jacket away returned boisterously, and joining all the other guards on the platform, formed in a line, and half-marching, half-dancing, went through some military maneuvers. While they were doing this, another lot of guards came out of the hive, and forming in a line opposite them, also went through the martial dance. At the end of it all the guards who had been outside marched into the hive, while the new ones remained outside on the platform. It was the "relief of the guard."

All during the guards' dancing and marching, Nuova had stood still watching them intently. Neither Saggia nor Beffa had seen her yet. And she was afraid to speak to them for fear of being made to go back into the hive again. She had made up her mind to stay outside. It was all so much more beautiful and exciting out here. She had decided that she would not be a nurse or wax-maker or anything else inside the hive any longer. She wanted to be a forager and be free to go in and out as she liked, and to fly far out into the garden and spend long, sunshiny hours there.

Just then, however, Saggia caught sight of her. It was, indeed, Beffa who saw her first. He quietly touched Saggia with one of his antennæ and waved the other in Nuova's direction. Saggia hurried over to her, looking anxiously around her to see if any other bees had noticed Nuova.

"What are you doing out here?" whispered Saggia to her as she reached her side. "Who sent you out? It isn't time for a week yet for you to come outside."

Saggia wanted to be angry with her, but the sight of Nuova, so sad and forlorn-looking, and with tear-marks still on her face, was too much for her kind heart. And she really loved Nuova very much. Indeed, all that Nuova had done, and what she had said, had made a strange appeal to the wise old bee. She was almost frightened sometimes to feel that down deep in her heart she not only sympathized with much of Nuova's revolt against the rigid traditions and automatic life of the bees, but that she realized that this stifling of all independent action and all personal emotions was not always the way to the highest happiness nor even the wisest conduct for the bees. She shuddered to think that perhaps she, too, was a "new bee."

Nuova was half-frightened by Saggia's discovery of her and by her hard words. But she answered her willfully and defiantly, although with a touch of attractive mischievousness.

"Nobody sent me out," she said. "I have just decided to be a forager; that's all. While I was in the hive a little while ago a forager came in with two great loads of pollen in her pollen baskets. She was very tired and seemed sick. While she was looking around for an empty cell in which to put her pollen, she suddenly sank down—and—and died."

Nuova shivered as she said this, and dropped her antennæ down over her eyes for a moment.

"Ah, yes," said Saggia sadly but proudly; "worked herself to death. That is the noble death we have. We die in the harness—working for others, working for the hive. The bees know that death well and honor it."

"They may know it well," broke in Nuova sharply, "but they do not honor it well. Anyway, not by their actions. Nobody paid any attention to the poor forager when she was staggering along with her load, and none when she sank down on the floor and died. Except pretty soon a couple of cleaners came along and dragged her body away. I suppose they brought it out here and flung it off the platform somewhere. A noble death, well honored, indeed! Well, I don't want that kind. I am going to die out in the garden, under a flower."

While Nuova was speaking, Beffa had hopped and hummed his way over to them, and now he broke in with a song, which he sang as he hopped and danced about them. This is what he sang:

"Work, no play; work all day;
A useful life; a usual life;
The good bee's way,
All day, all day.
Then die and lie
Till Saggia spy
The carrion stuff—

A tug; a shove,
And the friend you love
Is gone to grass:
Ha, ha, alas, is gone to grass.
A noble life; a halted breath:
The epitaph: 'She worked to death.'

Both Saggia and Nuova listened to Beffa and watched him till he had finished singing. They both saw clearly his own unhappiness and his own revolt against the rigor of the bee tradition that demands always the full sacrifice of the individual for the community. Saggia realized that Beffa, too, was a "new bee."

Nuova, in the meanwhile, was looking off again into the beautiful garden; at the green grass and bushes; the many-colored flowers; the blue sky and warm, bright sunshine over all. She was enchanted. She drew a long breath of relief and happiness. She turned to Saggia.

"Will they keep me in," she whispered, "if I go back into the hive? If they will, I shan't go," she added positively.

Saggia looked about again to see if other bees were paying attention to them. None was.

"No," she said, speaking in a low voice, "they won't keep you. They won't pay any attention to you as long as you keep busy, coming and going. You can be a honey-gatherer. The honey-flowers are only a little way off, there in the garden. But first you must get acquainted with the outside of the hive and the entrance. Look around. See, we are just by the side of this big bush, with that long branch hanging over. You can go out a little way from the platform, then turn around and see how the hive looks from there. Then go a little farther and look back again. Then go a little way to one side, and then to the other, and notice everything that will help you to find your way back. If you get lost, see if you can't see other honey-gatherers or pollen-foragers flying with full loads; they are returning to the hive; follow them. As to collecting the honey, you will learn that easily; in fact, you will be surprised when you get to the flowers, to find that you already know how. Be careful and not get into the poppies that shut up on you, and watch always for the great-crested bee-bird that swoops down on you, and, peck"—Saggia exaggeratedly imitated a bird's pecking—"and that is the end. Now, be off for your first flight. But not too far—not for the first time."

Nuova's face shone with eagerness. "Oh, thank you, Saggia, thank you. You are good to me. You are different from the others. Thank you, dearest Saggia."

Nuova started quickly forward toward the edge of the platform. Just then Beffa, who had been hopping gently about Nuova and Saggia while they were talking, now hopped and danced along in front of Nuova, singing:

"The new bee and the old world;
Flowers are there and butterflies;
But ugly toads and big bee-birds,
If the old bee thinks she knows,
The new bee knows she doesn't.
Ah, new bee knows the world-old truth,
That the old world's ever new."

Nuova had slowed her steps so that she could hear all of Beffa's little song, and as he finished she came up to him and touched him caressingly with one of her antennæ. But Beffa shrank from her caress. It meant so much to him, and yet he knew it meant so little to her. He knew Nuova liked him; yes, but he knew that he more than liked Nuova: he loved her. Poor Beffa! Love! A pitiful, deformed drone that could not fly; that could never be in the Great Courting Chase! And it was only then that the drones loved; and then only a Princess that could be loved. What he felt was impossible for a bee to feel; bee tradition told him that; and yet, he knew that he did feel this impossible thing.

"Beffa, you are good to me too," said Nuova to him; "you and Saggia are both good to me. And you two are the wisest bees in the hive, for you know that I am not the same as the other bees. No bees are exactly the same, I believe. We can't be all exactly alike, and we can't all like the same things, or think the same way, can we? I wish I could be a Queen so that I could have you always for my jester; always by to say funny things and wise things."

Beffa made a grimace—to hide a sob. And he hopped more grotesquely than ever, while he sang:

"Ah, well, who knows?
New things unheard of may be true,
For every day the world is new.
Ah, well, who knows?
Ah, well, who knows?"

"Good-bye, Beffa," said Nuova. And she stepped to the edge of the platform, and spread her wings for her first flight, her first plunge into the outside world of grass and flowers and butterflies and bee-birds. And just then something happened that postponed this flight.

