

## MR. JACKSON AND THE HORNETS.

Mr. Jackson lay in the shade of the hedge, half leaning against the stump of a tree, and gazing up through the branches in a listless way.

"I wonder," he was thinking "I wonder if those insects humming around are bees, or hornets, or just plain bugs. I wonder - won - ner - won - n - n" and his murmurs became more and more indistinct, until they ran into a regular hum, as he breathed almost like the hum of the "bugs" he was wondering about. Suddenly he roused himself, and exclaimed: "Shoo!" making a vigorous dash at a hornet which was buzzing close to his head. "Go 'way!" he exclaimed, waving his hat, to the imminent peril of the numerous specimens which he had stuck on it "go 'way! I don't want you."

"I thought you wondered what we are, so I came to tell you. That's no way to receive company, anyhow," buzzed the hornet, angrily, flying nearer and nearer to Mr. Jackson's head.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Jackson, hastily, for he had no desire to offend the warm-tempered little insect. "But I did not know you were calling on me. I thought you were just buzzing around, as it were, and that you might bump against me."

"And hurt yourself," said the hornet, sarcastically.

"Hem- hem- a-a-h! that is -is -is-s-s-s," said Mr. Jackson, stammering in his efforts to invent a reasonable excuse- "that is -is-s-s-s" he kept on murmuring, until the hornet suddenly interrupted him with

"There, now, I'm sure you look ever so much better than you did, and as for your voice, there can be no comparison."

Mr. Jackson was a little puzzled, and put up his hand to scratch his head. Something seemed to be wrong: he could not make out exactly what until he happened to glance at himself in the polished tin specimen box at his side. Sure enough, he was a full-grown hornet- rather a large hornet, but not noticeably so.

"Now, how much better you look!" said the hornet, complacently looking at poor Mr. Jackson; "how much more graceful! Why, you should really be proud of yourself. I can't see how you men can be contented with your great clumsy bodies, which it is impossible to fly with."

"What were you doing before you came here?" inquired Mr. Jackson, who had no idea of getting into any discussion of the relative advantages of being a man or an insect with so quick-tempered an adversary as his new friend.

"I was gathering building material," replied the hornet. "Now there is another place where we get ahead of you stupid men. You people Well, if you didn't, some other men did. You people made a great fuss about having invented paper-houses and water-proof paper. We have lived in paper-houses made of water-proof paper which is made from genuine wood-pulp. So you see the idea of wood-pulp for paper is an old one with us."

"Is it so?" said Mr. Jackson, becoming interested. "How do you manage it?"

"Come along and I will show you," said the hornet, good-naturedly, leading the way toward a neighbouring fence. The hornet perched on the top rail for a moment, just long enough to tear off a minute sliver with his strong mandibles, and flew off, chewing it to a pulp. Mr. Jackson soon followed to where, not far away, a

large nest hung-suspended from the lower branch of a tree. It was shaped just like a big pear, with the small end down. At the very point of the lower end was the entrance to the nest, a round hole about an inch in diameter. The hornet flew directly in here, and Mr. Jackson followed. The walls of the nest, which were made of successive layers of wood-pulp paper, were about an inch and a half in thickness. In the interior hung three layers of comb shaped just like a honey-bee's comb, but made of paper instead of wax. One remarkable thing which Mr. Jackson noticed was that these combs were not attached to the sides anywhere, but hung suspended from the middle of the roof. Hurrying all round were a number of hornets, which seemed to be engaged in putting the finishing touches upon the lowest comb.

"How many members are there in your family?" asked Mr. Jackson of his guide.

"About three hundred," was the reply. "We rarely have more than that, nor less than two hundred in a nest."

"I disturbed a nest once with more than a million in it," said Mr. Jackson, with much feeling.

"Oh no; you only thought so," responded the hornet, good-naturedly. "We are pretty lively when we mean business."

"What do you live on?" inquired Mr. Jackson, after looking around for some moments. "I don't see any honey."

"Oh, we don't eat honey, we live on spiders and flies and fruit, principally fruit - sweet pears and berries," answered the hornet.

"Well, what do you put in those comb-cells?" inquired Mr. Jackson.

"Our children," responded the hornet, with an air of pride.

