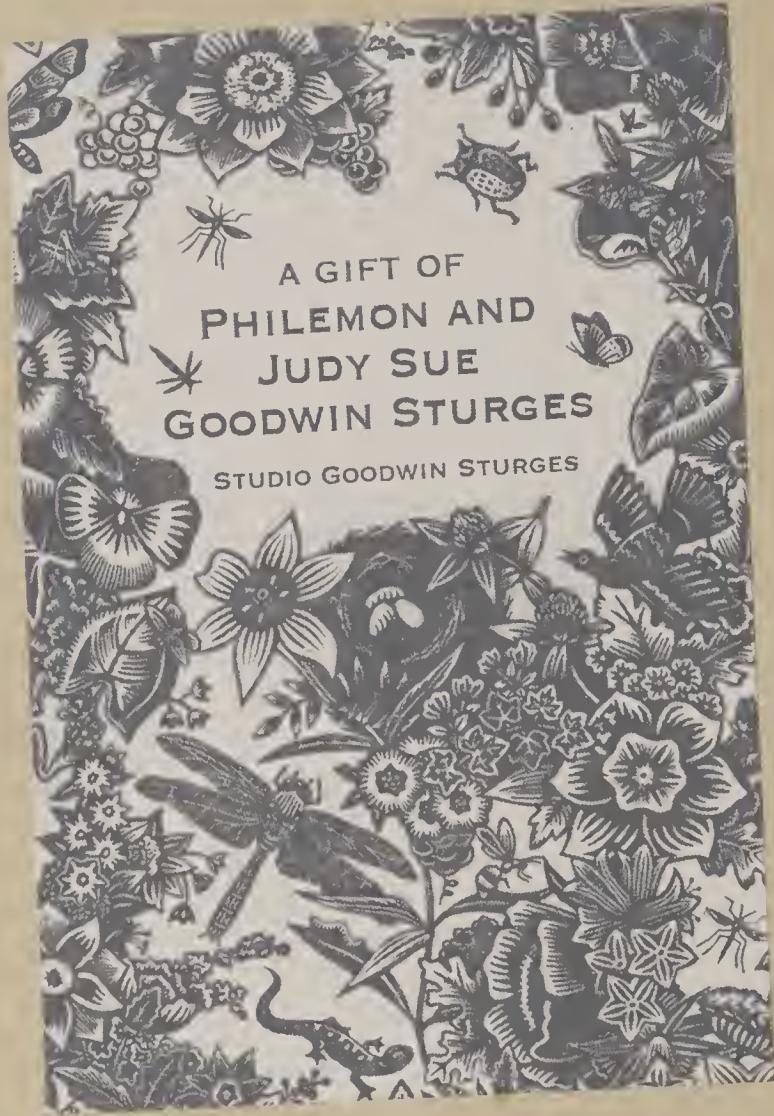


The LITTLE STRAWMAN



By CORA WORK HUNTER



A GIFT OF
PHILEMON AND
JUDY SUE
GOODWIN STURGES
STUDIO GOODWIN STURGES

To William -

from Mrs. E. E. Kemp -

Dec-25-1917.



The service in Woodland Hollow

See page 62

The Little Strawman

By CORA WORK HUNTER

With pictures by
FRANCES BEEM



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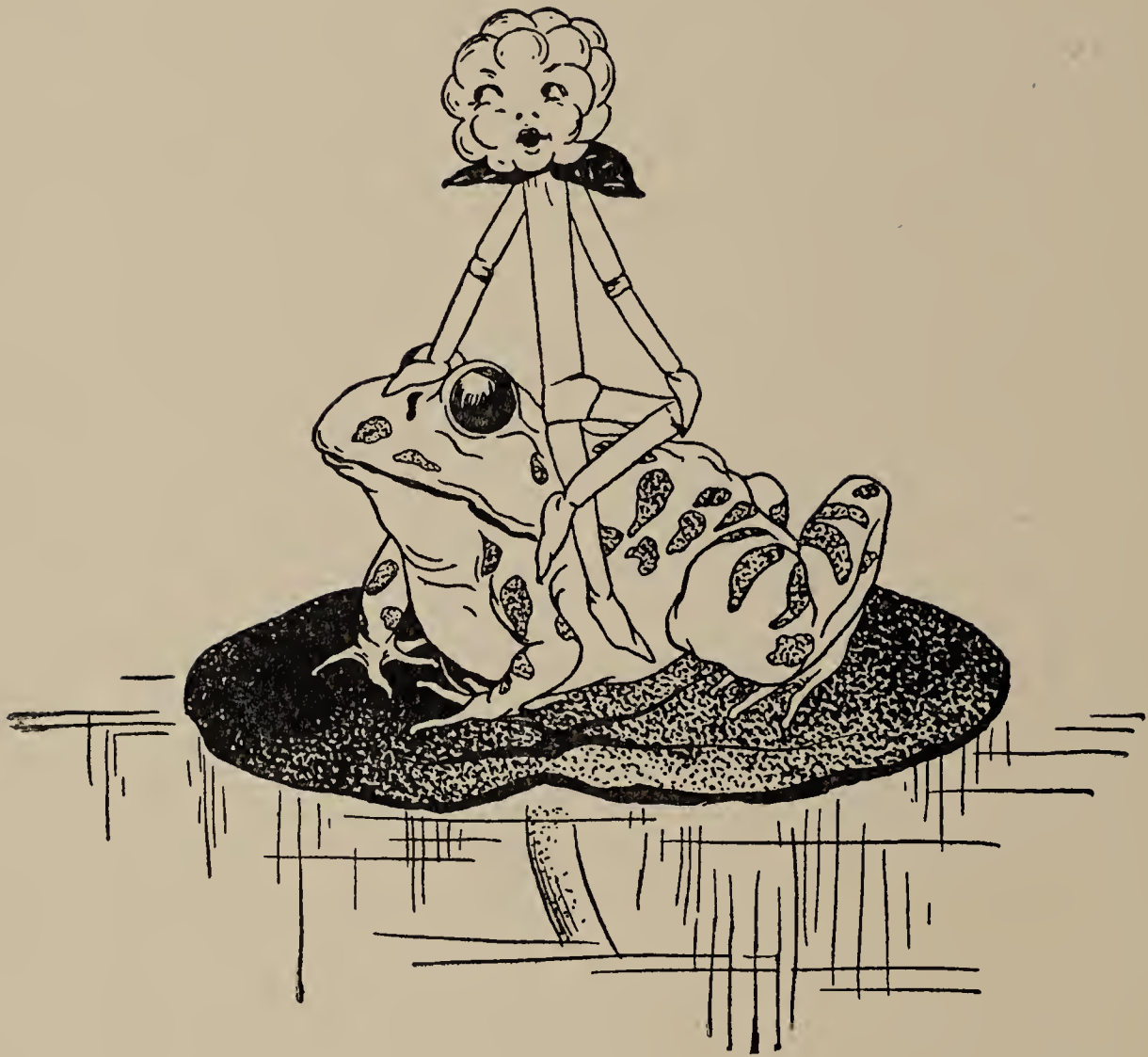
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THE COLORED PICTURES

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THE LITTLE STRAWMAN

HAVE you ever heard of the little Strawman,
Who lives in the forest as best he can?
Of how he blew into the wood one day,
Meeting the bumblebee on his way?
Of how he made friends of the woodland folk,
And built him a house of leaves from the oak?

But no longer now your patience I'll task.
Where the Strawman came from, I know
 you would ask,
For of course you must know there have not
 always been
Such wonderful people as little strawmen.