CHAPTER VIII

Nuova and Hero again, and a Battle

Just as Nuova was about to launch herself into the air, a sudden commotion at the hive opening made her look back. After this look she had no further thought of the garden. What she saw was the group of drones coming out of the hive, with another group of worker bees attendant upon them. These attendants were cleaning the drones' bodies and wings and evidently preparing them for some great event. It was plain to Nuova that this was the preparation for the Great Courting Chase. Her heart gave a leap, her eyes became misty; she stumbled and almost fell. She was so dizzy that she thought sudden death had struck her. It was only, however, the blow of her heart and mind in realizing that Hero—her Hero—must be in the group and preparing to leave her forever. He had, in a sense, already left her forever she knew, for he had made his decision—or rather she felt that the cruel bee tradition had made the decision for him—to follow the Princess. And if he followed her he could but win. Her wonderful, handsome, powerful Hero would be easily the successful one in the Great Courting Chase.

She ran her eyes anxiously over the group of drones now well out of the entrance and spreading out on the platform. At first she did not see Hero. But in a moment she did. He was a little apart from the others, and showed none of the excitement of the other drones. Indeed, he seemed to be rather depressed, and was evidently keeping quite by himself. He had not even an attendant with him. Nuova saw in this her chance.

She turned back from the edge of the platform, merged into the excited crowd, none of the bees paying any attention to her at all, and began to work her way through the press toward Hero.

Just then, however, Uno appeared by his side and began to brush his wings. He turned on her with an impatient gesture. Surprised and angry, Uno made a grimace and left him. A moment later, Due, noticing that he had no helper, hurried over to him, but she, also, much to her surprise and chagrin, was treated as Uno had been.

Hero seemed to be in an irritable mood. As the drones and their attendants came farther out, he moved away toward the front of the platform. This brought him rather near Nuova, who was able to reach him before any other bee could offer him her services.

Nuova, unperceived by Hero, slipped behind him and began nervously and awkwardly, glancing at the attendants on the other drones for guidance, to clean his wings. Soon an awkward tug apprised Hero that some one was again trying to attend him, and he turned with an angry movement to drive her off, when he recognized Nuova, and arrested his gesture. He stood still, looking at her keenly, and, without a word, let her go on caring for him. She grew even more nervous and awkward. Then he smiled gently, and spoke to her in a low voice.



Nuova began to clean his wings

"How do you come to be out here?" he asked. "You weren't sent as an attendant to us. Only the older and more experienced bees are given that—honor." He smiled again. "You didn't come out just now?"

"No," said Nuova almost in a whisper—"no, I was going out for honey."

"Oh, fine!" said Hero. "Out into the world already! You must have done your work in the hive very well."

"Yes," murmured Nuova demurely.

Just then two or three Black Bees slipped out from behind a bush near the platform, but no one noticed them.

"But why don't you go, then?" asked Hero. "It is beautiful over there among the flowers." He waved an antenna toward the garden. "And fragrant, and exciting. Other kinds of creatures; beetles and grasshoppers and big buzzing flies. Some bad ones, too; spiders and giant bee-birds always watching, watching to catch you." Nuova shuddered. "But you are not afraid, are you?" Hero looked at her keenly. "Or are you? Do you prefer to stay here in safety and just wait on the drones?"

"Yes," said Nuova slowly, "I prefer to wait on a drone."

"I am surprised," said Hero sternly and even half-contemptuously.

Just then Nuova made an awkward tug at his wing. He winced. "Ouch!" he said; then half-laughed. "Your champion will never win Principessa if you pull his wings out."

As he said this, Nuova involuntarily, in response to her feelings, gave an even harder tug at his wings.

Hero exclaimed again, and half-pulled away from her. He spoke almost angrily.

"Here, what *are* you doing?" he cried. Then, as he looked into the eager, excited, pretty face of his little attendant, he felt his heart give a curious throb. And when he spoke again it was almost tenderly.

"Well, you are good to try and help me, anyway. But"—and now he spoke rather moodily—"I don't need much preparing. I can beat any of them"—and he waved contemptuously toward the other drones—"easily, just as I am."

Poor Nuova! He could hardly have said a more discouraging thing to her, or one to hurt her more. She drew back a little and had hard work not to cry. She half-sobbed as she said: "That—is—fine. I am sure—you can." She paused. Then she said slowly: "And if you do beat them, are you sure to get—her? Are you sure to be able to catch—her?"

The excitement on the platform was growing. The drones seemed to be getting impatient, and the attendants worked feverishly at the cleaning and making ready for the wonderful event about to happen. The infection of all this excitement began to seize Hero. He had turned his face away from Nuova to stare intently at the opening of the hive. It was there, of course, that the Princess would soon appear.

At Nuova's last question he started a little. "Eh?" he said rather brusquely. "Oh, yes, of course, I can catch her. She will fly faster than we at first, but she can't keep it up as long as we can. She will try to go higher and higher in the air, but that is hard work. That is when we shall catch up with her." He paused, then added, musingly: "It is odd; she is trying her best to get away from us and yet she wants to get caught all the time. She must get caught, you know, or we shouldn't have any Queen, and the hive would go all to pieces. The old Queen never comes back, of course. The Princess is our one chance to have a Queen at all."

Nuova seemed to be thinking hard. Something was puzzling her. "But," she asked insistently, "what really does happen if a Princess doesn't get caught, or something happens to her. There must be some way to save the community, isn't there?"

Hero seemed to have lost interest again in Nuova and her questionings. He was gazing fixedly at the hive entrance.

"Oh," he said carelessly, "I don't know. I've heard sometimes that a worker bee can—"

He was suddenly interrupted. There was a new and very violent commotion on that side of the platform which the few Black Bees had approached, unnoticed, a few minutes before. Now there was a whole group of them plainly in sight and many others were coming quickly out from behind the bush. A great and angry buzzing was heard from the guards on the platform and cries of "Lotta, Lotta! The Amazons! Call Lotta! Call the Amazons! Hurry! The Black Bees! The Black Bees!"

The guards, few as they were in comparison with the oncoming horde of Black Bees, threw themselves bravely at them, and a moment after Lotta and her Amazons began issuing pell-mell from the hive entrance. They were met almost immediately by the foremost Black Bees, who had easily killed or were driving back the few guards, and were making rapid headway over the platform toward the entrance. A few even had passed in through the entrance, but they were driven out again at once by the issuing Amazons. In fact, most of the first Black Bees to gain a

foothold on the platform and to push forward to the entrance or into it were killed. But that brought no terror to the others. They pressed on over the dead bodies of their comrades, lunging and striking viciously with their long lances.

But Lotta and the Amazons were fighting fiercely, too. They were making a heroic defense of the hive and its stores. The battle raged with great fury, but for a little while with no apparent advantage to either side. The Black Bees seemed, on the whole, the more expert and the more furious fighters—they are, indeed, a race of bees famous for their fighting—but Lotta's wonderful personal courage and deeds of prowess were a great inspiration to the defenders. She appeared to be everywhere at once, and her shouts of defiance to the enemy and of encouragement to her followers made up in some measure for the feebler strength and less experience of her band.

