

# PETER LITTLE

AND

## THE LUCKY SIXPENCE;



## THE FROG'S LECTURE;

AND OTHER STORIES.

A Verse Book for my Children and their Playmates.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

CAWTHORN & HUTT, 24, COCKSPUR STREET.

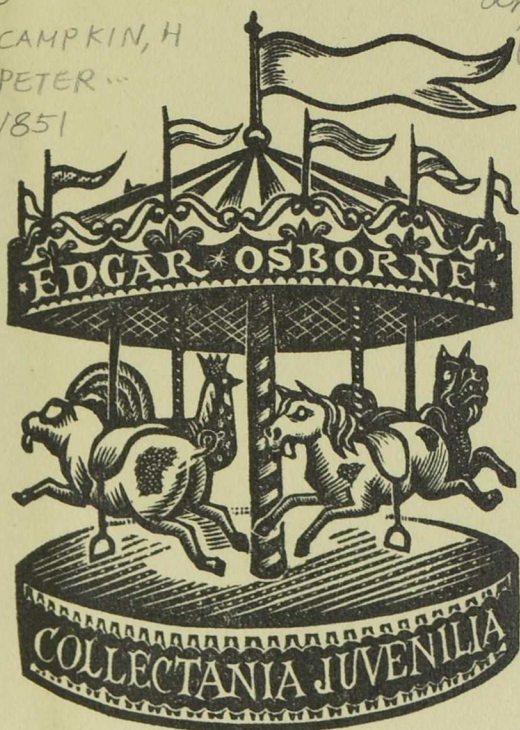
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MDCCCLI.





TO  
E. R. C.

---

DEAR BOY ! no thought to bid thee weep,  
Nor harsh design to mar thy pleasures,  
Moves me to pray that thou wilt keep  
Before thee, as the best of treasures,  
One simple, oft-forgotten truth,  
That, as thou sowest in thy Youth,  
In Manhood thou must look to reap.  
To-day, perchance, a deed is done,  
Of which, ere sets to-morrow's sun,  
All trace seems lost, but still its root  
Is in the heart, and years may pass,  
Yet must the tree give forth its fruit,  
Despite of Mem'ry's cheating glass.  
So would I counsel thee to hold  
From selfish promptings all aloof,  
Rememb'ring that the purest gold  
Best bears the fire's severest proof :  
Rememb'ring, too, that happiness  
Increaseth most when most we share it.  
My Boy, thy lot may Heaven bless !  
And, be it joy, or dark distress,  
May strength be given thee to bear it !

H. C.

SOME older readers than those for whom this little offering is intended, may perhaps recognize in one or two of the Pieces which it contains, acquaintances of an earlier day. The Author will therefore be pardoned for mentioning, that two of the following Stories were inserted by him, some sixteen years ago, in a less perfect shape than that in which they now appear, in a then popular Miscellany.

For the rest, it is trusted that his young Patrons will not be altogether disappointed with this attempt of the Author to furnish his quota towards their amusement.





# PETER LITTLE

AND

## The Lucky Sixpence.



PETER LITTLE found a Sixpence,  
On a summer's day,—  
Village folks were in the meadows,  
Busy making hay.

“When our pleasant village fair-day  
Comes again,” he said,  
“Lucky Sixpence, I will spend you  
All in ginger-bread!

“Safely in my little pocket,  
Lucky Sixpence bright,  
You shall have a quiet lodging,  
Morning, noon, and night.”

Peter Little's heart was bounding,  
Running o'er with joy ;  
“Lucky Sixpence, how I prize you !”  
Sang this little boy.

Peter Little conned his lessons,  
Quickly one by one,  
Then to school he gaily travelled,  
'Neath the shining sun.

Birds were singing, lambs were skipping,  
Hedgerows blooming gay ;  
Village folks were in the meadows,  
Busy making hay.

Just as Peter turned a corner  
Down the village lane,  
There he saw a little mourner,  
Wrapt in grief and pain.

