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THE QUEEN OF THE BEES.

"Jeanne, I am sure that I hear the sound of horses' feet. Listen!"

"No, grandmother, it is only Michette stamping her feet in the cow-house."

An old woman and a young girl, both French peasants, were sitting over a smoldering fire on the low hearth of their cottage. The sun was sinking, and a gray mist hung over the small cabin, dimming the glass with its thick moisture. The old woman was brewing a fiasne in a small earthenware pot set over a bed of coals, which she constantly rekindled by kneeling down and blowing lustily upon them.

The young girl was mending a coat. It was the coat of a French Zouave and she touched it with an air of reverence that might have suited the great Jeanne whose name she bore. Every now and then she would press her lips upon the gilt buttons which she was tightening with strong thread. Occasionally she would cast a furtive glance toward the closed door, opposite to her, and a look akin to rapture would illumine her face.

"Is my father still asleep, grandmother?" she asked presently.

"Yes, child, and what a heavy sleep it is!" replied the old dame. "Twice since noon I have gone in to see him and there he lies like a man drugged. No wonder he is so tired, the poor lad, walking all night!"

"Tell me about it again, grandmother. I did not hear him knock this morning. How was it? Tell me about it all over again."

"Ah, my child, youth has profound slumber. Not so with us old folks; our hearts are awake even while we sleep. I heard my boy's tap on the window-pane though it was almost as light as if a moth had struck there. Still I knew it was my soldier-boy, my brave son, the moment I heard that sound. How tired he was! How astonished was I. I gave him food, and he told me all there was to tell. Our troops are retreating—ah me, it is always the same story now—and when your father found himself so near his old home, his captain gave him leave to come to it for a day and a night. He is to leave us at midnight, or he will be taken prisoner, so rapidly have the Germans advanced; but he knows all the roads and paths about here so well that he is sure he can get back to his camp by daylight, to join the troops that are to move onward at dawn."

"Oh, bonne maman, what does he say about this dreadful war? When is my father coming home again—to stay?"

The old woman shook her head as she stirred the fiasne with a long wooden spoon. There was a listlessness of expression in her face which told at a glance the character of the strong-limbed, strong-featured and strong-natured peasant.

"That is what none can tell," she answered, "and least of all, the poor lads who fight and march and hunger; who dig the ditches and die in them; who build the barricades and are shot on them; who throw themselves in the heat of the fight, only to meet the cold finger of death. The soldiers know nothing. They ask no questions. They obey orders. There are many brave and true still left to fight, and as long as there is one there will be battle. And, my child, it is one of the bravest sons of France that now lies sleeping in that room."

Her eye kindled with love and admiration as she spoke, and a tear stood on her cheek.

Suddenly she stood erect, her whole frame quivering, her head bent forward, her face tense and eager in its attitude of listening.

"What is that, Jeanne?" she whispered, sharply. "I am sure I heard horses' feet. Open the door! Be quick! Put your ear to the ground, and listen!"

Instantly Jeanne sprang up. She was out of the door like a flash, with her ear to the earth.

"It is nothing, bonne maman," she said, as she rose. "I hear the frogs in the pond, and the blackbirds in the trees, that is all. Perhaps it is the creaking of the poplars that you hear. They grow like masts on ships at sea today."

"I have heard them," said the old woman pressing her hand against her wrinkled brow, "and I know it always foretells trouble. The night your mother died the poplars made that sound. I will not forget that night."

"Tell me of my mother, bonne maman," said the girl, wistfully, as she drew the old woman back into the house. You never talk of her, and I dare not ask my father. I know that she was young when she died. But tell me, was she beautiful?"

The grandmother looked narrowly at her as she said, as if with difficulty, "If you wish to know, look in that mirror."

Jeanne stepped forward with an air of curiosity that was quite imperson-

al, and looked at her reflection as if looking at an unknown being. The round, sweet face framed by closely-cropped, curly hair of a light blonde color and surmounted by the crisp white peasant's cap, was very wistful and tender. As she gazed her lips quivered, and her large eyes grew limpid with tears; her face had a new meaning to herself. The long-dead young mother of her dreams seemed to confront her as if it were an actual living creature. The face she saw was not her own; the mother-yearning in the child's face invested it with a new beauty and dignity, and made it seem other and different.

She leaned forward, a sweet rapture in her eyes, a tender adoring greeting lighting her face, and kissed her own reflection with a passionate ardor, whispering softly, not to herself, but to that other's presence there, "Est-ce toi, maman?"