The wind blew over a field one day,
Meeting a straw stack in its way.
It blew so lusty and gusty a blast
It caught up a wisp of straw as it passed,
And dropped it down on a raspberry vine.



Off walked, complete, our little Strawman

And would you believe it, in a very short time,
The straw grew fast to a raspberry there!
It began to breathe; it began to stir;
And before you could say "Jack Robinson,"
Off walked, complete, our little Strawman.

He walked, to be sure, with a wobble at first,
And his raspberry head he thought would
burst;

But soon he grew stronger and hurried along
The best he could, for the wind was strong
And he had much trouble in keeping his feet,
Till he reached the forest—a safe retreat.
And there he has lived till this very day;
Should he venture out, he would blow away.

When he came to the forest his knees were
quaking,

And his poor little raspberry head was aching.

In crossing the field he had grown so hot,

He sat down to rest in the first shady spot.

He looked all about in the greatest surprise,

For trees, grass, and flowers, in the little man's

eyes,

Were perfectly new; though to men they're

so old

They are passed with never a glance, I am

told.

As the little man sat there thus gazing around

He heard a perfectly terrible sound,—

A roaring and humming and buzzing sound!



He clapped his straw hands to his raspberry
ears,
And then, I'm afraid, he wept bitter tears.

The roaring and humming and buzzing came
nearer,
And the little Strawman, in the greatest
terror,
Saw over his head as he looked around,
A something from which came the terrible
sound—
A something that settled just over his head
On what seemed to him like a ball of red.

The Strawman sat there quite terrified
Till the creature saw him and suddenly cried,
“Well, bless my stinger! What can this be?
I think I really must stop to see.
It can't be a flower, and it can't be a fruit,
It can't be a tree, and it can't be a root;
For plainly 'tis made on a quite different plan.
It has arms and legs, so it must be a man.
But these are of straw, hence, let it be said
That this is a strawman, with a raspberry head.”

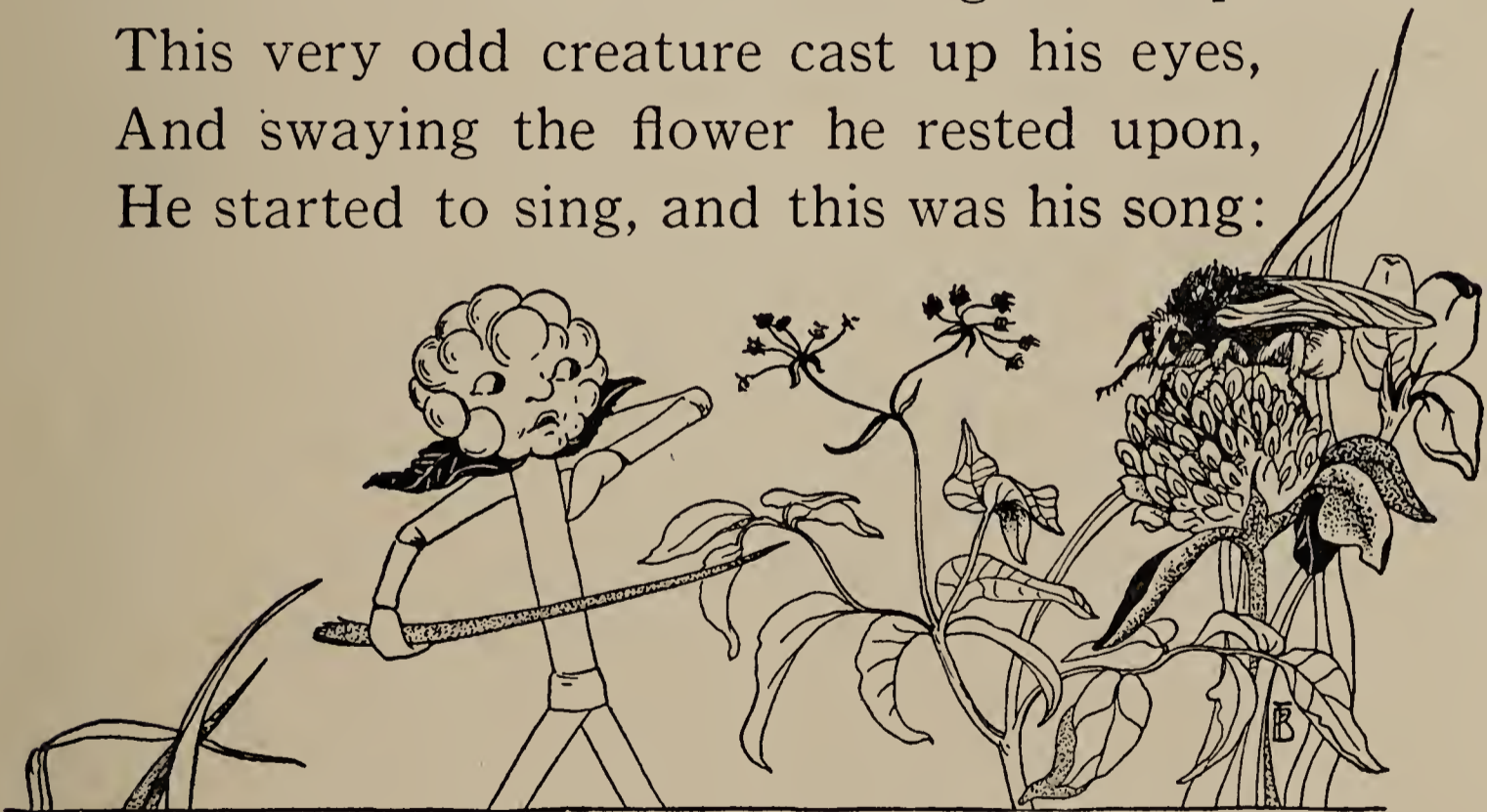
The Strawman sprang to his feet as he ended,
And grasping a grass blade stood thus defended.
The strange creature laughed in so hearty a way
He nearly rolled off—to the Strawman's
dismay.

But on being assured he intended no harm,
The Strawman recovered from his alarm.

His grass blade he sheathed, returned to his place,
And said to the stranger with quite a bold face,
“Kind sir, I'd be pleased if you'd tell me your
name;

And what you are doing; and whence you came.”