“Little Maiden, why dost weep so,  
Wherefore droops thy head?”  
“Little Boy, I’m full of sorrow,”  
Sobbed the little Maid.

“I was happy, very happy,  
When I left my bed,  
Now, alas! with weeping, weeping,  
See, my eyes are red!”

“Tell to me, oh, little Maiden,  
Tell me true, I pray!  
Why thy breast with grief is laden,  
On this summer day?”



“Birds are singing, lambs are skipping,  
Hedgerows blooming gay,  
Village folks are in the meadows,  
Busy making hay!”

“Down the village street this morning,”  
Sighed the Maiden fair,  
“I was running, singing, dancing,  
Thinking nought of care ;

“When a barking dog assailed me,  
Off I ran in fright,  
Oh, my pinafore, he tore it,  
But he didn’t bite !

“Yet have I sad cause for weeping,  
Though from danger free ;  
Oh, I’ve lost the crooked Sixpence,  
Mother gave to me !”

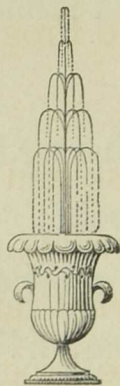
Peter watched the little Maiden,  
Leaped his heart with joy ;  
“ Lucky Sixpence, how I prize you ! ”  
Sang the little boy.

“ Little Maiden, here’s a Sixpence,  
Crooked, like thine own,  
Which I found this very morning,  
On our threshold stone.

“ Take it, keep it, never lose it,  
Banish all thy pain ;  
See, thy precious, crooked Sixpence,  
Comes to thee again ! ”

Birds were singing, lambs were skipping,  
Hedgerows blooming gay,  
Village folks were in the meadows,  
Busy making hay :

But upon that summer morning,  
    *He* was gayest there,  
Who restored that crooked Sixpence  
    To its owner fair !





# The Frog's Lecture.



ONCE on a time, a farmer's son,  
A thoughtless little rogue,  
Stole to the meadows, ripe for fun,  
To shoot a little Frog.

Equipped with flask and fowling-piece,  
Attended by his dog,  
He cried, "Oh, what rare sport it is,  
To shoot a little Frog!"

He reached the margin of a pond,  
Where Frogs, as well he knew,  
To congregate were always fond,  
And there he found a few.

“You, Dash, a close look-out must keep,”  
He said, “and when I shoot,  
Amongst the rushes, you must leap,  
And fetch poor Froggy out!”

But, just as he was taking aim,  
He heard a curious croak  
Which startled him, when forward came  
A stout old Frog, who spoke.

Yes, spoke! and little readers know,  
In fable all things talk;  
Nay, once I read, 'twas long ago,  
Of castles that could walk.

Thus spake the lowly Frog, “My child,  
Desist from cruel deeds;  
Remember by your frolics wild,  
How oft the poor Frog bleeds.

“The meanest thing which crawls the earth,  
Has life and feeling too ;  
Bethink you, whilst in idle mirth,  
What mischief you may do.

“There’s surely room for sport and fun,  
Without destroying life ;  
So, prithee, put away your gun,  
It speaks of nought but strife.”

He ceased, and in the waters cool,  
Quick leaped with tiny splash ;  
The little boy, all sorrowful,  
Walked slowly home with Dash.

The speaker ne’er was heard again,  
Though Harry and his dog  
Oft sought, but always sought in vain,  
Their ancient friend, the Frog.



## A Garden Fancy.



EVERMORE the gentle flowers  
Lovingly do intertwine,  
Each for each, in sunny hours,  
Morning grey and day's decline.

Evermore each little blossom,  
Blending with its brother fair,  
Leaning on its sister's bosom,  
Speaks a lesson none can spare.

Speaks a lesson all should cherish,  
Girl and boy, and man full-grown ;  
Teaching, Life's best charms would perish,  
Did we live for self alone.



## Willy would a Soldier be.



WHEN Little Willy first beheld  
A troop of soldiers, gay and free,  
That sight all other sights excelled—  
Oh, Willy would a Soldier be !

And when he heard their music played,  
And saw that some of high degree  
Bedizened were with gold and braid,  
Oh, Willy would a Soldier be !

