

Busch Wilhelm

Buzz a Buzz: or, The Bees



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Содержание

Preface.	4
Prelude	6
Fytte I. Bee Life	7
Fytte II. The Pig	10
Fytte III. The Rivals	13
Fytte IV. The Swarm	16
Fytte V. The Patent Monster Hive	18
Fytte VI. The Bear	20
Fytte VII. The Frog	23
Fytte VIII. The Ghost	25
Fytte IX. The Honey Thief	27
Fytte X. The Queen Bee's Fete	31

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Preface.

EXPLANATORY

I must say a few words in explanation of the somewhat novel form which my new "Bee-Book" has taken, and which, doubtless, will be a surprise to the many Bee-Friends who are waiting with exemplary patience for the second edition of my original "Bee-Book," soon about to appear after an interval of thirty years from the publication of the first edition.

I happened last year to be at the Cologne Station, waiting for the train, and employed my spare time in looking over the book stall for something to read on my way to Aix-la-Chapelle. The stall was covered with books about the late War. I had returned from a visit to the Battle Fields of 1870, and was sick of the subject. I wanted something of a more peaceful nature, and I was turning away, without making a purchase, when a book met my eye entitled *Schnurrdiburr*. What that might mean I knew not, but the second title, *oder die Bienen*, was intelligible, and had attraction enough for me. I opened it, and saw it was profusely illustrated with very comical cuts. I paid my Thaler and carried

away my prize.

The cuts are reproduced in the book which my readers have in their hands. The verses were written up to the pictures rather than translated from the German text; for alas! my German is very limited; enough for travelling purposes, but hardly enough to enable me to read a Bee-Book either serious or comical.

RIDENTEM DICERE VERUM QUID VETAT?

There is much truth lying hid under these comical stories; still more in the illustrations; and the notes which I have appended may be found useful even by serious Bee-Masters.

I promise my readers that they shall have the second edition of "My Bee Book" as perfect as I can make it, and with as little delay as possible.

I trust it may be much nearer perfection than the first edition, published under great difficulties, could be, and I hope it may have as many purchasers as this its forerunner.

W. C. C.

Frodsham, Cheshire,

September, 1872.

Prelude

Hail Muse etc.! Bring me Peggy,
My antient steed, now somewhat leggy;
Not him who on Parnassus green
Erst fed, and drank of Hippocrene;
But such, as to supply the trade,
At Nuremburg by scores are made. —
I mount him, and will now indite
A Bee-book for my own delight,
I'll sing of Johnny Dull: his pig,
Made by his bees exceeding big;
And of his daughter fair Christine,
Of her queer lover Dicky Dean,
And of his nephew rogue Eugene —
Of honey-robbers I will tell,
And bears, and bull-frogs, ghosts as well —
All which my readers may discover
Who con this true tale ten times over —
Or make ten other Bee Friends buy it;
For three and six I can supply it.

Fytte I. Bee Life

All hail! thou lovely month of May,
With parti-coloured flowers gay!
And hail to you, my darling Bees;
Much wealth you gain on days like these.
From morn to eve a humming sound
About the bee-house circles round.

The sentinels, in armour bright,
Keep watch and ward throughout the night;
And drive away, constrained by oath,
The mice, and toads, and Death's head moth.

At early dawn 'tis quite a treat
To see them work, they are so neat;
Some clean their house with brooms and mops,
And others empty out the slops.

The architects, by rule and line,
Their future cells with skill define;
The ever toiling workers these —
Meanwhile the Queen, she takes her ease;
Sole mother of the winged nation,
Her only work is propagation.

The egg she lays; the nurses hatch
That egg, and in the cradle watch.
The babe to swaddle, and prepare
The pap-boat, is their constant care.

All day, in regal state, the Queen
Encircled by her court is seen;
Their backs they never rudely turn:
Good manners they by instinct learn.

And when night comes she goes to bed,
And on the pillow lays her head;
Whilst by her side her faithful drone
Profoundly snores, for they are one.

They send for letters ere they rise;
For just at ten they ope their eyes.

The post office is in a flower,
Which opens at a certain hour,
Miss Crocus keeps it, fresh and fair;
The tresses of her flowing hair
They glitter like the purest gold;
And by her saffron cakes are sold.

