

CHAPTER III

THE HUMMING IN THE CLOVER

The old man of the bees, he who, years before, had arrived at his cot so auspiciously to save a child from apoplexy, was journeying homewards, twirling in his hand a wind-cast twig and turning over in his mind his own foreign thoughts. Already, though he was five miles from where the honey-makers and he dwelt, laden and homing bees were settling one by one on him to have what is called "a lift home." So he plodded gently, evading brushing branches, mouthing to himself some Latin about a hill-top, murmuring trees and murmuring bees. I could not say that his pronunciation was collegiate, for he had taught himself Latin from the Aldines and the Elzevirs that he had sold, time was, in his little shop in Bristol, little shop long since sold; and he had never possessed the assurance to admit his knowledge even to his most friendly of scholarly customers; though many a hint he had culled from them and digested in secret for his further relish of the Latin and the Greek and the old French. But he made a music of the Latin lines, with a difference; and assuredly he enjoyed what he read. He was a lover of rich phrases and