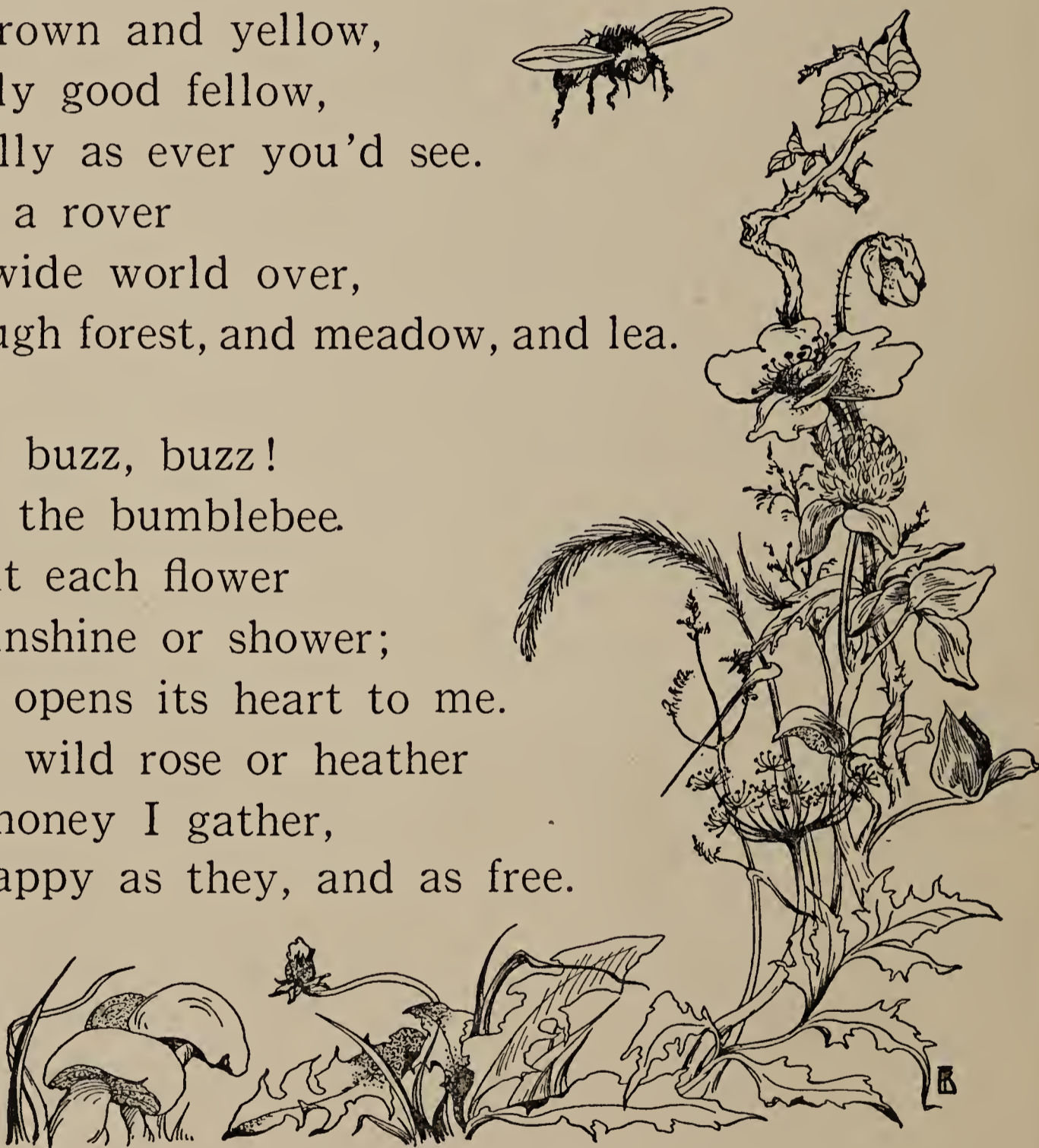
And then to the Strawman's great surprise
This very odd creature cast up his eyes,
And swaying the flower he rested upon,
He started to sing, and this was his song:

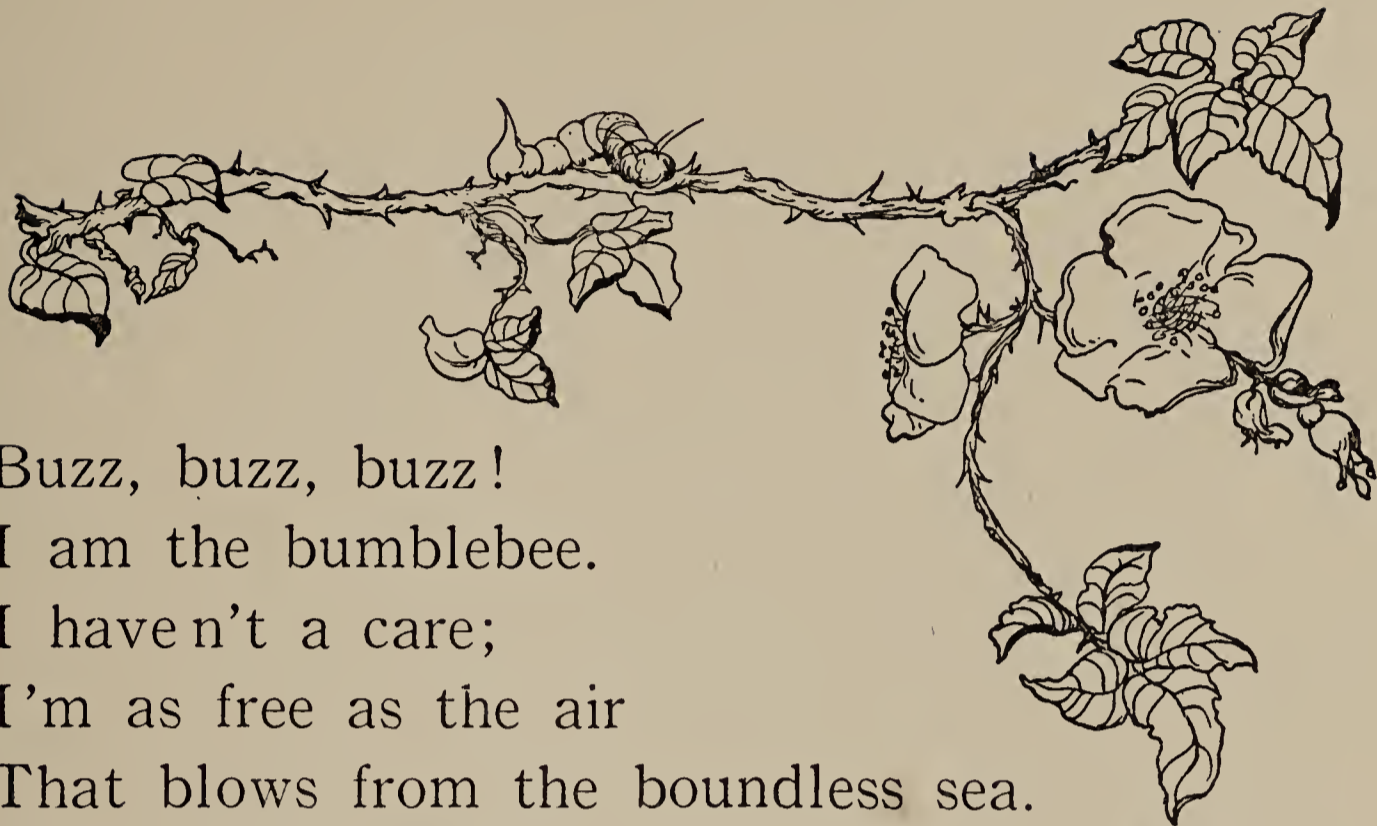


THE SONG OF THE BUMBLEBEE

Buzz, buzz, buzz!
I am the bumblebee.
All brown and yellow,
A jolly good fellow,
As jolly as ever you'd see.
I am a rover
The wide world over,
Through forest, and meadow, and lea.

Buzz, buzz, buzz!
I am the bumblebee.
I visit each flower
In sunshine or shower;
Each opens its heart to me.
From wild rose or heather
The honey I gather,
As happy as they, and as free.





Buzz, buzz, buzz!
I am the bumblebee.
I haven't a care;
I'm as free as the air
That blows from the boundless sea.
Each lovely bower,
Tree, grass, and flower
Share alike with me.

Buzz, buzz, buzz!
I am the bumblebee.
When no longer I'd roam,
I fly to my home
'Neath the grass of the sunny lea.
And there I may rest
In the coziest nest
E'er built by a roving bee.



The Strawman, now grown very bold,
To the bumblebee his story told.
The bee listened closely, then quietly said,
“My friend, you must plainly be clothed
and fed.
If you like, come with me and I’ll show you
a vine
That grows in a favorite glen of mine.”