Near is the pothouse where both grog
Is served to Bumble-Bees, and prog;
And when the Bumble-Bees get groggy,
Their intellect, like men's, is foggy.

On rose leaves they their letters write,
Here's one they either wrote or might.
"Great Queen, we hope you'll swarm to day";
"For 'is a lovely first of May."

The messenger this letter takes,
And eke a store of saffron cakes.

The Drones they neither work, nor can
Do aught but sleep on a divan;
And smoke their pipes through all the day;
Chibouks these love, and those a clay.
Such is their life – who would not be
A happy little worker Bee;
A Queen's too high for me, – a Drone,
Such laziness I let alone.

Fytte II. The Pig

Now Johnny Dull had once a pig, —
'T was far from fat, its bones were big.
To scratch his hide with all his might
Was this poor piggie's sole delight.

Once on a time it so fell out
He in the garden roamed about:
He chanced to have an itching mood;
The bee house quite convenient stood —

His hide he scratched; the bees rushed out,
And stung him well from tail to snout —
Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! poor piggie cried,
Feeling these daggers pierce his hide.

John Dull, who heard the awful clatter,
Said, "Bless the pig! why what's the matter?"

He came, — he saw — , his porker, that
Was erst all lean, was now all fat.

It chanced a pig-jobber that way
Was passing by; he stopped to say
"How much friend Dull for that fat pig?"

"Just ten pounds ten, for he is big" —
"Done" – "done again" – the bargain's struck —
John Dull he found himself in luck,

And blest his bees, and in their praise
He chanted forth these jocund lays.

Fly forth, dear Bees, 'tis morn, fly forth
To South, to North, to West, to East;
And cull from every fragrant flower
A honied feast.

Fly Home, dear Bees, 'tis Eve, fly home!
From North, from South, from East, from West;
Store in your cells your luscious spoil,
And sweetly rest.

The air is clear the day is warm,
John Dull sits watching for a swarm;

What's this? he thought; while I've been talking
My bees are all prepared for walking,
Staves in their hands, and on his back
Each carries his provision pack.

He strains his sight into the hole;
"They'll swarm to day – upon my soul."

His brain swims round, his eyes feel heavy,

He sees no more the increasing levee.

His nose, as down and down it drops,
His half used pipe of 'bacca stops. —

Buzz, buzz! – Hum, hum! a joyful sound,
Echoes the teeming hive around.
All gather at the trumpet's clang
To hear their noble Queen's harangue. —

"Up children up, to swarm prepare"
"The honey thief sits stinking there."
"And we who love the scent of roses"
"Have stale tobacco in our noses."
"We toil, we sweat from early May"
"To lay up for a rainy day."
"Our cells we fill, and at the Fall"
"He sulphers us, and takes it all."
"So let us one and all deride"
"This honey thief, this Bee-i-cide."
"Up children, up! to swarm prepare"
"Whilst Master Dull sits snoring there."
"A devil he, upon my troth:"
"Buzz! buzz! Hum! Hum! The swarm is off!"

Fytte III. The Rivals

"Nothing like soup," is still the cry
In each well ordered family;
So on Christine the duty fell
To cull the herbs they love so well;
And every morn, the charming maid
Within her father's garden strayed,
Parsley to pluck, wherewith to make
The soup, which they at noon should take.

Her father's garden marched, I ween,
With that of Mr. Richard Dean;
A school-master by trade was he,
And she esteemed him – maidenly.
But by degrees, within her soul
A softer, tenderer passion stole;
Love – full of joy and full of sorrow,
Sunshine to day, and storm to-morrow, —
Love may forget a parsley bed,
And dream of golden flowers instead.

And so the maiden stooped to cull a
Crocus, and an auricula.
These flowers, together-bound, she placed
Just half a foot above her waist.

Then sat her down beneath the shade,
And thought about him – happy maid.
Now Mr. Dull a nephew had,
A most audacious, awkward lad;
Some fifteen summers he had seen
And still was very, very green.

Christine he eyed, and with desire
He felt his little soul on fire.
With cat like pace behind the wall
He crept (he was not near as tall.)