"Hist!" cried the grandmother, springing up again. "Hist, Jeanne! This time I am not deceived! What is that?"

The girl wheeled around. All the rosy color had vanished from her face, and it was ashy pale.

"It is the tramp of horses!" she cried. "The Germans are coming! Oh, my father—my father!"

The girl dropped on her knees, but the old woman shook her rudely to her feet as she said, "Go you to the door and watch, while I call your father." Jeanne was trembling violently.

"What must I do, grandmother?" she faltered.

"Watch and tell me if the troops go by, or if they turn into the lane. If they find your father here he is lost."

Jeanne turned to the door, and stood there peering out like a frightened hare. Her grandmother opened the door to the inner room and went swiftly to the bed on which the French Zouave was lying asleep.

"Jean! Jean!" she cried, "wake up, wake up!"

The man opened his eyes, stretched his powerful body as if in relief, and would have turned to sleep again but that his mother shook him roughly.

"My son," she cried, "the enemy is on the highroad. Don't you hear their horses?"

The man sprang up. He was partially undressed, but he pulled his braces over his shoulders and in an instant was transformed into the alert French Zouave, sword in hand.

"If they find me I am lost," he said. "They will know that all the roads and passes here are known to me. They will try to force me to show them the way. I shall refuse, and they will shoot me."

"Oh, Jean, Jean, do not talk of death! You must save your life! You must fly!"

"Fly?" he asked, bitterly. "That means certain capture. There are scouts placed everywhere, hovering about like carrion-crows. Ah, that I had died upon the field of battle!"

The old woman wrung her hands, and for a second seemed to give up hope, but it was only for a second. Suddenly she said, "There is a roof. Could you not get out there and crawl along to the chimney and let yourself down inside, holding on by your hands? Other men have done it. Why not you? They will find no one here, and go their way. When night comes you can get back to camp. My son, take courage. Our Lady will give you strength. Come!"

The man's face brightened. "I will try it!" he cried. "But they will be almost sure to see me on the low roof. I will not dare to venture out until they are actually at the door. They will not send more than a scout or two to this poor little cabin."

As he spoke, Jeanne rushed toward them, white and breathless.

"They stopped at the head of the lane," she said, "but now they have turned in! Five Uhlans are galloping down the hill!"

"Go back to the door," said the old woman. "Keep them there to talk one moment, for life or death. Come Jean, with me."

The next instant they were up the stairs, and the man was peering about him in the gloomy attic, which was lighted only by a solitary window-pane let in the square cover to the opening in the roof.

"Die!" he cried, groping about, "where is the ladder?"

"The ladder?" cried his mother, with a groan. "Oh, Jean, my son, you are lost. I took the ladder down yesterday, to use in pruning the willow-trees. I forgot to bring it back! My son's blood is on my own head! I hear the enemy below! I dare not go down for a chair. Oh, my son, my son!"

Voices could be plainly heard, together with the stamping of horses' feet, and the scent of tobacco-smoke.

"This is hard," whispered Jean. "Is there nothing I can step upon—no box or barrel—nothing?"

"Nothing!" wailed the poor mother, in a stifled whisper.

Jean took his sword and with a light movement shoved back the cover to the opening. The room was flooded with light. Mother and son looked eagerly around the room, which was utterly barren of what they sought. Then their eyes met. In the mother's there was a new light.

"I will save your life, my son!" she cried, with a sort of exultation. "You can reach the roof by stepping on my back! Here it is!"

She bent her body directly beneath the opening grasping her knees with her strong gaunt hands.

But the man turned from her. "No, ma mere," he said, "I cannot do that. The Germans must take me alive or dead. I cannot kill my own beloved mother to save myself."

"Kill!" gasped the old woman, with an individual scorn. "Kill me? You forget. Look at the cords in this arm. Every villager knows how strong I am. Who was it that pulled Niere Botat's cow out of the bay? Who plows and digs and carries the heaviest loads for the woodmen? You hesitate. Then you will kill me, indeed. To spare my back—which is equal to twice as much—you break my heart!"

Again she bent to receive his weight, her eyes exploring him.

Silently the man unfastened his shoes, and removed them. Then with a smothered word of love to her, he put his foot upon her back. It seemed to her a very brief instant that she bore the precious weight of that heavy burden. With his hands upon the ledge, Jean had drawn himself through the opening.

The old woman tottered for a second; then, taking her son's shoes and his sword, she hid them under the beams, piling some strings of dried onions over the place. Before she had finished doing this, Jean had replaced the cover on the roof.