This was so obvious to the Black Bees that she was soon singled out for special attack by groups of her adversaries. Two or three Black Bees would combine to assail her from different sides, but her lightning movements and dashing bravery had so far saved her even from being touched by an enemy's lance. But just at the moment when Nuova had recovered a little from her amazement and terror at this sudden invasion, Lotta received her first wound. The fierce Black Bees were closing around her too closely. Nuova felt a violent rage rising within her as she realized that at any cost the Black Bees were going to kill the leader of the Amazons. Lotta was staggering, and a half-dozen lances were lunging at her. She stumbled, gave one final shout of defiance—and fell.

It was a terrible blow to the Amber Amazons. They were seized with dismay. They had no one to lead them. They hesitated, gave way here and there, and the Black Bees with triumphant shouts pressed forward. Some of them had even reached the entrance, when a new, shrill battle-cry and call of encouragement to the Amber fighters rose above all the noise of the battle.

The cry came from Nuova. She had watched the whole terrible struggle in a sort of daze; half of terror, half of utter amazement. But when Lotta was struck down, the rage rising within her seized her completely, and when the Black Bees had pressed on over the fallen leader's body with shouts of triumph, she sprang forward, grasped Lotta's own lance from her sinking hand, and threw herself with such fury on the rear of the marauders that they had to turn to defend themselves. Then it was that she had uttered her first battle-cry. As the Amber bees heard it and saw at the same time that some of the black fighters had turned to defend themselves against an attack in the rear, they checked their retreat and began answering back this new shrill call. In the next moment they saw something that filled them all with rejoicing and gave them at once a new courage.

Nuova, taking a lesson from the method of the attackers, had looked about, even as she leaped into the fight, for the leader of the Blacks, and had fought her way fiercely directly toward her. In a moment they were face to face, and in another moment thrusting and parrying in deadly personal combat.

But nothing could withstand the vigor and audacity of this rage-maddened new warrior's assault, and the black leader, first contemptuous, then amazed, then terrified, found herself fighting vainly for her life. She managed to strike Nuova one or two glancing blows with her lance, but for answer received a thrust fairly through the body, and fell with a great cry of defeat and pain.

This it was that filled the despairing Amber bees with a new courage and reanimated them to fresh resistance. Turning on their attackers, they renewed the battle with an irresistible surge toward Nuova, and reaching her and following her lead in but few moments more they had rushed the disheartened Black Bees off of the platform. They even followed them into the grass, where they killed many of them one by one. Then they hurried back with shouts of victory, and ranged themselves in lines for marching and dancing. While the foragers busied themselves with carrying the bodies of the fallen off of the platform, all the Amazons marched and danced and sang loud songs of triumph.



Nuova was among the fallen

But Nuova was not among them. She was among the fallen. Not far from the body of the dead leader of the Black Bees whom she had so brilliantly overcome, Nuova lay huddled. Saggia, who had been hustled out of the press and into the entrance of the hive while the battle was going on, now hurried to her fallen friend. Beffa, also, came hopping anxiously to her, and Hero, who knew now that Nuova was no coward, and had, indeed, been seized with a great admiration and at the same time a great solicitude for his extraordinary little worker-bee friend, also hastened to her side and bent over her. Other bees, too, came crowding around, and Nuova's body would almost have been trampled under foot by the surging crowd if Hero had not angrily cleared a little space about her. Saggia, who had found already to her great joy that Nuova showed no lance wound, but had only been stunned by a glancing blow, was lifting her gently to her feet. And just as Hero came to her side, Nuova, dazed and faint, first opened her eyes.

CHAPTER IX

Hero and Nuova once more, and the Great Courting Chase

"My brave little Nuova," said Saggia, joyfully and tenderly. And Beffa hopped happily about, singing softly to her:

"For a new bee
A new way;
From nurse to warrior
All in a day.
What's for to-morrow?
Who can say?
For the newest bee,
The newest way."

The other bees about her were all talking confusedly together. "She saved our stores! Who is she?" they cried. "She is Nuova, the nurse! Nuova, the wax-maker! She is Nuova, the honey-gatherer! She was not even an Amazon! Is she hurt? She is killed! She is wounded! What a brave bee!"

Hero had said nothing yet, but now, as he leaned over her with his face close to hers and her eyes opened slowly, he murmured tenderly, "Little Nuova!"

Nuova looked languidly up at him and around at Saggia and Beffa; then closed her eyes again with a weak but happy smile, and spoke in a low, trembling voice: "She struck me, but I hit her back; I hit her harder."

"You killed her, Nuova," broke in Hero, proudly. "You were wonderful."

Nuova shuddered. "Killed her!" she said sadly. "Dreadful! I am sorry."

"Sorry?" cried Saggia. "You silly! You saved us! You won the victory by killing her!"

"Who was she?" asked Nuova, still sadly.

"Why, the Chief of the Black Bees," said Hero, proudly and tenderly. "Their greatest fighter! And you, little Nuova, alone, killed her."

Nuova looked up at him thoughtfully. "Are you glad?" she asked.

Hero turned with stupefaction to Saggia. She could only lift her hands in amazement. Nuova's mental processes were too much for them, although Beffa, hopping near, nodded his head wisely to himself.

"Glad? I glad? Of course, you absurd warrior!" said Hero. "We are all glad, aren't we?" he asked of the others about.

"Glad? Of course, we are glad! You saved us!" said they all.

"Well," said Nuova, smiling gently, and looking up at Hero, "if you are glad, I am glad." And then she let her head sink down again and closed her eyes.

While Saggia and Beffa and Hero had been caring for Nuova and talking to her, most of the other bees had gradually resumed their normal occupations, the guards moving watchfully about over the platform, the foragers coming and going, and two or three cleaners scrubbing the floor here and there to remove all stains of the battle.

But Uno, Due, and Tre had not yet gone back into the hive to resume their nursing work, but with a few other bees had formed a group standing a little way off from the group about Nuova. They were whispering and looking and pointing toward Nuova. Uno finally left her group and came over and joined the bees about Nuova. She whispered to a few of them, and finally spoke out loud enough to be generally heard.

"Nuova was not an Amazon," she said. "Why should she fight? Is this the way of bees?"

Due and Tre shook their heads vigorously and murmured, "No, no."

And several other bees of their group shook their heads dubiously.

"No," spoke up Due, "this is not the bee custom. A good bee does the thing she is set to do. For a nurse to use a lance! No, that is unheard of."

"No, no, it isn't done, you know," said a drone near by, wagging his head wisely.

"If it hadn't been done, you loafer," cried Saggia angrily, "you would have starved to death before we could have refilled our pantries again after the Black Bees had taken all our food!"

"But it is not the bee way," interjected Tre; then adding boldly and tauntingly to Saggia, "Are you a new bee, too?"