Leapt up, and from the affrighted Miss
Ravished the much desired kiss.

"Stop little monster", and a whack
Descended on his upturned back —
(The place I cannot more define
Within the limits of a line)
– Side, I should add, but wherefore tell
What every school-boy knows so well.
Dick Dean so roundly plied the stick
That rogue Eugene skedaddled quick.

Then Richard raised the fainting maid,
And many a tender thing he said;
Her chin he chucked, his arm he placed
About her little taper waist;

Her flowers admired, and begged them too:
Christine, she knew not what to do;

But blushed assent; the flowers he took,
And thanked her with an ardent look.

"Sweets are repaid by sweets I wiss",
He said, and he too had a kiss.

"Adieu and – au revoir – " to night

Pray let us meet, my heart's delight,
Behind your father's Bee-house, when
The Church-clock shall have sounded ten.
Eugene, still smarting with the cane,
His heart on fire, with jealous pain,

O'erheard the place of assignation,
And crept out from his hidden station;
Rushed to the Bee-house, found John Dull
Asleep, and snoring like a bull.

"Wake, Uncle, wake" in startling tone
He shouted, "for your swarm is gone."

Fytte IV. The Swarm

John Dull, awakened from his slumber,
Observed his stock's diminished number;
His apple trees he searched, and found
The swarm some ten feet from the ground;

Got his bee dress, his hive, and ladder;
No Bee master was ever gladder.

Mounted, and without any trip
Got all the bees within the skip —

"Well done I have them;" as he spoke
The ladder's top-most rung it broke,

Crack! Crack! and, as I hope to thrive,
The same befel the other five;

The bees rush forth and quit the hive!

John on his knees, and free from harm
Marked well the disappearing swarm.

Two boys were making pies of dirt
Close by, and playing with a squirt;

They squirted at the bees to stop 'em,
Squirted in vain; they could not drop 'em.

Old Sally met them with her mop,
And Sammy trumpeted, stop! stop!

And Dick and Bob and Bill they screeched,
But not a sound these flyers reached —

A Sweep upon the chimney top
Showered soot upon them, and cried "Stop!"

When they had cleared the churches roof,
Sam Dutton put his gun to proof;

John Dull came panting up behind
And could no other stopper find;

He stamped and swore and scratched his head,
"A pretty dance I have been led,"
"Confound the bees; I've got a warming"
Some way I'll find to stop their swarming;
A hive I'll build as big as two,
Sold by Mancubrian P.tt.gr.w.

Fytte V. The Patent Monster Hive

Adverse events reveal the real man,
So Horace wrote, refute this truth who can.

And John Dull to its full completion wrought
The inspiration of his sudden thought.
"Room for the swarm!" This is great Nature's law,
And so he built two monstrous hives of straw. —

"Good morning neighbour" from across the fence
Cried out Dick Dean. "May I without offence"
"Ask what your making." "Why these blessed bees,"
"I find them creatures plaguey hard to please."

"Plaguey! dont say so – they're a real pleasure,"
"I love to watch them when I have the leisure;"
"Besides each scholar knows in antient days,"
"How Maro sung his little darlings praise."
"And when the Roman legions brought alarm"
"To every inmate of his Mantuan farm, – "
"Smiling he stood, amidst his winged host;"
"The mailed warriors fled and left him at his post."

"All this I know – Beekeeping would be charming,"
"If there was never such a thing as swarming."

"But grubs my friend! your bees are sure to breed,"
"Swarms come from grubs, as corn crops come from seed."
"Grubs you must have; and when your swarming's done,"
"Two hives you'll find, where erst you had but one."

"Bother the grubs; I know a better way,"
"My patent monster hives, they are the things to pay."

Fytte VI. The Bear

Eugene would often take his lunch,
Of dry black bread a monstrous hunch,
Into a wood – ere he got through it
He wished he'd some nice honey to it —
When all at once it chanced a bee
He saw creep up a hollow tree;
Another came, then two, and three.
"Hurrah! there's honey here for me,"
Eugene exclaimed, "No more I'll eat
This nasty bread, but have a treat." —

"Honey for ever!" up he clomb
To the trees fork – the honey comb
He saw below him in the beech
Hollowed by age, beyond his reach —

His hold he missed and sad to tell
Down midst the honey combs he fell;

Into the cakes his boots went crush,
As though it were mere muddy slush.