Groping her way through the suddenly increased darkness, she went slowly down the steps, and walked steadily to the door; where Jeanne stood, a piteous little fawn at bay.

"What is it you wish?" said the old woman. "In what way can my grandchild and I serve you?"

Five Uhlans were reined in a close little squad before the door of the cottage. They had evidently ridden hard, for their horses were covered with damp and foam.

One of these men, an officer answered, in voluble French. "We are looking for someone to show us a short cut to Branare. We have seen tracks in the path—a man's tracks. Where is the man?"

"Tracks?" was the contemptuous answer. "How do I know whose tracks they are? Monsieur Rental came this morning, looking for a lost goat. Both he and the goat are chez lui by this time, I suppose, if it is he you seek."

The officer tossed his reins to an orderly.

"I will look within," he said briefly. "Entrez," replied the old woman, throwing wide the door.

The fiasne was scorching on the fire, the scent and smoke of it filling the room.

On the chair lay the Zouave jacket, which Jeanne had thrown down in her excitement.

The officer walked straight toward this chair and pointed to the jacket.

"What is this?" he said.

The old woman met his gaze without the quiver of an eyelash. "If you do not know," she said, "it is because you have been on no battlefields. It is an old coat belonging to my soldier-son."

The officer pulled his blond mustache and smiled.

"Your son is here," he said, looking her straight in the eyes. Then, lifting his voice he cried, "Gottlieb, Fritz, dismount, and search this house! There is a French Zouave concealed here!"

The two Uhlans entered the house and the search began.

The old woman folded her arms across her breast and watched them as they looked in every nook and corner. Jeanne, with her hand upon her father's jacket, stood by the chair, and watched, also, with frightened eyes. The face of neither changed in its expression when the officer began to mount the garret stairs.

"Ah, we shall get him now!" he exclaimed, as, holding a lighted match, he peered about the dim attic. "He is out on the roof and has drawn the ladder after him, else there would be a ladder here!"

Then he turned to the old woman and said, persuasively, "Come, mere, you had best confess that he is here. If he will be our guide, we will pay him well, and let him go unharmed. If otherwise, the result will be serious. This house is now inside the German lines, and we can treat him as a spy. You know what that means."

As he spoke, he came backward down the steps, and stood facing the old woman.

"Search!" was the scornful reply.

"Grandmother," said Jeanne, her breath coming quick and short. "I can show them the ladder. It is out under the willow-trees, where Michette is tethered. I will go and get it, and

bring it here, to show them they are mistaken."

With these words she left the house. No word was spoken as they stood awaiting her return, but the child's poor strategy made the heart of the old woman tighten with pain and fear. It would at least occasion a moment's delay, she thought, but when the ladder was brought they would take it and mount the roof. And then would they find him? Would they look down the chimney? Would her son be able to hold on until they went away?

At these thoughts she turned upon the officer a look that was almost like an actual blow, so full of hate and anger was it.

Suddenly a cry pierced the air. It came from Jeanne, who rushed swiftly into the room. In her hair and on her bare arms myriads of bees were crawling, their black and yellow bodies massed about her short curls like a velvet cap.

"Grandmother," she cried, "the bees are swarming! You know they never hurt me, but you must hide yourself quick. They are very angry for they have smelt the sweating horses, and they may sting you to death."

As she spoke there was heard a wild stamping and whimpering from the horses outside.

"Gott in Himmel!" cried one of the orderlies, "the bees are maddening these beasts! I can never hold them! They will run away!"

Running behind the officer, Jeanne waved her slender arms about him, as if drawing in the air the circle of some incantation. The infuriated bees began to fly about him, and one of them dealt him a sharp stab on the temple. He gave a cry of pain. The men beside him cursed, and strode about, brandishing their helmets before their faces, but on wrists and palms the angry bees stung sharply. The horses reared and plunged so violently in their efforts to escape from the torturing stabs of their tiny assailants that the officer soon perceived that the only safety from this unexpected foe was in flight.

"Mount," he said. "We can return, but go now we must."

The Uhlans mounted their horses, needing no spurs as they fled wildly down the long lane, across which the Lombardy poplars cast their shadows as if stretching themselves out for the night's rest on the moist earth.

As the clatter of the horses' hoofs died away Jeanne laughed softly. She took a pan from the shelf and began tapping on it noisily to drown the drone of the bees and get them under control.