Away he buzzed, bade the little man follow,
And soon they came to a lovely hollow.
Here the Strawman saw, as he looked
around,
Thousands of vines growing close to the
ground,
And on them red berries of wondrous size—
Or so they seemed in the Strawman’s eyes.

He caught one up in the greatest haste
And found it had a delicious taste.
Near by sat Bumblebee, looking on;
And, when the little Strawman had done,
He calmly said, in his knowing way,
“We’ll call these strawberries from this day.”



"We'll call these strawberries from this day"

Now the Strawman followed the bumblebee
To the ragweed plant, where we shall see
He fitted himself with a suit of clothes
Just meant for a strawman, any one knows.
'Twas so snug a fit—there was not a flaw—
That 'twas plain to be seen he was made of
straw.

Now Bumblebee gave him some good advice,
And buzzing good-by, was gone in a trice;
The Strawman was left to his own device.

The world seemed dark to the little Straw-
man.

Would he ever see this kind friend again?
He felt very near to each flower and tree,
For they were all friends of Bumblebee.
Returning once more to his seat 'neath the
clover,
He sat down to rest and to think it all over;
But he could arrive at no definite plan.

“Of what are you thinking, little Strawman?”

A low voice asked just over his head.

He found, looking up, that the ball of red
Was nodding at him in a friendly way,

And now again he felt happy and gay.

“I am Clover Blossom, a friend of the bee's,
So of course your friend also, if you
please.

Just now I thought you were looking sad.

“If I can help you I'll be very glad.”



The little man rose with a courtly bow

The little man rose with a courtly bow.

“Miss Blossom, I thank you. I was just now
Quite cast down in spirit, in fact, quite sad,
For I thought I had lost the one friend I had;
But since I have found another in you
I am sure you will tell me what I should do.”

Little Miss Blossom now blushed very red.
She thought for a moment, and then she said,
“I am, of course, but a weak little flower;
I never have been out of this small bower.
Nothing I know of the world outside;

But Dame Owl's wisdom is known far and wide.

I'll tell you the way to the old owl's house
As I learned it one day from my friend the mouse.

She lives near by in an old oak tree.

I'm sure you can find it quite easily.

You follow the path till you come to the brook;

Then turn to the right; and if you will look
With a little care as you follow the stream,
You'll find, ere long, what to you will seem
A creature of very peculiar guise,
Without any tail, and with great staring eyes.
This is Herr Frog, who will ferry you over,
If you tell him you come from his friend,
Miss Clover.

His voice is hoarse and he's homely of feature,
But don't be afraid; he's a kind-hearted creature.

When you've crossed the brook, still keep to the right,

And the old oak tree will soon be in sight."



Miss Clover described the brook, frog, and tree

The Strawman looked quite mystified;
And, when she had ended, suddenly cried,
“But pray, Miss Blossom, how shall I know
The brook and Herr Frog and the oak as I
go?

For you must know they're strangers to
me.”

Then she described the brook, frog, and tree,

And the Strawman gayly went his way
In search of the oak, without delay.
As the Strawman followed the path along,
The world seemed to him to be full of song.
Above in the trees were scores of birds
Warbling and twittering; and soon he caught
words,
Carried down by the breeze; they were words
of thanksgiving
For sunshine, and trees, and the joy of living.
As the Strawman pondered, and gazed far
and wide,
He felt, like the birds, the sunshine inside.

And now his thoughts took another turn.
He remembered his errand, and how he
must learn
Which of all plans would prove the best
For reaching most surely the old owl's nest,
Which Miss Blossom had told him was far
from the ground,
And quite hard to reach unless help could
be found.



The world seemed to him to be full of song

Pondering this problem he came to the brook,
Which, from Clover's description, he knew
at a look.

He gayly sang as he flowed along
And these, little friend, were the words of
his song:

THE SONG OF THE BROOK

From a spring 'neath the root of an old oak tree,
Down I come bubbling merrily.

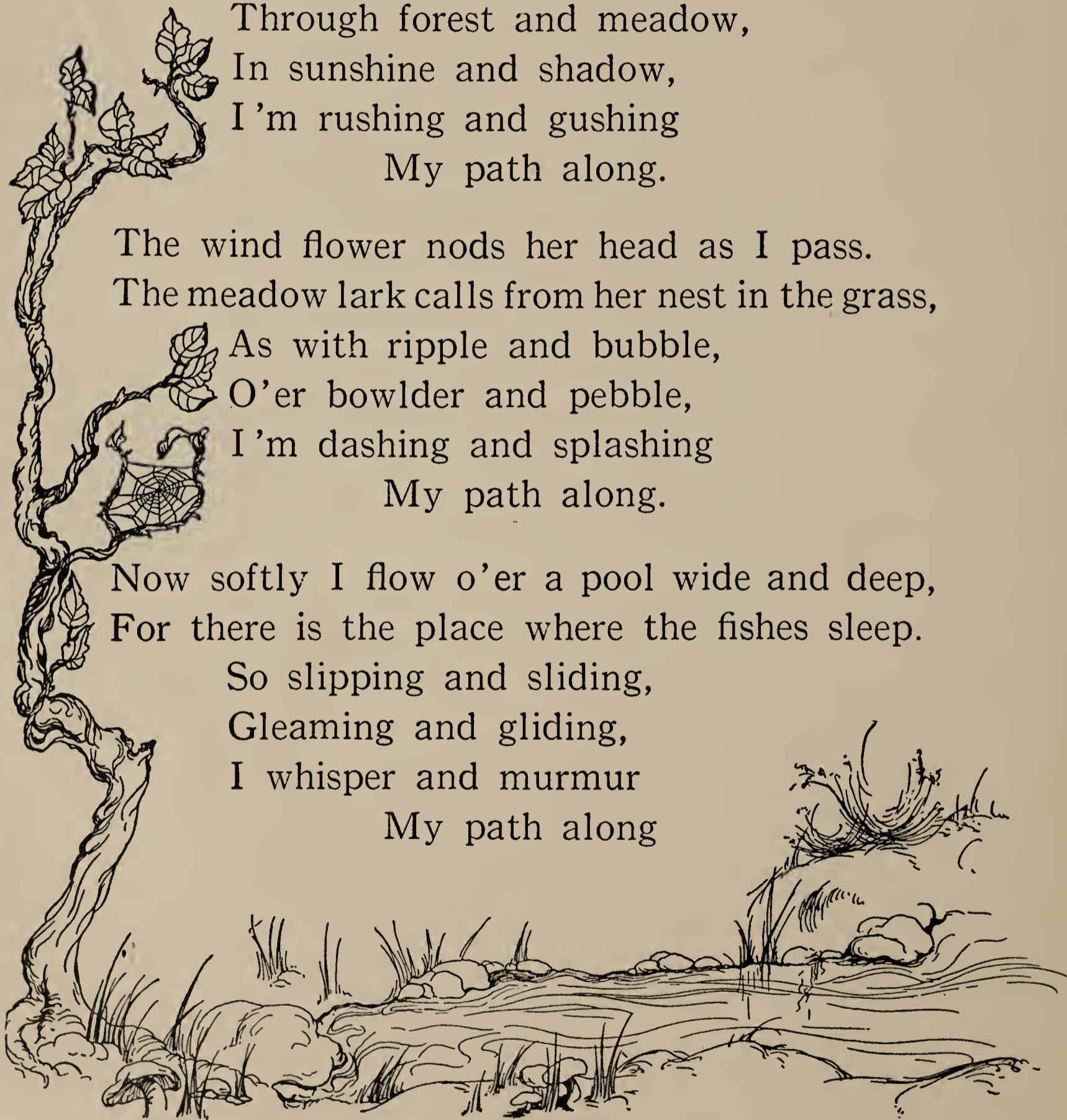
Through forest and meadow,
In sunshine and shadow,
I'm rushing and gushing
My path along.