To dear mamma did Willy run,  
To tell his wants, and beg that she  
Would buy for him a sword and gun,  
For Willy would a Soldier be !

Mamma looked very grave, and said,  
“ No, no ! much rather would I see  
My darling boy go beg his bread—  
Willy must not a Soldier be !

The soldier learns how best to slay  
His brother man : stern war's decree  
Or right or wrong, he must obey—  
Willy must not a Soldier be !

The scarlet coat, the trappings gay,  
Colours and feathers waving free,  
Oft lead the youthful heart astray—  
But Willy must no Soldier be !



Think of the battle-field, where they  
Who never met before, now see  
Themselves engaged in deadliest fray :  
My boy, wouldst thou a Soldier be ?

And when the fearful fight is won,  
And daylight fades o'er land and sea,  
On what a sad scene sinks the sun :  
Oh, who would then a Soldier be ?

Amid the thousands dying there,  
Mark yon pale form, on shattered knee,  
Attempt to breathe life's last short prayer,  
Oh, Willy, wouldst a Soldier be ?

Wife, children, parents, friends, no more  
Their long-expected one will see ;  
Death darkens many a threshold o'er,  
Oh, Willy, wouldst a Soldier be ?

I would not that from duty's task,  
My bonny boy should ever flee,  
But oh, beware of glory's mask,  
Willy must not a Soldier be.

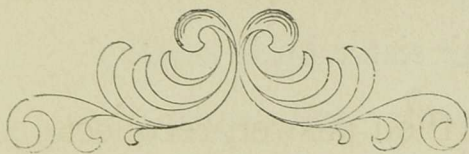
The sword's rude law, its right of might,  
Must e'er be shunned, dear child, by thee;  
The teachings of the Nazarite,  
*His* gentle law thy rule must be.

What though thy cause be *just*? in *fight*,  
The *strongest* earns the victor's fee;  
Come, Willy, answer me aright,—  
Wouldst thou, indeed, a Soldier be?

But, ere thou answer, recollect  
'Tis writ "Thou shalt not kill:" can he,  
In sober truth, this law respect,  
Who yet a Soldier seeks to be?

Take time, my boy, for thy response,  
Think well on all I've said to thee ;  
Thou canst not truly tell at once,  
Whether thou wouldst a Soldier be.

Nay, years must pass ere we can say,  
That thou to judge, art fully free ;  
But now, enough—some other day,  
When thou canst spare an hour from play,  
Then, Willy, come again to me,  
If thou wouldst still a Soldier be.





## A Valentine.



SUSANNA ! Susanna !

Amongst the sweet flowers,  
Which grace the gay garden  
In summer's warm hours ;  
Though Tulips and Dahlias  
May brighter robes wear,  
Oh, ever remember,  
The Heartsease is there.

Susanna ! Susanna !

The Hollyhocks tall,  
Like giants, o'ershadow  
Their sister-buds small ;  
But sweeter and dearer  
To me and to you,  
That gem of the vale—  
The Forget-me-not true.



## A Lesson from the Woods.



### I.

Close beside an ancient wood,  
A pleasant little cottage stood ;  
Around its porch the woodbine clung,  
And on its walls the rich grapes hung  
In clusters, tempting to the eye  
Of many a rustic passer by.

### II.

Beneath that humble roof once dwelt  
A sturdy husbandman, who felt,  
Whilst daily blessed with ruddy health,  
Small need had he for store of wealth ;

He tilled his ground with honest pride,  
Few were his wants and soon supplied.

## III.

Yet deep affliction had not spared  
The tenant of this lowly cot—  
His gentle wife no longer shared  
The joys and perils of his lot ;  
No longer, as in days gone by,  
When he from labour homeward bore,  
Stood she, with welcome in her eye,  
To greet him at the open door.

## IV.

And many a Sabbath eve he wept  
Beside the hallowed spot, where slept  
The mother of his children dear.  
But time assuaged each falling tear,  
As in his blushing daughter Jane,  
He saw his own loved wife again.



