



**THE BEE WHO  
WOULD NOT WORK**



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The Bee Who Would Not Work, by Charlotte B. Herr



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JUVENILE SECTION  
**PUBLIC**  **LEDGER**

Philadelphia, Sunday, March 5th, 1916

THIS LITTLE STORY IS TOLD  
AND THE LITTLE PICTURES  
WERE DRAWN FOR A GOOD  
LITTLE CHILD NAMED

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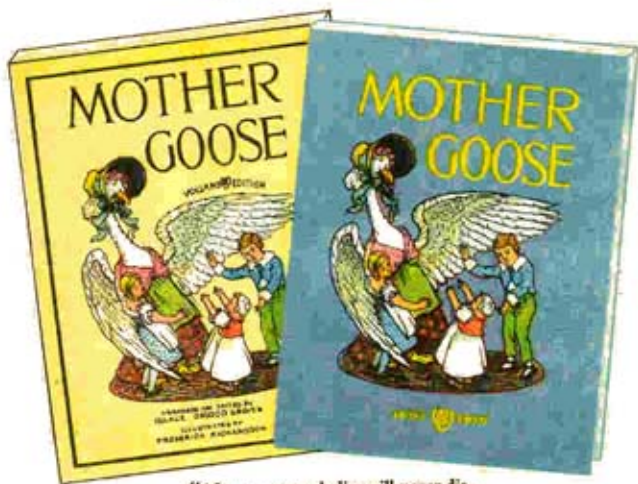
# THE BEE WHO WOULD NOT WORK

By  
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*Designs*  
FRANCES BEEM

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## THE BEE WHO WOULD NOT WORK

THERE was once a sunny summer morning, when the breeze blew the little white clouds high in the blue sky, and the meadows were golden with buttercups.

It was just the kind of a day for gathering honey. So thought all the bees, and each made haste to put on his little brown velvet jacket that he might get to work as soon as ever he could,—all except Fumble Bee. He did not like to work. Yet, because it

was dull in the hive after the others had gone, and dark too, he flew out into the sunshine and made his way slowly from one golden flower to another. But so slowly did he work, and so often did he stop to rest, that the honey he gathered was scarcely any at all.

Now, it happened that during one of these resting times, while he was rocking lazily to and fro in the heart of a wild rose, he heard some one laugh near by. Fumble Bee looked up, and above him, carelessly swinging on the topmost pink petal of the rose, he saw a tiny butterfly. Fumble Bee had never seen so beautiful a butterfly before. There were such lovely colors on her wings, and, besides that, she was very small for a butterfly, not much larger than himself.

"Well, Fumble Bee," she said in a soft little voice, "you really are not wasting this beautiful morning fussing away at your old honey pots? How can you be so

foolish? Now when I'm hungry, I sip all the honey-dew I care for, but I don't waste any of my time gathering honey for other people to eat!"

Fumble Bee hung his head, but he did not say anything, for he did not like to be made fun of.

"Come with me," the little butterfly went on, "I will show you something better to do. There is a fairies' ball to-night on the bank of moss under the big oak tree. I need some one to take me, and you will do very well.

"To be sure," the little butterfly went on, "the fairies do not care much for you bees,—such sober, humdrum fellows. You don't know how to do anything except to work, and pile up honey for some one else to use."

"Then why do you want me?" asked Fumble Bee.

"Oh, as to that," answered the little butterfly in a careless tone, "I don't care

much for you either, but your clothes are pretty. I always did like brown velvet. Then, I must have some one to go with to-night, and it might as well be you. Come," she said, "we will fly over the meadows and see what the world is like on the other side of the hill. We shall have a splendid time!"

Now, anything that took him away from his work pleased Fumble Bee, so he was perfectly willing to go with the beautiful butterfly, and together they flew away over the meadows. All day they played and enjoyed themselves, and not one bit of work did either of them do.

The little butterfly found a great green leaf with a smooth top, and there she taught Fumble Bee to dance

"For you must know how to dance to-night," she told him, "or the fairies will not like you at all!"

And when night had come, and the fire flies began to light their lanterns low down



in the grass, the little butterfly led Fumble Bee to the fairies' ball-room. It lay at the foot of the great oak tree, a hollow lined with the softest green moss. All round its sides were tiny acorn stools which the squirrel, who lived in the top of the oak tree, had given, so that the fairies might rest when they grew tired of dancing; and at one end was a tiny throne for the king and queen of the fairies. The ceiling was all of green leaves, and among them hung little glow-worms to light the floor. Fumble Bee had never seen anything so beautiful as was this ball-room of the fairies.

By and by, too, the fairies themselves began to come, and then it was more beautiful still; for they wore dresses made from every kind of flower, blue, and white, and pink, and plenty of lovely cobweb lace, and diamonds and pearls cut from the purest dewdrops. The king and queen, too, wore robes woven of golden sunbeams and wonderful silvery star-shine.



It almost took away Fumble Bee's breath, but every one seemed glad to see him, and all of them were kind to him.

"Who is that queer little fellow in brown?" the queen had asked, staring hard at him from her throne at the end of the room.

"That is Butterfly's friend, Fumble Bee," answered a fairy who stood near by.