"No," replied Saggia vigorously, "I am an old bee—old enough to have learned a little more than I knew when I was a nurse bee—a loafing nurse bee," she added, looking significantly and hard at Uno, Due, and Tre in turn.

They all started guiltily and began to move slowly toward the entrance, but all the time looking back malevolently at Saggia and Nuova.

"It's not the right bee way," they muttered. "It isn't the usual way."

Several other bees joined them in their muttering and head-shaking.

Just then, however, a new excitement became manifest at the hive entrance. Those drones who had gone back into the hive were issuing now post-haste, while those still outside joined those coming out. To them hastened their attendants, and in a moment all was busy preparation and expectation again.

Beffa, who had moved over to the entrance as the drones began to come out, now came hopping and humming across the platform toward Saggia, Nuova, and Hero. As he came near he was singing:

"She comes; she comes;
Principessa now would wed;
She seeks the sky for marriage-bed.
Let drones aside their languor fling;
Bethink the prize; to be a King."

Hero started up, infected by the excitement and driven by the still potent bee tradition. "She is coming," he murmured, "the Princess."

All the bees were growing more and more excited. The drones began to form in a line. Their attendants worked feverishly at cleaning and preparing them. The other bees cleared a space near the entrance, in front of the drones, whose eagerness was betrayed by their bending forward like runners on the starting-line. Hero started forward to take his place at the nearest

end of the line. Nuova tried to stand, Saggia helping her. She tottered as if to fall, but regained her balance. Her face was drawn and tears welled from her eyes. She pushed Saggia to one side and totteringly followed Hero. As he moved to his place, as if in a sort of daze and hypnotized and driven by another will than his, Nuova staggered into place behind him, as attendant, and made feeble attempts to brush his wings. He did not seem to see her nor even to realize her presence, but kept his eyes fixed on the entrance.

The commotion among the bees increased. All watched incessantly the opening of the hive. Suddenly the Princess was seen to be coming slowly and proudly out, still cold and set of face, but beautiful in figure and carriage, truly queenly in all her seeming.

Three or four attendants were busy behind her, brushing her long, slender wings, and removing every speck or stain from her body. The drones all leaned farther forward, their eagerness infecting her. For she became more animated and began spreading out and fluttering her wings. The drones did the same.

Beffa was hopping about with ridiculous activity and awkwardness, humming inaudible words. Suddenly, with a jerk, Hero turned his eyes from the Princess and let them wander about as if seeking something. They rested on Beffa, who in response made motions in his dancing that unmistakably directed Hero to look behind him. He did so and saw Nuova. He stared fixedly at her a moment. Then he leaned toward her and said in a curious, tense, but almost appealing tone, as if he were asking her for advice or help:

"The Great Courting Chase is on! A Queen is to be won! The prize is to be a King!"

Nuova called on all her strength, physical and spiritual.

"Yes, yes," she gasped. "Be ready! Lean forward! They are starting! You will win!" Her voice broke a little. "You can't lose, Hero—wonderful Hero. You will be King—our King—my King. Good-bye!" She stifled a sob. "Good luck! Good-bye!"

She could say no more. She turned her face away from his, sobbing unrestrainedly. Saggia, who had come to her side, caught her and supported her just as the Princess, with wings outspread and eyes fixed outward and upward, ran quickly to the outer edge of the platform, followed a little way behind by the drones in a group. As the Princess reached the platform's edge, she launched herself beautifully into the air and flew swiftly, first straight out and up and then curving gently away to the left. One after another the drones flew after her.

Nuova gazed fixedly after the following drones. Hero's delay with Nuova made him the last to spring into the air. But he flew so strongly that it seemed certain that he would quickly make up for this handicap in the great race. Indeed, some of the onlooking bees began to call out, "See how Hero is gaining! He will surely win! Hero will be King!"

Nuova had strained her gaze after Hero until he with all the others had passed from sight far out and up in the bright sky. As she gazed she had lifted on tiptoe and had even spread out her wings as if she would fly after him, but now as he disappeared she collapsed and fell back heavily with closed eyes and a pitiful sob into Saggia's supporting embrace.

Just then Beffa came hopping and humming over to them and sang, as if mockingly, but really with sympathetic and comforting meaning:

"Ha, ha, the sad attendant!
Her champion is too slow.
He'll never win the Princess,
Her kiss he'll never know."

CHAPTER X

Nuova in the Beautiful Garden

When Nuova had recovered enough to face squarely the situation in her life and in the life of the hive, she found herself very weak and very sad. Above all, she found the thought of going again into the dark hive to work extremely repugnant to her. And almost the first thing she said to Saggia, who had remained faithfully by her, supporting and caring for her, was that she would not go back into the hive to nurse or make wax or do anything else that meant staying inside.

Saggia comforted her by saying that she would not have to work inside. The kindly old bee whispered to her that there was always so much confusion and such change in the hive arrangements whenever a new Princess was born, and either she or the old Queen went out with many of the workers, that she could easily change her kind of work now without any notice being taken of it. And to confirm this Saggia pointed to several of the nurses, among them Uno, Due, and Tre, making one after another the little trial flights that Saggia had told Nuova to make preparatory to going into the garden out of sight of the hive. These nurses were plainly intending to become foragers. Even as Saggia and Nuova watched them, one after another flew out higher and farther and disappeared into the garden.

It was a beautiful garden on the edge of which the hive was set. The owner of the garden was a great lover and student of flowers. He liked bees and beetles and birds, too; all kinds of live things, plant or animal. And no one was ever allowed to kill any creature, little or big, in his garden, so it was full to overflowing with life and animation. Birds made their nests in it; squirrels barked in the trees; even moles and gophers made their underground runways unmolested. There were open, sunny grass-plots for playing, and close little copses and coverts for hiding, and great trees for climbing to see out into the still wider world beyond the garden walls. But the garden itself was world enough for most of the creatures that lived in it. There were flowers enough for the bees; seeds and worms enough for the birds; nuts enough for the squirrels. And if some of the happy family in the garden had to live by eating some of the others, still that was the way of life, and the only thing was to hope and try to make sure that the end would not come too soon.



In the Garden

Nuova already loved the garden, although so far she had not been in it; at least not been any more in it than standing on the entrance platform of the hive and looking into it from this vantage-ground. But now she was really to go out into it, and sad and tired though she was, she felt a little thrill of happiness as she thought of what she might see over there beyond the near-by bushes, out there among the brilliant flowers and the lush grasses. She turned to Saggia gratefully.

"Good-bye, dear Saggia," she said gently. "I am going to go into the garden now. I will make the little flights first as you told me, so as to be able to find my way back to the hive—but, I don't know, Saggia, I don't feel like ever coming back to the hive." Her eyes filled with tears. "He—he will never come back. He will win, and he will—will die." She shuddered and nearly collapsed again.