## V.

Companion of his quiet hours,  
Sole mistress of his house was she ;  
Taxing with joy her slender powers,  
That she of fullest use might be.  
To two fond boys her care was due,  
Their teacher, nurse, and playmate too ;  
Thus, in one constant, cheerful round  
Of busy work, was Jenny found.

## VI.

One day, one bright autumnal day,  
The corn was stacked, the fields were clear,  
The husbandman was heard to say,  
(Kissing his little daughter dear,)  
“ Come, Jenny, bring to me my gun,  
George longs to taste a rabbit pie,  
To day I mean to give him one ;  
He'll stay at home, whilst John and I,  
To find the promised rabbits try.”

## VII.

George begged that he might join them too ;  
“ My little lad,” his father said,  
Another time you may—but you  
Forget that I must be obeyed ;  
So tarry here with sister Jane,  
Till John with me comes home again.”

## VIII.

John and his father to the wood  
Together went ; awhile they stood,  
Watching the nimble squirrels skip  
From bough to bough, with playful leap ;  
Then forward moved at careful pace,  
But not a rabbit showed his face.

## IX.

At length, within a thicket near,  
By fern and brushwood overgrown,  
A stealthy, rustling sound they hear ;  
“ Didst mark that noise ? ” demanded John.

“ Silence !” his father quick desired ;  
Then, lifting up his gun, he fired—  
A sudden cry of terror wild  
Rang through the wood—and then a groan—  
Then staggered forth a wounded child :  
Unhappy parent, ’tis thine own,  
And thine, too, the unwitting blow,  
Which lays the luckless truant low.

## X.

’Twas little George, who, unobserved,  
Had stolen from his sister’s side,  
Regardless of his father’s word,  
From whose keen glance he sought to hide  
In yonder copse ; and on his head  
A cap of rabbit-skin he wore,  
Which Jane’s own careful hand had made,  
Only a few short days before.  
Thus did he bear a fatal lure,  
Whilst of his safety vainly sure.



## XI.

The anguished father, in his arms  
Bore to his home the senseless boy—  
Effaced were those engaging charms,  
Which oft had yielded him such joy :  
The shattered knee and matted hair,  
Told of the fearful havoc made,  
Whilst hope, despondency, despair,  
By turns his anxious bosom swayed,—  
“ O Heaven ! spare my boy :” he prayed.

## XII.

The little sufferer on his bed,  
Deathlike, in deepest stupor lay ;  
His life upon the slightest thread  
Seemed but to hang—and all the day,  
Around him stood, in mute suspense,  
His father, brother, sister dear—  
Seeking, in agony intense,  
One ray of hope their hearts to cheer.

## XIII.

Hope dawned upon them : once again

Did consciousness resume her seat ;

In accents, tremulous with pain,

He spoke, forgiveness to entreat

For woes which sprung, he knew full well,

From his own disobedience.

He was forgiven : but who can tell,

How deeply for that one offence

He paid ?—how sad the consequence ?

## XIV.

He lived—and when with spirits gay,

The school-boys sallied out to play,

One lonely youth might oft be seen

Reclining on the village green :

'Twas George, who never more could touch

Nor kite, nor hoop, nor bat, nor ball,

He scarce could move without his crutch,

Nor join in out-door games at all.

## XV.

Yet none to him were e'er unkind ;  
And when on winter evenings cold,  
Their ears to listen they inclined,  
Be sure some lively tale he told,  
Learned from his fondly cherished books ;  
But if a playmate strove to flee  
From duty's cause, no harsh rebukes  
Were needed : George, with kindly looks,  
Held up his crutch that all might see,  
And softly said, " Remember me ! "







## Harry's Mistake.



'Twas in December's dreary month,  
Cold, bitter cold, the night ;  
The wind blew loudly o'er the hills,  
The moon shed forth no light ;  
The stars were all in darkness hid,  
The snow fell thick and fast ;  
And over houses, fields, and trees,  
Its fleecy robe was cast.