"Go tell him to come here," commanded the queen, "I wish to dance with him."

So Fumble Bee danced with the queen of the fairies, and was as proud and happy as he could be; and when at last the ball came to an end, and the fairies had gone away, he went to sleep in a holly-hock bell, and dreamed it all over again.

The next morning, however, he thought of his own queen, and made ready to go back to the hive. But the little butterfly did not seem pleased at this.

"Why need you ever go back to that dusty old hive?" she asked. "Your clothes



are as pretty as ever, and the fairies all like you. Besides, in a few nights the king and queen hold their court, and then we shall all be very gay. Stay with me and be happy!"

Now, Fumble Bee wished for nothing nicer, so from that day on the little butterfly and he did nothing but play, and thought of nothing but pleasure; for the summer days were warm and bright, and winter was far away.

The red clover tops nodded and beckoned to him.

"We have such sweet honey for you to-day, Fumble Bee!"

And the buttercups called to him to stop for their honey, too, but Fumble Bee flew straight past them all, and pretended that he did not hear.

All the other little bees looked on and shook their heads, and one of them told the queen of the bees what Fumble Bee was doing. Then the queen herself came out



of the hive to talk to him, and all the other bees came with her.

"What are you doing, Fumble Bee?" she asked. "We thought you must be dead."

"No," answered Fumble Bee gaily, "not dead,—only having a good time!"

"And if you do not work now, what will you do when winter comes?" asked the queen.

Fumble Bee hung his head, for he did not know what to say. But the butterfly only laughed.

"Winter is very far away!" she said in her soft little voice, and again she laughed.

Then the queen was very angry.

"Do not come back to the hive any more," she said. "We do not want bees who will not work."

And she turned her back on Fumble Bee and went into the hive, and all the other bees went with her. But Fumble Bee cared very little, for the days were still warm and bright and winter was far away.



Every morning the butterfly and he played in the sunshiny meadows, and when evening had come and the robins sang good night to the world, they swung themselves to sleep in the holly-hock bells and rested until another day.

But at last there came a time when the sunshine went away, and the nights grew dark and cold. The fairies did not come any more to dance on the moss under the big oak tree, and the fire flies would not light their lanterns.

Then, one morning the little butterfly stopped playing, and she said to Fumble Bee:

"I think I shall try to find my cocoon again now. The nights are cold, and it will help to keep me warm."

"But what shall I do?" asked Fumble Bee. "I haven't any cocoon!"

"I am sorry for you, but I cannot help that," answered the little butterfly. Then,

laughing, she flew away, and Fumble Bee never saw her again.

But always the nights grew colder, so cold that Fumble Bee could not keep himself warm. And although he hunted all day long, he could find no more honey; for the flowers were dead, and winter had come.

So Fumble Bee went to the little red squirrel in the oak tree. It was he who had given the acorn stools to the fairies, and he was very kind and generous always. Fumble Bee was sure the squirrel would be good to him. So he knocked at his door.

"Please, dear Mr. Squirrel," he begged, "I am so cold and hungry! Please, let me come in!"

But the squirrel only peeped at him out of his hole, and would not let him come in.

"Oh, ho!" he cried, "So you are the bee who did nothing but dance with the fairies! I worked all summer and now I have

plenty of nuts to eat. Why didn't you work, too?" and he slammed the door in his face.

Then, because he could think of nothing else to do, Fumble Bee went back to the hive and knocked at the door.

"Please let me come in, dear bees," he begged, "I am so cold and hungry!"

"Where have you been, Fumble Bee?" asked the queen. "We thought by this time you surely must be dead."

"No, not dead," answered Fumble Bee, "only cold and hungry. Please, dear queen, let me come in! I will work for you all day long."

"No," answered the queen, "there is no work to do now. We will not let you come in!" and the bees shut the door of the hive.

Then poor Fumble Bee had nowhere else to go, but always the wind blew colder, and there was nothing at all in the world to eat.

So one cold, dark night when he was very hungry, Fumble Bee crawled under a dead



leaf and there he turned over on his back and lay all night up-side-down, for he was too weak and tired to stand right-side-up any longer. He was almost dead, and in a few more minutes he would have been quite dead, but just then he heard a faint rustle, and a queer little voice said:

"The fairies are sorry for you, Fumble Bee, for you did help us to have a good time. Will you come and work for us now, and learn how a bee ought to live?"

"Oh, yes," answered Fumble Bee, "I will do anything for you if only you will take me in. I am so cold and hungry!"

So Fumble Bee went to work for the fairies. And all winter long he made for them little brown velvet jackets, just like his own, to keep them warm when the cold winds blew.

But when at last the spring had come again, the queen sent him back to the hive.

"Go tell your own queen that now you know how to work," she said, "and here

are all the little brown velvet jackets you made for us. Summer is coming, and we shall not need them any more. Take them for gifts to the other bees. Then they will be glad to see you."

So Fumble Bee flew back to his own queen, and every one was glad to see him again, for now he knew how to work, and, besides, he had brought each bee a little new velvet jacket!

Then throughout the sunny meadows Fumble Bee gathered honey all day long, and he was very happy; for all bees are happiest when they work.



The End