

The Poet and His Song.

By Paul Laurence Dunbar.

A song is but a little thing,
And yet what joy it is to sing;
In hours of toil it gives me zest
And when at eve I long for rest,
When cows come home along the bars,
And in the fold I hear the bell,
As night, the shepherd, herds his stars,
I sing my song, and all is well.

There are no ears to hear my lays,
No lips to lift a word of praise;
But still, with faith unaltering,
I live and laugh and love and sing,
What matter yon unheeding throng?
They can not feel my spirit's spell.
Since life is sweet and love is long,
I sing my song, and all is well.

My days are never days of ease:
I till my ground and prune my trees,
When ripened gold is all the plain.
I put my sickle in the grain.
I labor hard, and toil and sweat,
While others dream within the dell;
But even while my brow is wet,
I sing my song, and all is well.

Sometimes the sun, unkindly hot,
My garden makes a desert spot;
Sometimes a blight upon the tree
Takes all my fruit away from me;
And then with throes of bitter pain
Rebellious passions rise and swell;
But—life is more than fruit or grain,
And so I sing, and all is well.

Browsings Among the Books.

On Bees.

[From "Locusts and Wild Honey," by John Burroughs.]

The drones have the least enviable time of it. Their foothold in the hive is very precarious. They look like the giants, the lords of the swarm, but they are really the tools. Their loud, threatening hum has no sting to back it up, and their size and noise make them only the more conspicuous marks for the birds. They are all candidates for the favors of the queen, a fatal felicity that is vouchsafed to but one. Fatal, I say, for it is a singular fact that the fecundation of the queen costs the male his life. Yet day after day the drones go forth, threading the mazes of the air in hopes of meeting her whom to meet is death. The queen only leaves the hive once, except when she leads away the swarm, and as she makes no appointment with the male, but wanders here and there, drones enough are provided to meet all the contingencies of the case.

Toward the end of the season, say in July or August, the fiat goes forth that the drones must die; there is no further use for them. Then the poor creatures, how they are huddled, and hustled about, trying to hide in corners and by-ways! There is no loud, defiant humming now, but abject fear seizes them. They cower like hunted criminals. I have seen a dozen or more of them wedge themselves into a small space between the glass and the comb, where the bees could not get hold of them, or where they seemed to be overlooked in the general slaughter. They will also crawl outside and hide under the edge of the hive. But sooner or later they are all killed or kicked out. The drone makes no resistance, except to pull back and try to get away; but (putting yourself in his place) with one bee a-hold of your collar and the hair of your head, and another a-hold of each arm or leg, and still another feeling for your waist-bands with his sting, the odds are greatly against you.

It is a singular fact also, that the queen is made, not born. If the entire population of Spain or Great Britain were the offspring of one mother, it might be found necessary to hit upon some device by which a royal baby might be manufactured out of an ordinary one, or else give up the fashion of royalty. All the bees in the hive have a common parentage, and the queen and the worker are the same in the egg and in the chick; the patent of royalty is in the cell and in the food; the cell being much larger and the food a peculiar stimulating kind of jelly. In certain contingencies, such as the loss of the queen with no eggs in the royal cells, the workers take the larva of an

stiletto upon her unhatched sisters. Cases have been known where two queens issued at the same time, when a mortal combat ensued, encouraged by the workers, who formed a ring about them, but showed no preference, and recognized the victor as the lawful sovereign. For these and other curious facts we are indebted to the blind Huber.

It is worthy of note that the position of the queen cells is always vertical, while that of the drones and workers is horizontal; majesty stands on its head, which fact may be a part of the secret.

The notion has always very generally prevailed that the queen of the bees is an absolute ruler, and issues her royal orders to willing subjects. Hence

sole female bee in the hive, and the swarm clings to her because she is their life. Deprived of their queen, and of all brood from which to rear one, the swarm loses all heart and soon dies, though there be an abundance of honey in the hive.

The common bees will never use their sting upon the queen; if she is to be disposed of they starve her to death; and the queen herself will sting nothing but royalty—nothing but a rival queen.

The queen, I say, is the mother bee, it is undoubtedly complimenting her to call her a queen and invest her with regal authority, yet she is a superb creature, and looks every inch a queen. It is an event to distinguish her amidst the mass of bees when the swarm alights; it awakens a thrill. Before you have seen a queen you wonder if this or that bee, which seems a little larger than its fellow is not she, but when you once really set eyes upon her you do not doubt for a moment. You know that is the queen. That long, elegant, shining, feminine-looking creature can be none less than royalty. How beautifully her body tapers, how distinguished she looks, how deliberate her movements! The bees do not fall down before her, but caress her and touch her person. The drones, or males, are large bees too, but coarse, blunt, broadshouldered, masculine-looking. There is but one fact or incident in the life of the queen that looks imperial and authoritative: Huber relates that when the old queen is restrained in her movements by the workers, and prevented from destroying young queens in their cells, she assumes a peculiar attitude and utters a note that strikes every bee motionless, and makes every head bow; while this sound lasts not a bee stirs, but all look abashed and humbled, yet whether the emotion is one of fear, of reverence, or of sympathy with the mistress of the queen-mother, is hard to determine. The moment it ceases and she advances again towards the royal cells the bees bite and pull and insult her as before.