"We must save our kind deliverers, bonne maman," she said. "The Uhlans will not dare to return for hours, if they ever do come back, and by that time my father can reach the marsh. Did you know, grandmother, what I had in my mind to do when I went out? I suddenly thought of the bees. I know how they hate the smell of horses, and I said to myself, 'I think I know some Zouaves who will put these Germans to rout,' and I went and upset the hives. As I did so, I whispered, 'Sting them, sting them, good French bees,' and I believe they understood!"

"Well, blessed be the bees and you, my child. Our dear one is saved!" said the old woman, as she hurried up the steps to tell her son of his deliverance.—The Indiana Farmer.

The Christmas Tree Threatened.

Stock raising and forestry practically monopolized the attention recently of the Vermont instructors on the better farmers' special train. The tour was through Ryegate, McIntire, Passumpsic and St. Johnsbury Centre. In the horticultural car Prof. L. R. Jones and William Stuart, of the Vermont experiment station, and the Hon. Ernest Hitchcock, State Forestry Commissioner, held forth, the latter winning particular notice on what may be called the Christmas tree peril. The gospel of more and better forests has many things to contend with in Vermont, but one of the most destructive is the demand every December for Christmas trees, which when cut off remove a forest of the future more effectually than the woodman who waits till the tree grows up. The New York market is almost entirely supplied from Vermont, and the southern part of the State is described as being well-nigh denuded of its young spruce trees, with the wave of destruction advancing northward each year. It is to head off this movement that the forestry commission is active on the better farming train. Arguing mainly that the farmers are selling Christmas trees too cheaply, the lectures show that a spruce tree good enough for Christmas festivities is worth a quarter to a dollar as it stands in the woods, and that the farmers in selling them for 5 cents a piece are figuratively cutting their own throats. This danger to the forests was placed on a par with the forest fires, which also figured in the forestry argument.—Boston Herald.

Edward Hughes, the famous portrait painter—Queen Alexandra of England has sat to him three times—had a picture at the Royal Academy when he was 15 years of age.

SOUTHERN FARM NOTES.

TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE PLANTER, STOCKMAN AND TRUCK GROWER.

Handling Sweet Potatoes.

Some months ago I said I would give my plan to keep sweet potatoes. I take a turn plow and drag off the vines, barring them off shallow, at the same time plowing them up with the same plow, going deep enough not to cut them. In this way it throws them out, so they can be found without much trouble. Put three rows together, being careful not to pitch them so far as to bruise them against one another. Then I take small sacks (corn or meal feed sacks) and go over the rows and pick up the large ones. Two hands to the sack. In this way they will not be bruised, the sack not being too full.

Then go back and take up the plantings, in the same way, filling the sack full as can be handled. They, being small, will not bruise like the large ones. Let the sacks be small and slazy just so they will hold to place for the hill. Set five or six of the sacks in the hill, these being the sorriest ones with no kainit or salt about them—though I have used washed by rains or hand. Then form the hill around the hill sacks that I set in the middle with loose potatoes and on top. This shapes up my hill. The sacks give ventilation.

I hill on high, elevated land, if I can, where it is deep sand, putting straw about two inches deep, dirt about the same, leaving a place on top about as large as my hat with no dirt. Have the straw about four inches thick right on the top, then make a hole with my hand through to the potatoes and leave them so all winter. I can go along every day and run my hand in and see if my potatoes are sound or not.

Then I go to work and build a shelter over them to keep the dirt dry. I built my shelter some years ago and have used it ever since. By this plan you see I keep my place dry year in and year out. In spring remove all rotten ones so as not to infest the land with the rot. My shelter is ten feet wide, thirty-two feet long, four feet high behind and seven in front, fronting the east, boarding up the back and north end, edge to edge front and south end, just enough to keep out the sticking, knocking down the front for hilling and taking up. I take off about two behind to get dirt to hill or throw out in taking up plantings.

Well, let's go back to the field. Now I use a one-horse wagon with body on. I don't put them in like they are rocks or corn. I set them in with care not to bruise and go to the hill and pour them out as careful as I can. Now in this way I have handled my potatoes as few times as it can well be done.

Dig after first frost, a fair day and let dry good.

As to marketing potatoes, well, I'm not a big farmer, and I know there are others that can write more interestingly how to cultivate than I can, but if this does not go to the waste basket I may try to say something later about cultivating them.

I sold a few potatoes last year that I kept up with—125 bushels. They brought me \$100. I got them off about an acre; fed the small ones to my hogs. I have sold this year 108 bushels for \$85.

I handle my potatoes one bushel to the sack, then have no trouble any more to measure them where my customer wants a bushel.