The wind flower nods her head as I pass.
The meadow lark calls from her nest in the grass,

As with ripple and bubble,
O'er boulder and pebble,
I'm dashing and splashing
My path along.

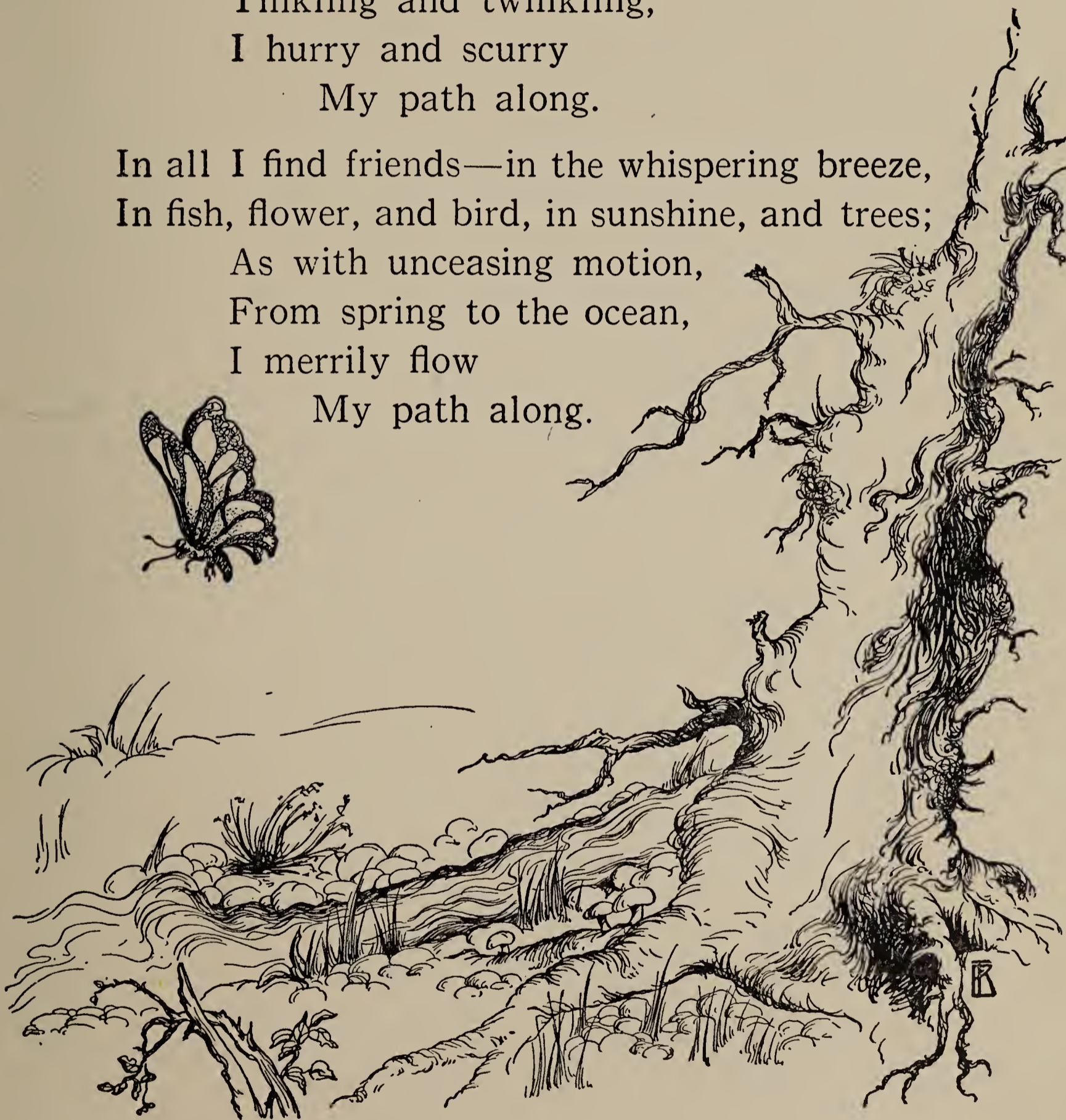
Now softly I flow o'er a pool wide and deep,
For there is the place where the fishes sleep.

So slipping and sliding,
Gleaming and gliding,
I whisper and murmur
My path along



Sometimes the breezes come whispering by
And the little leaves beckon and nod on high,
Then wrinkling and crinkling,
Tinkling and twinkling,
I hurry and scurry
My path along.

In all I find friends—in the whispering breeze,
In fish, flower, and bird, in sunshine, and trees;
As with unceasing motion,
From spring to the ocean,
I merrily flow
My path along.



The Strawman listened with great delight,
Then, as told by Miss Clover, he turned to
the right.

A beautiful path was this road by the brook,
Filled with new wonders at every crook.

The little Strawman was eager to learn,
So he looked for the wind flow'r at every
turn;

And soon he found her, all pink and white;
She nodded and swayed as he came in sight.

Here and there where the brook grew deep
He looked for the fishes, and found them
asleep

Or lazily making their way about,
Weaving and winding in and out.

Ere long he came to a hollow log
And on the end sat his ferry, the frog,
Idly watching the brook as it ran.

He turned and saw the little Strawman.

“Hello, little friend! Who might you
be?”

And what, pray tell, do you want of me?”



On the end of a log sat his ferry, the frog

“I am called the Strawman by Bumblebee;
And am on my way to the old oak tree
Where lives Dame Owl of widespread fame.
It is to ask her advice I came;
To reach there, you know, I must cross the
brook,”
He said to Herr Frog with a timid look,
“But I have been told by your friend, Miss
Clover,
That you would kindly ferry me over.”

Herr Frog then rose with a widespread yawn,
Stretched far out—in a trice was gone!

The Strawman looked at the place where he
sank,

At the widening circles; then close to the
bank

He heard a voice which kindly said,

“Now, little man, just climb on my head.

Hold on tight, and I’ll carry you over

As you were promised by little Miss Clover.”

The Strawman did as he was bidden,

And when to the other side he’d ridden

He thanked Herr Frog for his kindly aid

And asked how the journey from there could
be made;

How he ever could reach a nest built so high,

For a strawman could neither climb nor fly.

Now old Herr Frog looked very wise

As he scratched his head and closed his eyes.

Then he turned to the Strawman standing

near.



The Strawman climbed on to Herr Frog's head

“I’ve thought of a plan that will work, never
fear;

My cousin, the tree toad, lives in the oak;
He’ll take you up,” he said with a croak.

“Continue your journey, and when you’re
near by

Give, once or twice, this peculiar cry.

He will answer you and at once descend.

In him you will find another friend,

For he’ll carry you up on his back, I am
sure,

And let you off at the old owl’s door.”

The Strawman thanked him joyfully

And hurried on to the old oak tree.

When he reached the oak he gave the cry

And heard an answering trill near by.

Down came the toad in his curious way,

To hear what the Strawman had to say.

Then taking the little man pick-a-back

Up the tree he went in the very same track.

He set him down at the old owl’s door,

And left him there all alone once more.