Saggia could say nothing. She believed, too, that Hero would win in the Great Courting Chase. And if he won, he would die. It was really, she thought with some anger, a very stupid sort of arrangement; very unfair to the King; to be crowned because he was the finest, strongest, and swiftest drone in the hive, or in any of the other near-by hives whose drones also joined in any Courting Chase they noticed going on, only to die at once. It was simply not only stupid; it was brutal.

She did not like to think of Nuova's going off alone into the garden so soon. And she could not put out of her mind the uneasy feeling that Nuova would never come back to the hive at all; not even as a forager who might go out and in as she pleased. Nuova had too plainly shown that her interest in living was gone, and her surrender to her impulses of the moment was likely at any time to be complete even though it might lead to death itself. Saggia decided that she and Beffa were needed in the garden. As Nuova left her to go to the edge of the platform for her first flights, Saggia scurried off in search of Beffa.

A number of bees were busy at a little group of flowers in the garden when one of them, Uno, who had just turned around facing the general direction of the hive, suddenly uttered an exclamation.

"Well, of all things!" she said. "Beffa in the garden!" The other bees turned and stared.

"And Saggia!" exclaimed one of them. "Beffa and Saggia! Beffa in the garden! What can he do here?"

Beffa, hearing them, released himself from Saggia's support, and began to make weak little hoppings and to sing. Poor Beffa; he was sadly tired, for because of his deformed wings he had had to walk all the way from the hive. And Saggia was tired, too, because she had walked with him, and not only that, but had helped him over some of the rougher places.

Beffa sang:

"Beffa in the garden;
The prisoner in the sun;
No Queen in the palace;
No jesting to be done."

He stopped to rest, and Saggia went slowly to a flower, where she busied herself putting a little pollen into her pollen baskets.

Due turned to Beffa. "Hi, Beffa, you can sing and dance for us while we gather pollen and honey. And you can watch for Bee-Bird to see that he doesn't surprise us. Oh, you can be useful. Hop, hop, hop-la!" And she made a little hop or two, in mimicry of Beffa.

Tre had been looking sharply at Saggia. "And Saggia doesn't seem to be doing much," she said, with asperity. "Foraging again, is she? That is rather a dangerous business for such an old bee, isn't it?" she said malevolently. "The two-legged man giant that owns this garden likes the two-legged bird giants. He is a brute! He protects the birds! And they eat the insects! He might protect us, rather. Brute!"

"Brute!" cried the other bees. "Protect the horrid birds, indeed! Sting him if you see him."

Just then a big blue-bottle fly that had been buzzing about the flowers ventured too near a dark corner lower down in the bush, and was lunged at by a big black spider, which barely missed it. The blue-bottle dashed excitedly away with a tremendous buzzing, and all the bees jumped about nervously a little.

Beffa began to sing without rising from the ground, just moving his feet as if dancing:

"Bee-birds in the tree-tops,
Spiders in the grass;
Death rides down the sunbeam,
Death leaps as you pass."

"Ugh!" said Uno. "Can't you sing something more cheerful? Be funny, can't you?"

Beffa got up and hopped about a little. Then he sang:

"Out among the flower-cups,
Dancing in the sun;
Now a drink of nectar,
Then another one.
Brushing up the pollen,
Hurry 'gainst the gloam,
Pail and basket over-full,
Off to hive and home!"

All the bees skipped and danced and sang after him:

"Pail and baskets over-full,
Off to hive and home!"

After singing this refrain several times and dancing happily about a few moments, the bees set at their work again industriously. It was so beautiful and so bright and so warm in the garden that one could not help being happy in it.

And yet just then Nuova stepped out from behind a flowering bush looking very weary and very sad. Saggia, who had been glancing around for her all the time, slipped quickly and quietly over to her without attracting the attention of any of the bees, and before any other one had seen her.

Saggia led Nuova around to the side of the bush where they would be out of sight of the other bees, and then spoke to her in a low tone.

"Are you all right, Nuova?" she asked anxiously.

Nuova smiled wearily and sadly. "Of course, I am all right," she said gently; "who would not be out here in this wonderful world, this golden sunshine, this fragrant air? It's a place to be all right in all the time. I am going to stay here."

"Stay here? What do you mean?" asked Saggia.

"Simply that, dear Saggia," she replied gently, smiling; "stay right here in the warm sun, near the beautiful flowers. Do you think I am going back into the dark hive to die like that poor forager and be dragged off and tossed out like a piece of dirty wax?" She shuddered. "No, no; I am going to die out here, and lie in the soft grass under that heliotrope there."

Saggia spoke anxiously but sternly. "Die? Die? Why do you talk of dying? Have you a right to die yet? Have you done all you should do for the hive? Are you going to shirk your duty? Anyway"—and her voice grew more kindly—"do you really want to die? Don't you want to do first all the things a bee can do, to nurse—"

"I have nursed," Nuova interrupted.

"And make wax—" Saggia went on.

"I have made wax," Nuova broke in.

Saggia persisted, "And build cells—"

"I have built cells," interrupted Nuova again.

"And gather honey—" Saggia continued.

Nuova touched a near-by flower. "I am gathering honey," she said.

Saggia hesitated a moment, then began again. "And—and—" she stammered; then exclaimed suddenly and triumphantly—"and clean floors!"

Nuova smiled at Saggia's anticlimax. "No, I haven't scrubbed the floor yet. I suppose I ought to enjoy that a little before I die. But you see I am not really old enough to have had time for *everything*."

"That's it," broke in Saggia warmly. "You are not old enough yet. It is nonsense to talk of dying so young. You must live a long time yet. Look at me! Think how old I am!"

Nuova smiled again, but grew earnest as she spoke. "It is not how long you live, Saggia; it is how much you live. I have not done everything, but I have done most things. You, you dear wise, old, sensible bee, you have done the things calmly one after another as it came time for you to do them. But I have tried everything that was interesting and for only as long as it was. You have lived a long and useful life with much in it. I have lived a short and useless one; but also with much in it. You have lived mostly for others, and have been mostly happy. I have lived mostly for myself, and been mostly unhappy. But that is the way I am, Saggia. That is my way of living and really I suppose, my way of being happy; happily unhappy. And, Saggia"—and Nuova bent close over to her, as if to tell her a secret—"you know, don't you, that if I have missed cleaning floors, I have done something else in place of it; something you haven't done. I have loved! And that is the happiest unhappiness I have had."

Saggia was truly shocked. "Nuova," she exclaimed, "haven't I told you before not to say such things! You have *not* loved," she added, firmly, "because you *cannot* love. Poor little Nuova, you have much to learn yet about bee life."

"There is much about it I don't want to learn," muttered Nuova.

"There is much you must learn," replied Saggia sternly, but kindly. "And some of it you must learn now. When I say you cannot love, I mean exactly that; not that you ought not or must not, because other bees do not, but simply that you cannot. Bee loving is not just liking and sighing and laughing and dancing and crying, and being always happy and unhappy at once, but it is becoming the mother of babies, many babies, and that only Princesses can become. And when they are the mothers of babies, they are Queens. In bee land to be a mother is to be a Queen, and to be a Queen is only to be a mother."