Alone upon that cheerless night,  
Did little Harry creep  
Across the bleak and barren heath,  
And down the hill-side steep ;

And when he reached the great coach-road,  
He boldly marched along,  
Now striking up a merry tune,  
Now carolling a song.

Through wind and snow he gaily trudged,  
When, all at once, he sees  
A horrid monster far ahead—  
Down, down upon his knees  
Poor Harry fell! he could not guess  
The monster's shape or size,  
He only saw amidst the gloom,  
Two fearful, glaring eyes!

He spoke not, moved not, scarcely breathed;  
The monster nearer came;  
Still larger seemed its awful eyes,  
Like rolling balls of flame.

Now, now 'tis close upon him ! See—

He almost faints with fright ;

Huzza ! it heeds him not ; 'tis gone,

And now 'tis out of sight !

Once more was Harry on his feet,

Soon reached his home so dear ;

He told his tale of woe to all,

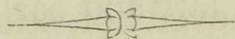
But no one dropped a tear.

Yet, whilst he lives, he'll ne'er forget

That night of snows and damps,—

The wondrous monster was a *Coach*,

Its glaring eyes were *Lamps* !





## A Valentine.



LATE and early, late and early,  
Little Maid, I watch for thee ;  
Starry eyes and tresses curly,  
Ever were a joy to me.

Late and early, late and early,  
I would be thy faithful swain ;  
Cruel treatment, visage surly,  
Ne'er should wake thy soul to pain.

Late and early, late and early,  
How 'twould cheer my daily toil,  
Linked with her who loved me dearly,  
Welcomed me with winning smile.

Late and early, late and early,  
All thy wishes should be mine ;  
Maiden dear, with teeth so pearly,  
Wilt thou be my Valentine ?



## The Orphan Watercress Girl.



At the peep of the dawn,  
Ere the sun gilds the lawn,  
Poor Mary is up and away ;  
No shoes to her feet,  
Through cold and through heat,  
Many miles doth she plod every day.

To the babbling rill,  
At the foot of yon hill,  
Whilst the lark carols high in the air,  
Little Mary doth trip,  
With her basket of chip,  
Fresh cresses to gather with care.

She hath flowerets, too,  
The harebell so blue,  
The wall-flower, violet, rose ;  
Then, for charity's sake,  
A small purchase make  
Of the poor little maid ere she goes.

Once, indeed, there were times  
When morn's early chimes  
To Mary were bringers of joy ;  
Those dear days are fled—  
Father, mother, both dead—  
Hard, alas, is the maiden's employ !

But, if she can earn  
A scant meal, in return  
For her labours, content will she be ;  
Work sweetens repose,  
To her straw bed she goes,  
No queen sleeps more soundly than she.



Yet sad is her tale :  
How the freshening gale  
Swelled into a hurricane wild ;  
How her father doth sleep  
'Neath the fathomless deep,  
She will tell, if you ask her, poor child !

Homeward bound, trim and brave,  
Rode his ship o'er the wave,  
All happy its veteran crew ;  
On its deck did they stand,  
Looking out for the land,  
And the land, their *own* land, came in view.

But by them never more  
Was that eager-sought shore,  
In the pride of their hearts, to be trod ;  
The ship, tempest-tost,  
In a moment was lost,  
And hurried were they to their God !

In grief's sudden strife,  
The heart-broken wife  
Pressed her child to her bosom and died ;  
To her grave was she borne,  
And her Mary, forlorn,  
From the depths of her agony cried.

Poor nest-riven bird !  
Her sobbings were heard,  
And strength, her bereavements to bear,  
Soon blessed the lone maid ;  
Not vainly she prayed :  
Though lowly, she did not despair.

Thus, far from her home,  
Little Mary doth roam,  
With her basket she comes to your door ;  
Use her kindly, and she  
Ever thankful will be,  
For gratitude dwells with the poor.

And if *she* murmur not  
At her sadly changed lot,  
Her example may we treasure up ;  
Nor, like cowards, complain  
Of the visits of pain,  
Nor shrink from Adversity's Cup!





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