The Strawman felt the shivers creep
As he peered in the hole so dark and deep.
Nothing he saw and nothing he heard,
So he timidly knocked, and called to the
bird.

Out of the depths came a deep, "Who, who?"

The little man, trembling, nearer drew.
"'Tis the Strawman," he answered, though
much afraid.

"I am sent by Miss Clover to ask your aid."
"I can't be disturbed by every tramp—
But I'll listen to you; just wait for my lamp."

A soft bright glow now lighted the den,
Then was gone, but soon blazed forth again.
Thus dying and bright'ning it nearer drew,
And the Strawman saw a creature quite new.
Like the bee, it had wings, but was long and
slim,

And in no other way resembled him.
This odd little lamp that so strangely burned
Was called the firefly, he afterwards learned.



*The Strawman felt the shivers creep
As he peered in the hole so dark and deep*

Now the creature turned with his cheery glow,
And led the Strawman down below
Where sat Dame Owl of world-wide fame.



The Strawman told her why he came

The Strawman told her why he came.
She ruffled her feathers and tilted her head,
Then looked at the Strawman and calmly
said,
“You say you were fed and clothed by the
bee,
And for further advice you come to me.
Little man, you do well, for much I know;
I can tell you where all things live or grow;
The names of all things you can learn from
me.
I know far more than that meddlesome bee.”

The Strawman's eyes grew big with surprise.
Of course he had known Dame Owl was wise—
But wiser than Bumblebee! That, he knew,
Could not by any means really be true.

But he looked at Dame Owl, at her monstrous
size,

At the wise expression about her eyes,
At her ruffled feathers, and tilted head;
Then he felt that indeed it must be as she said.

“I see that, though clothed, you have no hat,”
Continued the owl. “We must furnish that.
As you leave this tree, just look on the
ground,

Where you'll see some acorns scattered around.
Find you a cup that has fallen off
And you'll have a hat at which none can
scoff.

“But first we must plan a house for you;
For that I believe oak leaves will do.
You can build the house just under this tree,
Then when needing advice you can come to
me.

“There is moss near the root of the tree,” she said,

“That will serve very well for both carpet and bed.

’Tis a place that is sheltered from wind and rain;

That ’tis cool and shady is also plain.

Fasten the leaves with needles of pine,

And you’ll have a house that’s as snug as mine.”

She ceased to speak, and the Strawman saw
She wished him to leave, so he turned to
withdraw.

The lamp which had lighted the way before
Led him once more to the open door.

He mounted the toad, who was waiting, he
found;

And when, at length, they reached the
ground,

He asked the toad where the pine trees
grew,

Then found him a hat and set out anew.



He gathered the needles that lay on the ground

The little man had not far to go
Till he came to the place where the pine trees
grow.

He gathered the needles that lay on the ground,
And returned to the oak, where the leaves
he found.

He chose a spot with moss soft and fine,
Then joined the leaves with needles of pine,
And, driving four needles far into the ground,
He fastened his house down firm and sound.

The Strawman busily worked away,
Nor heeded aught that around him lay.
When he had finished he sat down to rest,
And proudly surveyed his cozy nest.
Imagine our little Strawman's surprise
When he looked right into a pair of bright
eyes

Peeping at him around the house.
He wondered if it could be the mouse.
Then a pretty brown head came into view
And a furry brown body followed, too.

The inquisitive stranger sat up very straight;
From his mouth took a nut, which he slowly
ate.

Now the Strawman felt he was hungry, too,
For in building his house he had much to do.
He thought of the strawberries down in the
glen,

And wondered if he could find them again.
Then he spoke to the stranger, and asked if
he knew

The way to the glen where the berries grew.



The Strawman and his house

The pretty brown creature shook his head.
“I know of no strawberry glen,” he said;
“In fact, I never heard the name.
But if you will show me the way you
came,
And describe this glen where the berries
grow,
I can help you find it again, I know.”

So off they started for Strawberry Glen,
The little Strawman and his new-found
friend.

The stranger said, as they followed the trail,
“I’m Bushy Squirrel from Hickory Dale,
Which lies near the oak where you built
your home.

What is your name, and from where did you
come?”

“Oh, I blew into the wood one day,
Meeting the Bumblebee on the way.
He named me Strawman, and I suppose
It will do very well as far as it goes.”

“No,” said the squirrel, “that will never do,
For you must have a full title, too;
And whether the bumblebee said so or not,
You are now the Strawman of Oak-leaf Cot.”

In friendly talk they came to the brook,
And the Strawman wondered by what hook
or crook

Bushy could reach the other side,
For Herr Frog was too small for him to ride.



The little man did not wonder long;
For the squirrel was not only large, but
strong.

On his back the Strawman he quickly took,
Ran up a tree that grew by the brook,
And, springing lightly from limb to limb,
Soon he had crossed the stream with him
Into a tree on the opposite side,
That spread its branches far and wide.
Then down they came to the path again,
And continued their journey to Strawberry
Glen.

Now they follow the brook along,
Turn where the Strawman first heard his
song,
Reach Miss Blossom, his kind little friend,
And now they arrive at their journey's end.

“Aha!” said Bushy, “last year I came
To this glen for nuts, but knew not the
name.

The berries, I think, were then not here,
For you know I came in the fall of the year.”



Two large nuts in his cheeks he packed

The Strawman ate to his stomach's content;
Then on going home his thoughts were bent,
As he sat on a leaf of a swaying vine,
Watching Bushy, who spent the time
Busily digging beneath an oak.

The Strawman thought he would surely choke
When, without the shell having even been
 cracked,
Two large nuts in his cheeks he packed.

The little man ventured to ask him how
He knew they were buried beneath that
 bough.

“These,” said the squirrel, “I laid away
To furnish my dinner some cold winter day,
But this year I found that I needed no more.
I’m taking them now just to put with my
 store.”

Now another thought entered the Strawman’s
 head;

He, too, must arrange to be amply fed
Without making this journey day after day,
So he asked the squirrel if there wasn’t
 a way

To have a strawberry patch of his own
At Oak-leaf Cot, his new-built home.



“Just help me root this up, if you can”

“Of course there is, my little man.
Just help me root this up, if you can,
And we’ll carry it home to Oak-leaf Cot,
And plant it there in your garden plot.”

So choosing a plant that was large and fine,
He set to work to uproot the vine.
They dug it up and carried it home,
And planted it there for meals to come,
And from this day, my little friend,
The Strawman had berries without end.

So he gathered his berries, day by day,
And carefully laid each berry away;
For Bushy had said, and not without reason,
That he must provide for the winter season.
Then he stopped every crevice of Oak-leaf

Cot

With soft green moss from his garden plot.
He lined it within, both above and below,
Then said, well content, "Now let the wind
blow

And the winter come with its cold and snow;
I have a warm home, and a soft, mossy bed,
And plenty of berries wherewith to be fed."

He thought he had all that heart could desire
Till he chanced to think of light and fire.
“By my acorn hat! I must have a light
And a cheery fire each cold winter night.”
Said he, “I must plan a way,”—and then
He remembered the firefly he’d met in the den.
Of course Dame Owl would not let him go,
But of other fireflies he might know.

At once he sprang up with his usual vim
To search for a firefly to live with him.
The Strawman shivered on opening his door,
For winter’s wind had come once more,
And his ragweed suit was for summer wear;
It was not proof ’gainst the frosty air.
So first to the fir tree he went for a coat,
Which he buttoned up to the very throat.