Nuova was silent. She felt compelled to believe Saggia, who surely knew about the life of bees if any one did, and who had always spoken truthfully to her. And yet she had a feeling within her that seemed some way to contradict Saggia's knowledge.

"Well, then, Saggia," she said slowly, "I haven't loved, but I have wished to love." And she added in a whisper, "I *want* to love!"

"You cannot love," repeated Saggia firmly. "Only Princesses can love. You should not think of it any more."

Nuova looked up into the sky. And when she spoke it was as if she were speaking in a dream. "I want to love and I cannot love! Only a Princess can love. And I am not a Princess. What can I do? Clean floors?" She turned to Saggia and smiled sadly. "No, I cannot clean floors, either," she said softly. "I am an unfortunate sort of bee, Saggia, a worthless sort. A new bee, but not new enough to love, and too new to clean floors. Just a bee to lie under the heliotrope bush."

Just then Beffa, who had come hopping and gently humming up to them unperceived by either,

and who had overheard Nuova's last words, began to sing:

"A heliotrope or a rose-bush,
A pale-blue flower or pink,
But a dead bee sees no colors
Nor smells sweet smells, I think.
An old world for old bees,
A new world for the new,
And, ah, who knows the real truth?
The untrue may be true."

Nuova was delighted, in her sadness, to see Beffa again. "Beffa, you dear, funny Beffa!" she cried. "But how did you get out here in the garden?"

"He couldn't come,
And so he came.
Can or cannot,
All's a name,"

sang Beffa in reply, hopping about more vigorously than ever.

As Beffa finished, Saggia saw some of the other bees looking scowlingly toward them. She touched Nuova with an antenna.

"Nuova," she said in a low voice, "we must get to work. The other bees are noticing us. We are idling. We must go to work. Beffa can sit here in the sunshine and watch us." She moved off toward a flower.

Nuova looked after her a moment, and then she turned to Beffa.

"Good old Saggia," she said. "She is an example of industry, isn't she? But I don't like her to work just because others are noticing us. That makes me want *not* to work." She stood loitering by him.

Beffa deliberately stretched himself, with a yawn, and settling down comfortably near a dandelion, he hummed, as if half-asleep already:

"Some work because others talk;
Some talk because others work;
The wisest bee keeps wisest way,
He—goes—to—sleep!"

And as he finished he closed his eyes.



Beffa settled down comfortably

Nuova saw through Beffa's transparent means of sending her off to work, and was as much amused as vexed. "Oh," she said, "I much prefer working to talking with bees whose wisdom might put me to sleep, too. Good-bye." She made a mocking curtsy and went off slowly to a small group of flowers which was hidden by a large bush from the rest of the bees.

As soon as she had started, Beffa opened one eye to spy on her, and as she disappeared behind the bush he slowly straightened up, very much awake and evidently strongly possessed by some idea. He let his eyes roam over all of the garden he could see, and he even scanned the air in all directions. Apparently not finding what he sought, he remained quiet, but alert, on the flat dandelion leaf. The bees at the flowers worked industriously. The garden was fragrant and quiet in the sun.

CHAPTER XI

Hero finds Nuova in the Garden

Saggia had joined a group of foragers at work, among whom were Uno and Tre. These two bees at first moved away a little as Saggia came over, but in their foraging work they gradually came close to her again. Pretty soon Uno, after glancing toward Beffa sitting quietly by the dandelion, spoke to Saggia.

"The garden is not a place for jesting," she said sharply; "nor for listening to jesting. Beffa is not a good example for bees who work." As she said this she looked significantly at Saggia, and several of the other bees, overhearing her, smiled maliciously.

Saggia said nothing at first, but busied herself at her flowers. As she changed, however, from one flower to another one near by, she said quietly: "Beffa works harder than most of us."

"Do you call jesting work?" asked Tre indignantly.

"I call Beffa's work hard work—for Beffa; and useful work," Saggia replied.

"What other hive has a jester, a bee that does no work, that just hops and sings?" demanded Uno angrily.

"We are more fortunate than other hives," said Saggia evenly. "We have a bee who has time to think, and a clever tongue to say what he thinks."

No one spoke for a moment, then Tre said mechanically, as if repeating by rote: "Bees ought not to think; and if they do they ought to keep their thoughts to themselves." Then she added maliciously: "I think I learned that from you, Saggia."

The other bees turned and smiled.

"One lives and learns," said Saggia, a little confused.

"Oh, worse yet!" exclaimed Uno. "'Bees do not learn: they know.' That also is from Saggia," she said, turning to the other bees.

They all smiled again enjoying Saggia's discomfiture.

"Well," said Saggia desperately, "bees do know most things, but—not—everything."

Just then Beffa came hopping toward them hurriedly. He was singing loudly, too, and was evidently much excited about something. As he reached the group of foraging bees he did not stop, but kept hopping right on by them singing loudly as he passed:

"Hoptoad squats beneath the flower;
Waits that pleasant fateful hour
When honey-bee on food intent
Comes within his leafy tent;
Open! Shut! Poor bee, good-bye;
An ugly, horrid way to die!"

As the bees heard this, they all became much frightened and excited, skipping about and peering in all directions.

"The Toad!" they cried. "Where? There! I don't see him! Where, Beffa? Beffa, where?"

Beffa's movements plainly indicated the direction of danger to be toward where he had come from, and the way of safety correspondingly in the direction of his hopping. All the bees, therefore, with much buzzing and jumping about, moved along with the hopping and singing Beffa. Only Saggia seemed a little slow to take alarm or to follow him closely. She watched him curiously, and kept turning to look in the direction from which he had come. She remembered that Nuova was back there somewhere, and she could not believe that Beffa would leave her in danger in order to warn ever so many other bees. Saggia knew well poor Beffa's hopeless love for Nuova.

As a matter of fact, Beffa had seen not a toad, but something else, which, under the circumstances of bee life and tradition, was much more extraordinary, and he had come hopping over to lead off the other bees that they might not also see it.

What he had seen was something that his keen wits had told him all along he might see: in fact, he had been looking for it all the time since he had been in the garden; it was something that made him happy and unhappy at the same time. It was something that would make Nuova the happiest bee in the world, for a little while at least, though it might mean something very dreadful to her in the end. And what could make Nuova happy made him happy—even though her happiness should come from seeing somebody else who would almost make her forget that Beffa ever lived. What Beffa had seen was Hero flying slowly down into the garden near where Nuova was. It was certain that they would see each other in a moment.

In fact, Nuova, turning away from the flower which she had been slowly and listlessly rifling of nectar, saw Hero just a moment after he alighted. Her heart gave a great jump, and her first impulse was to slip away before he could see her; but when she saw how dejected and sad he seemed, she felt a great pity for him and wanted to comfort him. Just then he lifted his eyes and saw her. He started, then controlled himself and came to her. "Nuova," he said quietly but earnestly; "Nuova, I am glad you are here."