Honey he found but every school-boy knows
He cannot eat his sweetmeats with his clothes.

Another Bee Hunter that way
One Mister Bruin chanced to stray;
A dancing Bear by trade was he,
But fond of honey – certainly!

"If I smell right here's honey comb";
He said, or thought; then upwards clomb.

Eugene below, half dead with fear,
Saw the bears hinder's drawing near,

With both hands gripped him tight and had a

Mount upwards by this living ladder;
Sure never little lad was gladder.

Meanwhile John Dull, a spying round,
The self same honey tree had found;

Up to the fork himself he reared
When Bruin's ugly mug appeared.
Augh, back he fell through utter fright;
Close to his tail did Braun alight;
And by Braun's heels Braun's parasite.

Braun seized John Dull with either claw,
Just as himself was seized before;

John pulling out his hunting knife
Cut off his tail to save his life;

Sam Dutton here did interveen,
"To shoot that grizzly bear I mean!"
But Braun was nowhere to be seen.

Early next morn came sawyers two,
And sawed the Honey tree right through;

There stuck the boots of young Eugene;

He drew them out, and licked them clean;
Such blacking ne'er before was seen!
While John Dull, from the luscious store,
Filled twenty honey pots or more.

Fytte VII. The Frog

"The appetite with eating grows" —
This truth my little story shows.
For many a day the rogue Eugene
To John Dull's bee-hives creeps unseen;
Smokes them, – Puff! – Puff! – then boldly takes
The much desired honey cakes.

When lo! one day the angry swarm
Out on him rushed – the day was warm;
They covered him from top to toe,
Behind, before, above, below,
They buzzed, they crawled, they stung him, – Oh!

Eugene half stifled, for his nose
And mouth were covered like his clothes,
Rushed to the nearest water-pit,
And took a header into it;

Rose through the Bee-besprinkled foam,
And ran, all dripping, to his home.

Felt quite unwell! The doctor came
And to his illness gave a name.

"By aid of careful auscultation,"
"And thinking on his late natation,"
"I think, I think that I deskiver,"
"A frog within this dear boy's liver."

"I'll get him up." A bee he took,
Impaled it on a fishing-hook;

Played it within his open jaws,
A bite! and up the frog he draws;

Frog to the open window took,
And cut the line close by the hook;

Frog to the pool, rejoicing, hopped;
And plump into the water dropped.
Then chanted his Batrachian lay
Quite in th' Artistophanic way;
"Brekekekek, coax, coax,
Coax, coax, Brekekekek."

Fytte VIII. The Ghost

Forbidden fruit is sweet they say;
And so its gathered every day;
And should this fruit be sweet before,
Forbid it, and 'tis ten times more.
Eugene oft coveted the pot
Of honey that John Dull had got
Placed on the shelf above his head,
For safety, when he went to bed;

John slept, John snored; then ope'd his eyes
And stared about him with surprise.

"What's this I see come crawling on?"
"Sure, 'tis a strange phenomenon."

A winged beast, with tail, and claws
On his four feet, which end in paws.

With stealthy pace on on it crawled,
John turned upon his face, and bawled.

John's hair as this strange beast drew near
His night cap raised for very fear.

On its hind legs itself it reared,
As it its squalling master neared,

Nearer still nearer – till he got

The much desired honey pot.

Turns tail and runs; whilst Johnnie sits
Bolt up, divested of his wits.

A pearly drop on every hair
Hangs pendant, not from heat, but fear.

Eugene his garret sought, and there
Ate honey, like his friend the bear,
The pot he emptied mighty soon,
Using his paws instead of spoon.

Fytte IX. The Honey Thief

The flowers which Christine culled at morn
At eve were withered, and forlorn.

These withered flowers Dick sadly took,
And placed them in his music book;
Then put the book upon the table,
And pressed, the best that he was able.