Returning, he reached the owl’s nest as before,
Where he met the firefly at the door.
Yes, sure enough, the firefly knew
Of a distant cousin he thought would do,

So he sent him word by the dragon fly
That he'd found him a winter home near by.
The Strawman returned to Oak-leaf Cot
Feeling contented with his lot.

“I'm ready,” said he. “Now let the wind blow,
And the winter come with its cold and snow.”

Soon the leaves fluttered down, and the trees
were bare,

And a touch of frost was felt in the air.

The birds had gone to a warmer land,
And to winter quarters the insect band.

The firefly donned his winter dress—

You wouldn't have known him then,
I guess,

For beneath it his wings were out of sight,
And now he glowed with a steady light.

The flowers had fallen asleep till spring.

No longer now did the happy brook sing,

For he had put on a coat of mail

To protect him well from the winter's gale.



Bluebird told him that spring had come.

Winter had come with its cold and snow,
But what cared the Strawman how the winds
blow?

He lived warm and snug in his cozy home,
Till Bluebird told him that spring had come.

Back the bird came with his song at last,
To tell all creatures that winter had
passed.

He called to the brook to put off his coat,
He wakened the flow'rs with his merry note.
In passing, he greeted the sleeping trees,
“'Tis time to awake and unfold your leaves.”

He called to the insects far and near;
Some of them answered; some did not hear.
The katydid gave his wings a flap,
Then over he rolled for another nap;
The butterfly stretched himself with a yawn,
Then decided to wait till the others were
gone;

But the beetles came, and the crickets, too,
And the earthworm opened his door and
peeped through.

He called but once at the Strawman's door,
For the little man longed to be out once
more.

From his winter coat the firefly crept.
All through the winter he had slept,
But now he must be leaving, too,
For he'd taken a contract the summer through
To furnish the light for a field of wheat;
And he must be off his friends to meet,
To settle upon some definite plan
Before the summer really began.

Now our little Strawman had home, food,
and clothes.

No more could he wish for, you might suppose.
Ah, no, little friend! As you older grow,
'Tis the way of the world, you will learn to
know,

To always desire just one thing more;
And so in the sunshine he sat at his door,
And thought how very happy he'd be
Had he only some one for company.



*He thought how very happy he'd be
Had he only some one for company*

And so to Dame Owl he went again.
He found her asleep in her cozy den.
She'd already furnished him house and hat,
And now she suggested he get him a cat.

Nothing of cats the Strawman knew,
So he asked Dame Owl where the pussies
grew.

She said he need only to follow the stream.

And now, little friend, though strange it may
seem,

The Strawman had not very far to go

Till he came to a tree where pussies grow.

How did he know the cats were there?

Listen to me with the greatest care.

First, you must know the place where they
grow

Is called by man the pussy willow.

He left the den in the greatest glee

And began his search for the pussy tree.

In a very short time he reached the side

Of the brook, who promised to be his guide.

“Oh, yes,” he rippled, “of course I know

The place where the pussy willows grow;

The pussy-cat chorus I can hear

As I flow by, for the tree is near.”

And sure enough, soon the Strawman heard

A song, but could not distinguish a word,

Till he left the brook and approached the tree;

Then he could hear it quite easily:

THE PUSSY-CAT CHORUS

Purr, purr, purr!
 In the pussy willow live we,
 And all day long
 You can hear our song,
 If you'll listen quite carefully.
 Purr, purr, purr!

Purr, purr, purr!
 Free from all danger are we;
 Without dog or boy
 To trouble our joy,
 We live in the pussy tree.
 Purr, purr, purr!

Purr, purr, purr!
 Now, little friend, don't you see
 Why cats like to climb?
 For, once on a time,
 All lived in a pussy tree.
 Purr, purr, purr!



Now the Strawman had found the pussy-cat
tree,

He saw how much company a cat would be.

“I swear,” said he, “by my acorn hat,

That I will most certainly have a cat.”

So he called and he coaxed the pussies gray,

But they just purred on in their sleepy way

And gave the Strawman never a thought.

“If you will not come, you will have to be
brought,”

Said he, and set out for Hickory Dale

To find his friend of the bushy tail.

With the kindly squirrel he soon returned;

And then the pussy-cats quickly learned,

Though they would not come, in spite of
that

There are more ways than one to get a cat.

With a spring and a bound Bushy ran up the
tree

And a soft little sleepy kitten chose he;

He carried him down in the old cat's way,

And gave to the Strawman the pussy gray.



*Under his arm, with great content,
He placed the kitten, and away he went*

Under his arm, with great content,
He placed the kitten, and away he went.
Back to Oak-leaf Cot without delay,
The Strawman merrily made his way.
Never again could he lonely be,
For a dear little pussy-cat gray had he.

Now the kitten lived in Oak-leaf Cot
And purred away as though he'd forgot
He ever had lived in a pussy-cat tree.
But soon, little friend ('twas sad, ah me!),
The kitten grew thin and his eyes grew dim;
No longer he sang with his usual vim.

The Strawman watched him day by day,
Slowly but surely pining away;
And now in the greatest despair was he
When who should come by but Bumblebee.

“Well, bless my stinger! What have we here?”
Bumblebee buzzed with his hearty cheer.

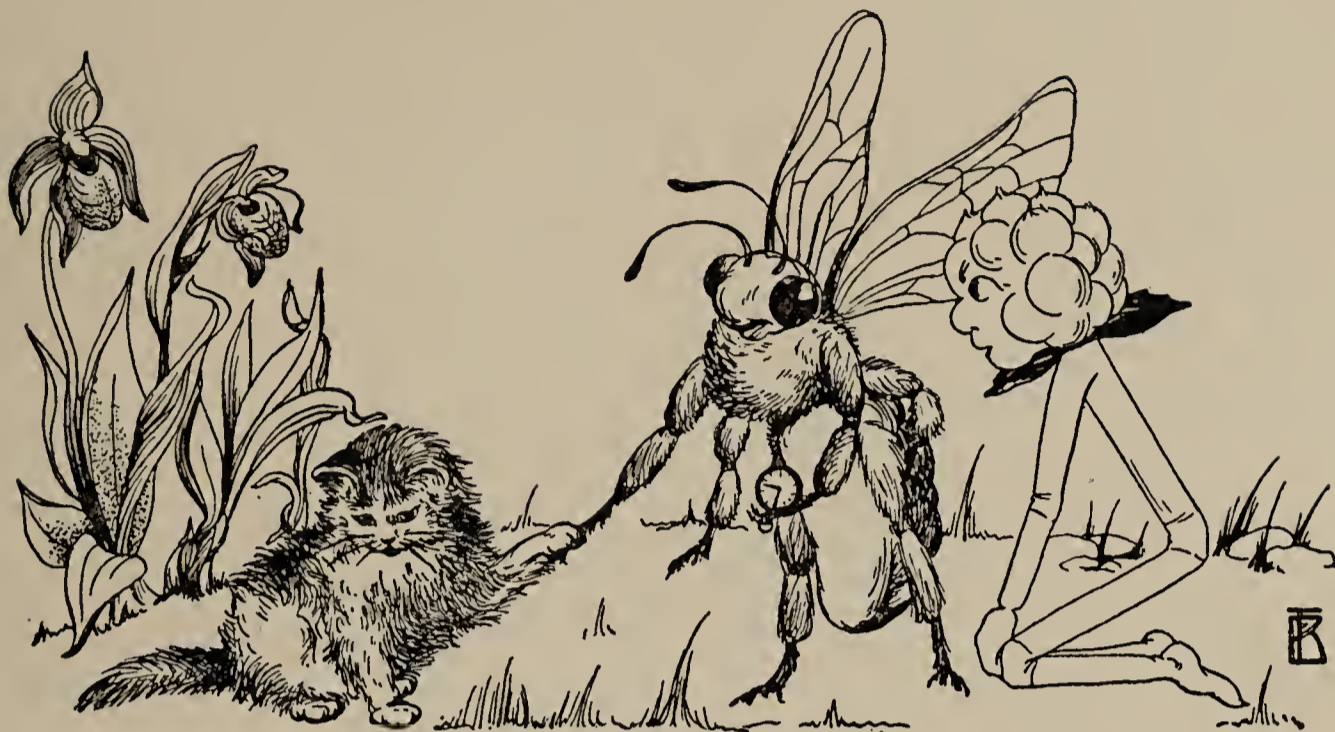
“If it isn't the Strawman I met months
ago!

