

trusting of insects. True, they "gather honey from every opening flower," but they also scatter stings with equal freedom. I'm sure my hair would turn white and I shouldn't live out half my days if I had bees for familiar acquaintances at all hours.'

'But we need something so much to help along, and with mother and grandmother both almost invalids neither of us can leave home to go to work.'

'I know that, but I would rather take in washing than to have a swarm of bees buzzing about me.'

'I wish you would be sensible, Alma. I don't know of any one here in the country who wants washing done; besides if there was, you know mother would never hear of such a thing.'

'I see. Well, I withdraw the washing, but I will stand as firmly against the bee-stings. Then, too, if we had bees they might die, as Mr. Bice's did last winter. He has only one hive left.'

'But he was sick then, and they were not protected as they should have been. He is hoping that they will swarm early and make a good increase this summer.'

'There's no use of arguing with the ways and means committee of this family. I did have visions,' and Alma sighed, 'of hens that should lay golden eggs, but when my first brood of chickens hatched in an April snowstorm and I had to keep them by the kitchen stove for a week, and the next brood utterly failed to hatch by reason of the hen basely forsaking the eggs in her charge, and the third brood were nearly all caught by the hawks, I'll admit that my enthusiasm flagged.' At a slight sound she turned her head and gave a little start. 'There's a bee now, Marjetta, come to fill your want. I feel in my bones that it's going to sting me, and I shall beat a retreat,' and with that she ran into the house.

May had given place to early June. Alma Brewer on her way to the village had to pass the home of old Mr. Bice, where up against the garden fence in pathetic loneliness stood the solitary beehive in place of the half-dozen which had kept it company the year before. As she drew near a peculiar buzzing sound caught her attention, and a flood of bees came pouring out of the hive, as if each was trying to be out first, and sweeping up into the air became a maze of whirling black lines and musical sounds.

Old Mr. Bice had heard the sound and came hobbling out half bent with rheumatism.

'Are your bees swarming?' asked Alma.

'Yes, yes, and a fine swarm it is!' was the answer as he hurried away to bring an empty hive.

With all her fear of bees Alma stood still in her interest and watched the to her curious sight as this way and that they drifted, rising, sinking, growing thick about some bush or tree branch, then moving to mass at some other point. The old man had now come back with a veil over his hat and face, and gloves on his hands, carefully carrying the hive.

'Alma, Alma Brewer,' he quavered, as he watched the bees anxiously, 'can't you come and help me a little? There's nary a soul at home but me, an' I can't let the first swarm of the year, and such a big swarm, get away from me.'

'I'm—I'm afraid they'll sting me,' answered Alma.

'Bees don't usually sting when they're swarming, an' this first swarm of all, I can't noways bear to lose it.'

Alma hesitated, for she had not exaggerated her fear of bees; but she knew how much these meant to the old man, and how he had grieved over the loss of his hives the winter before. She looked around; but there was no one else in sight.

'It is selfish to be afraid when he needs me,' she said to herself. 'I must, I will, be helpful and brave.' So after a moment's struggle she answered, though there was a tremble in her voice, 'I will do what I can,' and turning into the yard she drew the light shawl she wore closely about her head and shoulders for protection.

But the bees had not yet begun to settle in earnest. Suddenly the swarm rose and swept circling and buzzing directly round her; then one of the bees, larger, longer than the others, detached itself from the rest and crept under her shawl, and before Alma had time to prevent or remove the intruder, the queen-bee, for such she was, was tumultuously followed by the whole swarm, who almost before she had time to realize what had happened, were clinging to her shawl and sleeve, a buzzing mass, bee above bee, larger than a gallon measure.

Alma grew fairly faint with terror.

'Keep still, keep still!' cried the old man, but little less frightened than herself. 'Don't move, don't make 'em mad or they'll sting you. Keep still.'

'I'll try to,' Alma gasped, resisting the impulse to flight, which she did not till later realize would have been to panic and disaster. 'Get your hive, quick,' and by an effort she held herself steady for what seemed an age while the old man crossed the yard with the hive, and lifting the shawl found and captured the queen-bee, who again was followed by the whole of the swarm. When the last one was safely in the hive, Alma, white to her very lips, sank on the ground with a little hysterical laugh of relief.

'Their buzz sounded like a roar in my ears,' she said, telling the story to her sister, as she sat fanning herself with her hat on the doorstep of home, 'and I just thought at first I should die with fright, but I held fast. Not a single bee stung me after all, and Mr. Bice says I am the pluckiest girl he ever saw with bees—just think of that, will you? But best of all, I helped to save his bees.'

Mr. Bice soon repeated the story, and Alma found herself in a small way a local heroine; and what was better still, from that day she entirely lost her former fear of bees.

'I'll admit it was a heroic remedy,' she used to remark when referring to it afterward, 'but after all I guess it paid,' with a nod of pride towards the row of white hives under the orchard trees where the sound of humming made the air musical through the summer days, as the bees came laden with their honey treasure gathered from the sweet hearts of opening blossoms.

For she had had a start in bee-keeping after all. Mr. Bice made the girls a visit of state on the occasion of his bees' second swarming and pressed upon Alma the acceptance of the swarm, and would not

take no for an answer, though the girls both tried to have him take payment for them.

The incident of the first swarming he was never weary of telling.

'That Alma Brewer,' he would say, 'has just the most nerve when it comes to bees of any girl I ever saw yet. Why, I was scared most to death for fear them bees was goin' to sting her, and there she stood and never once moved. Them Brewer girls is doin' fine with their bees, best of anybody around here, an' it's more than half owin' to the way Alma can manage 'em. Says she learned the knack that day she stopped to help me, you know. Kinder queer,' he would add with a reflective chuckle, 'how sometimes we help ourselves the most just by helpin' of somebody else.'

Afraid of Losing his Eyes.

He was a literary man in a Chinese city, disfigured by a hare-lip. He heard of the Christian (L.M.S.) Hospital at Hankow, where (he was told) wonderful operations were performed, and thought he would like to find out if anything could be done to put his mouth right. With a friend he came to the hospital, but did not dare to go in. He had heard and he believed all the current stories about the foreign doctors digging out people's eyes and killing them to get their hearts, with which to make medicines. He and his friend hung about the door of the hospital day after day, anxious for help, but afraid. At last Dr. Griffith John saw them, and invited them in. Reassured by his courtesy, they timidly crossed the threshold, and saw everything clean and bright, and poor sick folks experiencing such kindness and comfort as they had never found elsewhere in a time of trouble. Encouraged by what he saw and heard, the literary man allowed his lip to be operated upon, and was soon cured, and his face comely to behold. He told the doctor then what stories he had previously heard of him; but now, he said, 'I will assure my friends how false these charges are; and when you come up to my hut you will have a hearty welcome.' So the hospital breaks down walls and lets the Gospel go in.—The 'Presbyterian.'

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