I have them clean and not skinned up and good measure.

Now, reader, if you try next year to raise potatoes, don't try to plant your whole crop of potatoes and make a failure like the man I saw mentioned in the Progressive Farmer some years ago did, and say your land won't make them.—D. Powell, Rocky Mount, N. C., in the Progressive Farmer.

Soy Beans and Cowpeas.

The soy bean and cowpea may be successfully grown on almost any soil of reasonable fertility. Like the common field pea, both require good drainage and easily suffer from excessive wet, but will do much better during periods of dry weather. For the best results a good corn soil should be chosen. If properly inoculated, both crops will do well where corn would suffer seriously from lack of nitrogen. For use in a regular rotation they should precede corn or winter wheat. In the latter case the ground does not need to be plowed for the wheat.

The preparation of the soil should be similar to that best suited to corn. It should be deeply plowed and the seed bed made fine and mellow. A loose, deep seed bed is essential to success.

Both the soy bean and cow pea are

warm weather plants and should be sown early in the season. A general rule the best time to sow after corn planting is finished is that the soil has become thoroughly warm. The seed should be deep covered. It should be sown in drills and the crops cultivated like corn until the soy bean blooms and the cowpea begins to vine. For grain production, drilling and cultivating is always best, but for hay production fair results may be secured from broadcast seeding on ground free of weeds. The rows should be three to four inches apart for the soy bean and twenty-four inches apart for the cowpea, and both seeded at the rate of twenty to twenty-five pounds seed per acre for the medium-sized varieties. Seeding may be done with a wheat drill set at two bushels per acre on the wheat scale, and the holes not needed stopped up. Thick seeding is detrimental to seed production.

Some soils need to be inoculated with the proper bacteria for one or both crops before satisfactory results can be secured. This need can only be determined by trial and by examination of the roots for the nodules. If needed, inoculation may be accomplished by sowing before the last harrowing when preparing the seed bed, 200 or 300 pounds per acre of soil taken from a field where the crops have been grown and the bacteria are known to exist. Without the bacteria the crops must secure their nitrogen from the soil and under such conditions draw heavily upon its fertility.

For hay production the cowpea will generally give best results. It should be cut when the first pods begin to ripen and cured as in the case of clover. Either the Early Blackeye, Whippoorwill, New Era, Michigan Favorite, Iron, Clay, Red Ripper or unknown varieties may be used.

For grain production either crop may be used in the South, but in the northern portion of Indiana the soy bean will usually be most profitable. The Ito San, Early Browns and Midum Early Yellow (late) are among the best varieties.

Harvesting should be done when most of the leaves have fallen and most of the pods are ripe. An old-fashioned self-rake reaper or a mower with a side delivery attachment will be found satisfactory for harvesting. Threshing may be done with the ordinary threshing machine with the lower concave removed and replaced by a board and run at low speed. A corn shredder may also be used for threshing.—A. T. Wiancko, Purdue University.

Meat in the South.

The Washington Post has this to say about the meat scandals and the South's relation to them:

"It seems in order to say, however that at least Southern towns, cities and communities have no right to complain. If at any time they have suffered, either in their stomachs or their pockets, because of the high price or the unwholesome character of Chicago meat products, they have only themselves to blame. There has never been the smallest reason why they should not feed themselves from their own herds, flocks, fields, dairies and barnyards. The South is rich in farming and grazing lands, and the inhabitants thereof can raise beef, cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry and vegetables of the very finest quality in an unlimited quantity if they choose. Why need they go to Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha or any other distant market for food which they can produce themselves? And if they persist in a policy so unnecessary and so improvident, they might have the grace to realize that it is their fault and refrain from condemnation of others. The pastures of the South can turn out as good beef and mutton as the stockyards of Chicago can. Southern farmers are capable of furnishing as high-class butter, milk, eggs, etc., as any farms in Iowa or Kansas. Why, then, do not the Southern people help themselves instead of calling upon Hercules to help them and filling the air with complaint and imprecation when he fails to answer to their satisfaction?"

"We do not pretend to pronounce upon the truth, or lack of truth, in all these nauseous denunciations of the packing houses. We are quite sure, however, that the Southern people would be in much better business to set about the task of caring for themselves. It is not at all necessary for them to be dependent on imported food of any kind. When they bewail the hardships inflicted on them by the Western trusts, they remind us of nothing so much as of the Texas ranch owner, thirty years ago, denouncing the quality of the condensed milk he got from Minnesota."