I swear it by all the flowers that blow!
And he's got him a house, and an acorn
hat;

And by all that's fragrant, he's got him a
cat!

But what have you done to the cat, pray
tell?

To me he doesn't look overly well.”



The bee felt its pulse

The Strawman fell on the bumblebee's neck
With tears of joy. Now what did he reck
That the kitten was sick? His friend, tried
and true,

Had come and would tell him what to do.

The bee felt its pulse, examined its tongue,
Counted its heartbeats, tapped its lung;
Then said, as he turned to take his seat,
"All that it needs is something to eat."

Now the little Strawman was horrified
To think that his kitten might have died
Of hunger, for he did not know
A cat must eat to live and grow.



Away they went for a milkweed plant

Then Bumblebee told him that he must feed
The kitten sweet milk of the healthful milkweed.
So away they went for a milkweed plant
In the greatest haste; for the time was scant
If they really wanted the kitten to live.
The squirrel went along, his help to give
In digging it up and bringing it home.

“Now,” said the bee, “since so far we have
come,
We may just as well make the most of the
trip,
And carry back also a bit of catnip.
And so there will be no more danger of
fasting,
We’ll take with us, too, mouse-ear-ever-
lasting.”

The squirrel dug fast, though he grew tired
and hot,
And soon they turned homeward to Oak-leaf
Cot.
For each of the plants there was found
a place,
And the Strawman’s garden thus grew
apace.

The little gray kitten had all it could need—
The mouse-ears, the catnip, sweet milk from
the weed.
And now, little friend, ’tis needless to say
It began to grow better from that very day.

Now the little Strawman had become well
known

To the woodland folk; he had made his home
In the forest among them for almost a year.
Birds, flowers, and insects he knew far and
near.

The dragon fly, who was quite an old friend,
On any errand he felt he could send;
With the greatest of pleasure did he hail
The visits of Bunny Cottontail,
Who told of dangers from which he was
freed

By means of his wit and remarkable speed;
Of course Miss Blossom, Dame Owl, and the
bee,
The squirrel, and Herr Frog were old friends,
you see.



*With the greatest of pleasure did he hail
The visits of Bunny Cottontail*

So greatly contented with his lot,
He lived in cozy Oak-leaf Cot.
The wise old owl was his nearest neighbor.
To reach her home, though, required such labor,
The Strawman thought there surely must be
An easier way to climb the tree.

When he wished to visit her in her den,
The toad would carry him up, but then
They did not find it convenient at all,
For he was long and the toad was small;
And in spite of all that they could do,
His feet would drag the journey through.
So, determined to think of a better way,
He set out for a walk one bright spring day.

By the brook he met Miss Violet,
Who bowed as he gayly raised his hat.
Here as his path made another turn,
He passed the home of Maidenhair Fern;
In a shady nook at the root of a tree
She lived with her happy family.
As she spied the little man on his way,
She waved her hand, and nodded good-day.

Ere long he arrived at the thrush's nest.
Mrs. Thrush asked him to stop and rest
And have a bit of her wild-grape wine,
Which she thought this year was unusually
fine.



Mrs. Thrush asked him to stop and rest

Then she proudly showed him her children
three,
As likely young birds as one would see.
He duly admired each spotted breast,
Each well-shaped beak, and glossy crest.

But when he inquired for her merry mate,
She said, "You are just a bit too late;
He left home not ten minutes ago,
For services down in Woodland Hollow;
Jack-in-the-pulpit is preaching to-day.
If you wish to see him, just pass that way."

Now never before had the Strawman heard
Of Woodland Hollow, and never a word
Of Jack-in-the-pulpit; at once then, you know,
He decided to Woodland Hollow to go.
Where it might be, or how far away,
Mrs. Thrush really could not say,
For never once had she gone to church.
The little man seemed to be left in the
lurch,
Yet to find the place he determined to try;
When who should come past but the butterfly.

He fluttered up, dressed in his Sunday best,
And stopped a moment to talk and rest.
He was on his way to Woodland Hollow,
And the little Strawman need only follow.
So now he bade Mrs. Thrush good-by
And started off with the butterfly.

But soon they found, as will you who try,
That for one to walk and another to fly
Is not of all ways the easiest ever
For two good friends to keep together.
A better way they must find to go
To church, for neither, as you know,
Could the Strawman fly nor the butterfly
walk.

But now in the course of a friendly talk,
The butterfly thought of a plan that would
do.

Why could they not combine the two?
One would rest while the other would work,
And thus neither one the task would shirk.



The butterfly carries him far as he can

So tightly clasping the little Strawman,
The butterfly carries him far as he can,
Then down to the earth they come once more,
And the little Strawman walks on as before;
But on his back he carries his friend.

'T is thus they reach their journey's end.
And in just this way it came about
That the little Strawman at last found out
An easier way to climb the tree,
When the wise old owl he wished to see.

As they entered the Hollow the Strawman
inferred,
Though of Jack-in-the-pulpit he never had
heard,
That he must be of widespread fame;
For into the Hollow the wood folk came,
Rushing by 'neath the spreading trees,
Large folk, small folk, by twos and by
threes.
On foot and on wing, they hurried along,
Happy of heart,—a motley throng.

And on with the rest, as fast as they can,
Rush the butterfly and the little Strawman.
Shortly they hear the little brook's song
And now they stop with the merry throng
In a shady dell with a green mossy carpet.



Large folk, small folk, by twos and by threes

High on the edge stands Jack-in-the-pulpit,
A wise little man, with kindly manner;
He nods and smiles 'neath his waving banner.
With answering smiles they gather round
On leaf and twig, and the mossy ground—
Creatures of every conceivable guise.



Herr Frog played his 'cello

Here the Strawman sees with surprise
 His friends, the squirrel, the frog, and the
 bee.

Here are the thrush, and the chickadee,
 And many feathered folk beside.

Here are the insects from far and wide,
 The katydid, and the dragon fly,
 Beetles of low degree, and high.

Of congregation there was no lack
 To hear the sermon of pastor Jack.

The orchestra was excellent;
 Each had his favorite instrument.
 The locusts played the mandolin;
 The katydids the violin;

And with his 'cello, old Herr Frog
Lent volume from his mossy log.
The birds a hymn in chorus sang
Until the wood with music rang.
But when the sermon had begun
They all were silent; every one
Turned his eyes upon the pulpit;
And the little man within it
Preached a sermon, short and simple,
To these merry woodland people.

Here we'll leave, in the midst of this little
band,
With friendly folk on every hand,
The Strawman we've learned to know so well,
And may meet again—no one can tell.
If so, we'll see how, for many a year,
He dwelt with his friends in the woodland
here.



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