Nuova could hardly speak. She was so tense with excitement, with wonder, with happiness that they were together again. But what had happened? How could this be?

"You did not win?" she stammered. "You are not dead?" She stared at him with painful intentness.

"I did not go on," said Hero slowly and somberly.

Nuova did not understand. "An accident?" she cried. "You could not fly? Your wings were not—" she stopped, alarmed and almost in tears at her thought. "Surely I did not hurt them when I—I—pulled them?"

Hero did not understand clearly what she meant. In fact, he was too intent on the overwhelming fact of what he had just done, of the absolute break he had just made with bee tradition, to think, for the moment, of anything else.

"No, no," he said; "I just decided not to go on. I—wanted to come to you."

Nuova could not realize at once all he meant by these words. The thing clearest in her mind just now was what Saggia and all the others had told her so often. She began to speak slowly and almost mechanically as her memory guided her.

"But you can't do that," she said. "It—it— isn't done, you know. You *must* chase the Princess; you *must* win her; and you—you"—she sobbed—"you *must* die."

She stepped toward him, excitedly, with her hands outstretched to urge him on. "Go on!" she exclaimed. "Go on! Start again! You are so much swifter and stronger than the others! You can beat them yet! Hurry! Fly!"

In her excitement and half-crazed exaltation she pressed against him to push him into starting. He held her closely to him for a moment, caressing her gently. But soon she drew violently away, and spoke again with choking voice. "Fly!" she said. "Go on! Go on!"

Hero shook his head doggedly. "No, I will not go. I cannot go. I never wanted to go. I wanted to come to you. I didn't know you were in the garden. But here you are." In his joy at being with her, he began to dismiss the dark thoughts of his break with bee custom. He looked intently and eagerly at her.

"Yes, here you are, I have come to you. I have come to tell you that I"—he stumbled a little in his speech, and smiled slightly—"I—am a new bee, too!"

Nuova laughed happily. Then she grew serious and puzzled. "And Saggia and Beffa," she said. "Are we all new bees in this hive?"

Hero smiled. "Uno, Due, and Tre—" he said.

"Ugh! horrid bees," said Nuova with a grimace. "They would like to kill me."

"Beasts!" broke in Hero, "I'll kill them!" But then he remembered the fact that he had no lance nor by bee tradition could have any. "Absurd," he said in disgust. "What a world, where only the women may carry lances and fight and work, and the men are only loafers and lovers, and can only love by tradition, at that. Bah! I'd rather be even a human being. They are silly enough, those awkward giants, and can't fly and eat other animals as spiders and snakes do, but their men can work and fight; and they can love whom they like. At least they can if they don't try to be too much like us, as some of them seem to want to be. It's a terrible thing to be a man bee. We have no rights at all!"

Nuova looked up at him wonderingly. "Why, the other drones seem to like to loaf," she said. "Anyway, they don't object."

"Don't object!" exclaimed Hero contemptuously. "They don't think; they don't feel! Each just does what the others do and all just do what drones have always done."

"But how else are we to know what to do," persisted Nuova, who had learned her lesson well from Saggia, "except by seeing what others do, and being told what the bees before us did?"

Hero was amazed and disconcerted to hear Nuova talk in this way.

"Why, you talk like Saggia!" he said. "What do you mean? Haven't you always objected to doing what the others do? Haven't you always tried to do what you most wanted to? And haven't you wanted to talk with me? I thought you—liked me."

Nuova was disconcertingly calm. "Oh, yes, I have objected to some things, and I do like to talk with you. And I like you. But all that must not interfere with the work and life of the community. And I am afraid it is interfering. I ought to be getting more honey, and you ought to be flying after the Princess." She paused; then she added, determinedly and even severely: "You must go right away. You can catch up with them yet, and beat them, and—and—win her." Nuova had grown more excited and earnest as she continued urging him, but her voice broke a little as she uttered the last words.

Hero, paying too little attention to her manner and reading nothing in it, so seized was he by surprise at Nuova's new attitude, was yet doggedly intent on speaking out his own feelings. "No, I am not going after the Princess," he declared, speaking almost roughly in his vehemence. "I stopped flying because I wished to, and I came here because I wished to, and I shall talk to you because I wish to. You *must* hear me! Nuova, it is not the Princess that I love; it is you." Nuova started. "Yes, you; just you; all you. I love *you*, Nuova."

Nuova had stood rigidly at first, but then unconsciously swayed a little toward him. Then she caught herself and stepped back, all the time staring at him fixedly. He leaned toward her as he finished speaking, but made no other motion.

Nuova began to speak, still holding herself rigid and staring at him. She spoke in an even, monotonous voice, even mechanically, and as if directed by some foreign influence.

"You cannot love me," she said. "You can only love a Princess. I cannot love you. I cannot love anybody. There are other things for me to do. I have not cleaned floors; I must clean floors. And you, you must chase Princesses, chase Princesses, chase—Princesses—all—the—time." Her voice trailed away into tense silence, and she swayed as if about to fall, but recovered herself, and half-turned as if to move away.

Hero stepped forward, caught hold of her roughly, and spoke harshly. "You shall not clean floors," he said, "and I will not court the Princess." Then suddenly he spoke tenderly, "Nuova, I love you. Saggia says I can't; all of them say I can't; you say I can't. Well, I do. That is all. That is the answer. I have never loved a Princess and I do love you; I have loved you from the moment I saw you." He spoke more impetuously. "I didn't know what it was at first; now I do. I found out when I started to fly after Principessa. I can fly faster than any other drone; yet every one was beating me. I can fly higher than any other bee; but I couldn't rise at all. Why? Because of *you*, Nuova; because I loved *you*, Nuova, and could not love Principessa. And they say that you cannot love me. Saggia says so, does she?—and all of them say so, do they?—and you say so, do you? Well, they are all mistaken. Just as they are all mistaken about me. I can love *you*, because I *do*. You can love me, because you are going to. You were not an Amazon, yet you fought. You are not a Princess, but you are going to love. I can teach you; I *will* teach you."

Nuova was almost carried away by Hero's speech—and her own inclinations. But she still fought blindly and feebly against what she wanted most. "No, no," she stammered; "I must work; I must go; I am only a worker bee; I *cannot* love; it is all fixed; it has been that way for a long time; I know; Saggia knows; *Beffa*—"

She stopped short, remembering some of Beffa's cryptic words.

Just then Beffa's voice was heard. He was coming toward them hopping and singing.

CHAPTER XII

The Happy Ending

Beffa had not been able to hold the foragers any longer away from that part of the garden where Nuova and Hero were. The flowers here were more abundant and sweeter with honey, and the bees soon forgot their fright of the toad they had not seen—and that Beffa had not, either.