Travel Notes.

(FROM HELEN'S DIARY.)

Wiesbaden, April 20, 1914.

Spring's magic wand has transformed Wiesbaden into a veritable garden of delight. The shade trees and the decorative trees all over the city are masses of marvellous colors,—soft grays, tender greens, delicate pinks and copper browns. The magnolias are in full bloom, and the little pink umbrellas they call Japanese trees are thickly studded with flowers. The fruit trees are snow-white with blossoms, and the air sweet with fragrance. Every lane and street and garden is a lovely bit of color, and as for the parks!—they are dreams of beauty. In front of the Kurhaus is a stretch of level ground called the Bowling Green; although it is no longer a bowling green the old name still clings to it. Now it is a gorgeous flower garden. The flower beds are of all shapes and sizes, and the color combinations most artistic. Just now the tulip is the predominating flower. There seem to be tulips of every color—and such masses of them. There is one huge bed of vivid crimson tulips in the center of this garden which makes everybody "oh!" and "oh!" with wonder and delight. We tried to reckon up about how many flowers were in that particular bed, and decided there must be at least four thousand; and each flower perfect; and each flower a twin of its neighbor. We wondered at the amazing uniformity, and were told that the secret was that the flowers were all in pots, although they looked as if grow-

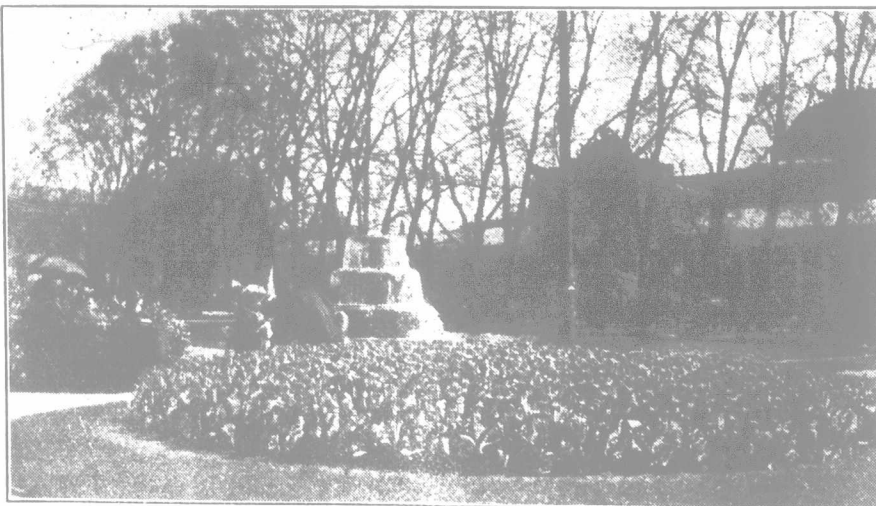


"Church Parade" on Wilhelm Strasse.

ordinary bee, enlarge the cell by taking in the two adjoining ones, and nurse it and stuff it and coddle it, till at the end of sixteen days it comes out a queen. But, ordinarily, in the natural course of events, the young queen is kept a prisoner in her cell till the old queen has left with the swarm. Not only kept, but guarded against the mother queen who only wants an opportunity to murder every royal scion in the hive. Both the queens, the one a prisoner and the other at large, pipe defiance at each other at this time, a shrill, fine, trumpet-like note that any ear will at once recognize. This challenge, not being allowed to be accepted by either party, is followed, in a day or two, by the abdication of the old queen; she leads out the swarm, and her successor is liberated by her keepers, who, in her time, abdicates in favor of the next younger. When the bees have decided that no more swarms can issue, the reigning queen is allowed to use her

Napoleon the First sprinkled the symbolic bees over the imperial mantle that bore the arms of his dynasty; and in the country of the Pharaohs the bee was used as the emblem of a people sweetly submissive to the orders of its king. But the fact is, a swarm of bees is an absolute democracy, and kings and despots can find no warrant in their example. The power and authority are entirely vested in the great mass, the workers. They furnish all the brains and foresight of the colony, and administer its affairs. Their word is law, and both king and queen must obey. They regulate the swarming, and give the signal for the swarm to issue from the hive; they select and make ready the tree in the woods and conduct the queen to it.

The peculiar office and sacredness of the queen consists in the fact that she is the mother of the swarm, and the bees love and cherish her as a mother and not as a sovereign. She is the



A Bed of Pink and White Tulips in the Bowling Green, Wiesbaden, Ger.