The pressed flowers took a wondrous shape,
Which seemed the human form to ape;
And in these specimens, Christine
Is imaged, and her Dicky Dean.

Ten sounded from the old church tower —
Before the last stroke of the hour,
Close by the bee-house Richard Dean,
His last new coat on, might be seen;
Christine, arrayed in all her charms,
Was there, and rushed into his arms.

"Hist! what's that sound?" alack! alack!
A thief, with crotchet at his back —
A Honey thief – ill may he thrive.

Each crept into a monster hive.

The thief peered round; "This will I take" —
"This big one will my fortune make."

Then hoisted Dicky, hive and all,
Upon his back so lean, so tall —

"Halt," shouted Dicky, and the head
Of his strange monture bonneted;

Held him down tight, and with a stick
Passed 'twixt his legs, secured him quick.

And Christine, what must she have felt
While Bruin round about her smelt?
Out of the hive she softly stole;

In crept the bear and through the hole
At the hive's top he poked his nose;
Christine her ready courage shows,

She through his nose ring passed a stick,
Which from the ground she happed to pick.

Poor Bruin rolled upon his back,
And grunted out alas! alack!

So after all these strange alarms,

Again Dick rushed into her arms.

John Dull by chance came strolling by,
His hives upset first met his eye;
He saw they both were tenanted —
Amazed he looked, then scratched his head;

Peered all around, espied Christine
And her own true love Dicky Dean;
Behind the bee house they were placed,
And Dicky's arm was round her waist.

"Come here" he cried "you little chit,"
"I understand it not a bit" —
Upon their knees they both fell down,
And the whole mystery made known.

The father heard them all declare,
Then gave his blessing to the pair.
"Bless you my Christine: Dick I bless"
"With stores of wedded happiness."

Then came the dramatis personae;
The tall, the short, the fat, the bony.

Sam Dutton thought to get a shot,
Now Bruin could no longer trot.
But Sally interposed her mop,
And to his shooting put a stop.

The night watch came, and 'twixt them bore
The skewer'd thief to the prison door.

And came the bear leader as well,
And took poor Bruin to his cell.

Sam with his trumpet blew a rally,
And Hip, Hurrah! cried ancient Sally.

Long live both empty hives and full,
Long live Dick Dean and Johnny Dull.

Fytte X. The Queen Bee's Fete

The night is warm, and many a nose
Upturned, is snoring in repose;
Whilst every tree and every flower
Rejoices in that witching hour.
And o'er John Dull his garden beds,
The moon her gentle influence sheds.

'Tis May the first, the Queen bee's fête!
And she, in all her regal state,
Beneath her fairy hall of roses
With her beloved drone reposes.

She nods a sign; the bombardier
Awakes the echoes far and near.

Whilst tinkle, tinkle, clang! clang! bang!
The Court musicians' strain out-rang.
The fly he blows the shrill trompette,
The gnat the softer clarionette;
The grasshopper, a fiddler he —
The drummer is the bumble bee. —

The Willow-beetle, such a swell,
With young Sabina waltzes well;

Liz too and Kitty have their swains,
Who one and all are taking pains
To make themselves agreeable,
Each to his own peculiar belle.

The Stag-Beetle, that beau precise,
Regales his partner with an ice.

The Moon, upon the Apple Tree,
Surveys, well pleased, the revelry.

Two cockchafers soon quit the dance;
They cannot bear the piercing glance
Of their fair partners – see them set
Within a private cabinet.
They smoke, they sing, they drink until
Their little polished paunch they fill.

Their homes they cannot find – alas!
They tumble backward on the grass.
"To whit" "To whoo" policeman Owl,
The wisest of all feathered fowl,
Hoots out; "why here's a precious go,"
"Drunk and incapable, ho! ho!"

"So come along, I know you well;" —
He said, and drove them to his cell.
Were they discharged? No, never more,

That cell it was an abattoir.
The owl supped on the elder Brother,
And for his breakfast ate the other.
So you, who think a dance divine,
Mind – never take excess of wine.

The Evening star went flicker – flick —
Over the bedroom candlestick;
And round its silver radiance shed
To light the sleepy moon to bed.

I've done – I doff my riding gear,
And order Pegasus – HIS BEER.