Hero and Nuova were still concealed by the bush, behind which they stood, from the returning bees, but it was only a matter of a short time before they would certainly be seen. Beffa, therefore, came hopping toward them and singing. He could at least warn them of the approach of the others. So he sang loudly:

"Ah, well, who knows?
Ah, well, who knows?
The old world for the old bee;
The new world for the new;

For who may know the real truth?
The untrue may be true.
Ah, well, who knows?
Ah, well, who knows?"

Hero turned triumphantly to Nuova. "Yes, yes, you hear?" he said. "Beffa knows. Say it; say it. Beffa knows: not Saggia; not the others; but Beffa. They are all blind. They only see what has been, but Beffa sees what may be. And you see it, Nuova, and I see it. You are a new bee, Nuova, and so is Beffa, and so am I. And we shall do new things; live a new life. Ah, Nuova, my little Nuova! I love you, and you love me. My little Nuova!"

Nuova could say nothing, do nothing. It was too much. She could only look up through a mist of tears into Hero's face and smile happily at him; it was half-smiling, half-crying, but unmistakable to Hero for what it truly was; the full revelation of Nuova's consent to all he had said. They stood together, silent in their great happiness. And thus Uno saw them. Uno was the first of the returned foragers to come, in seeking new flowers, around the bush and in sight of them. She stared at them amazed. Then, angry and malevolent, she beckoned, without calling out, to her companions to come to her. They crowded up and looked where Uno pointed. They were astounded and outraged. Uno first spoke up.

"They call themselves bees!" she said with scorn and malice.

"Beasts, rather!" said Due similarly.

"No, human beings," said Tre. "Like the daughter of the owner of the garden and her lover. In secret, and against all the customs. Shame and scandal!"

"Drive them out! Kill them!" burst out all the other bees, who had come crowding up at the words of Uno, Due, and Tre. "Call the Amazons! Sting them to death! Hero, the faithless one! Nuova, the silly new bee! Hero, our finest drone! Nuova, the pretty little nurse! Traitors! Kill them!"

It was a terrible moment for Nuova and Hero, for death looked them in the face. But they stood quietly side by side realizing their impending fate, yet fearless in their exaltation. Neither one spoke. They looked at each other with great eyes shining with love and happiness. Death—together—was such a little thing. It was even a thing, under the circumstances, to be courted. There seemed, indeed, nothing else that could be a "happy ending" for Nuova and Hero's romance. And as the Amazons pressed forward with lances set and already almost touching the devoted pair, it seemed to be the inevitable and immediate end. Yet, just at the moment when Nuova, with one last look of love and joy to Hero, turned full toward the shining lance points as if to say, "Welcome, sweet Death!" something happened.

A cry from the air just above them was heard. A messenger bee, greatly excited and almost breathless, was dropping down to them and gasping: "The Princess! The Princess! The Princess is lost! The Bee-Bird has caught the Princess!"

The mob about Hero and Nuova stopped in its attack and stood still, thunderstruck by the news. The messenger dropped to the grass just between the foremost Amazons and the pair of lovers, and there collapsed with fatigue and grief. She was caught and supported by Saggia and Beffa, who had pushed forward out of the crowd at the first cry from the messenger.

The horror-stricken bees were dumb for a moment, overwhelmed by the catastrophe. Then they began to call out, all speaking confusedly together: "The Princess is lost! The Bee-Bird has killed Principessa! Our only Princess! The old Queen gone, the new Queen killed! Our hive is doomed! We are queenless! No more children in our hive! It is our end!"



"The Princess is lost!"

All the while they were speaking they surged back and forth, turning to each other. They seemed utterly at a loss what to do. None any longer paid any attention to Nuova and Hero standing there, still silent and motionless together, as if with no more thought of their present momentary escape from the death that was so close to them than they had had for their apparent certain destruction a moment before.

Saggia had not called out with the other bees. Nor had she moved away from her position near Hero and Nuova, where she was still supporting the messenger. But she had been looking keenly first at the shouting bees and then at Nuova and Hero. Her face was alight with a new thought and strong purpose. As the cries of the bees died down from exhaustion for a moment, she lifted her head and began to speak in a loud, clear voice.

"Bees," she said, "a terrible thing has happened to us!" Some of the bees cried out again in lamentation. Saggia paused a moment till there was silence again. Then she went on.

"But we stand before a wonderful happening that may be our saving." As she said this, she half-turned toward Hero and Nuova so as to call the attention of the bees to them. As she did this a few bees, notably Uno, Due, and Tre, began to gesture angrily again toward the couple, and to mutter against them. But Saggia paid no attention to this, except perhaps to lift her voice a little higher and to speak more rapidly.

"I am an old bee," she said, "and know the lore of bees better than any others of you. And I tell you plainly that the death of the Princess does not mean that all is lost. I tell you that we have a means of saving our hive. Sometimes a bee is born, who is not a Princess, but who is of a different sort from the rest of us workers; a bee who can not only work, but *love*; who can love and be loved and be the mother of bees."

She turned now swiftly to Nuova, stretched out her antennæ and wings dramatically, and spoke as with the voice of an oracle.

"Nuova is such a bee!" she exclaimed solemnly. "Nuova can be a Queen for us! She loves Hero. Do you, Nuova?" Nuova turned a rapt face up to Hero's.

"And Hero loves Nuova. Do you, Hero?" Hero leaned down to Nuova and kissed her.

Saggia turned again to the bees. "That Hero loves Nuova proves that she can be loved; that Nuova loves Hero proves that she can be our Queen. Let Nuova, the new bee, be our new Queen!"

The bees were already buzzing and fluttering about in great excitement again. They were not able to comprehend immediately all that Saggia's words implied, but they saw in them a hope for their hive, and some of the bees already began to call out joyously. Just then Beffa began dancing vigorously and waving his wings and antennæ in triumph and singing loudly and clearly:

"Bee-Bird may yet be beaten;
We yet may peal the wedding bell,

Although our Queen is eaten!"

Then he made a grand whirl which brought him squarely in front of Nuova, and with a deep curtsy and elaborate gesture he called out to all the bees, like a herald:

"The Queen has passed. Long live the Queen!"

And Saggia immediately echoed him, also bowing low before Nuova: "The Queen has passed. Long live the Queen!"

Other bees took up the shout, which soon spread to all. Beffa beckoned all to follow him in a triumphal march and dance around the amazed and happy pair, and altogether they set up a great song of joy and triumph. Nuova and Hero were not only saved, but they were become in a second King and Queen of the hive. It was breath-taking. They could only look at each other in utter thanksgiving and love. But as Beffa, tiring of the exertion of the dance, stopped by the side of Nuova, she put out an antenna caressingly to him and then turned to Hero.

"Hero, my King," she said proudly.

"Hero, our King!" proudly shouted all the bees.

And then she turned to Beffa.

"Beffa, my jester," she said lovingly.

"Beffa, our jester!" shouted all the bees.

Beffa gave a little hop; then looking up at Nuova, he sang:

"Ah, well, who knows?
Ah, well, who knows?"

THE END

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NUOVA; OR, THE NEW BEE ***

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