

stanza beginning, "Hot midsummer's petted crone." The bumble-bee loves the sun and in the greatest heat of summer it is most active and conspicuous. Moreover the rank luxuriance of our wild flowers and foliage then shows our country at its nearest approach to tropical conditions. Another bond in this complex association may be the rich, bright color of the bumble-bee.

*Zig-zag.*—A felicitous term to describe the flight of the bee.

*Steerer.*—The poet evidently credits the bee with taking a zig zag route intentionally. To most observers it seems to go blundering along awkwardly with little power of self-direction. The poet perhaps has in mind the line "Let them sail for Porto Rico," and the image of a sailor used farther on, and looks on the bee as progressing by tacking like sailors in a head wind.

*Desert.*—Is it a waste or merely an uninhabited place? See "wildernesses" farther on.

*Chase.*—Follow eagerly.

*Keep me nearer.*—Keep me closer to thee.

*Me thy hearer.*—Observe the subtle casual force of this phrase=because I wish to listen to thee.

*Singing voices.*—Forcible though unconnected in a grammatical sense. Understand "thou who art singing," etc. How can the hum of the wings be called singing?

*Here the tents.*—Note the fine metaphor in the word "tents," suggested by the shape of the flowers.

*Insect.*—This word seems redundant and of no poetical value here.

*Lover of the sun.*—See the note on "torrid zone." The bumble bee is quite sluggish in cool weather, scarcely flying about at all.

*Joy of thy dominion.*—The bee enlivens the sunny air, and hence is said to be its "joy"; it traverses everywhere the air, which is therefore called its "dominion"—what it rules over.

*Waves of air.*—Expand the comparison.

*Epicurean.*—A follower of pleasure. Epicurus the Greek philosopher taught that pleasure was the highest good of life. He certainly did not mean thereby only the pleasure of the senses but included in his contemplation all moral, intellectual and æsthetic satisfactions. In the word "epicure" especially the original significance has become degraded and specialized. "Epicurean of June" means therefore 'the dainty pleasure-seeker of the summer months.'

*Wait.....hum.*—Note a similar idea in the first stanza. Observe the various descriptive terms applied to the sound of the bee throughout the poem.