

THE
ROBIN
OF
WOODSIDE
LODGE

Sakla Annitta Hopen

with the love of her

young friends at

Old Windsor Priory

A decorative border in a light blue-grey color, featuring a repeating scroll or floral motif, frames the entire page.

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OF
WOODSIDE LODGE.

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A TRUE TALE

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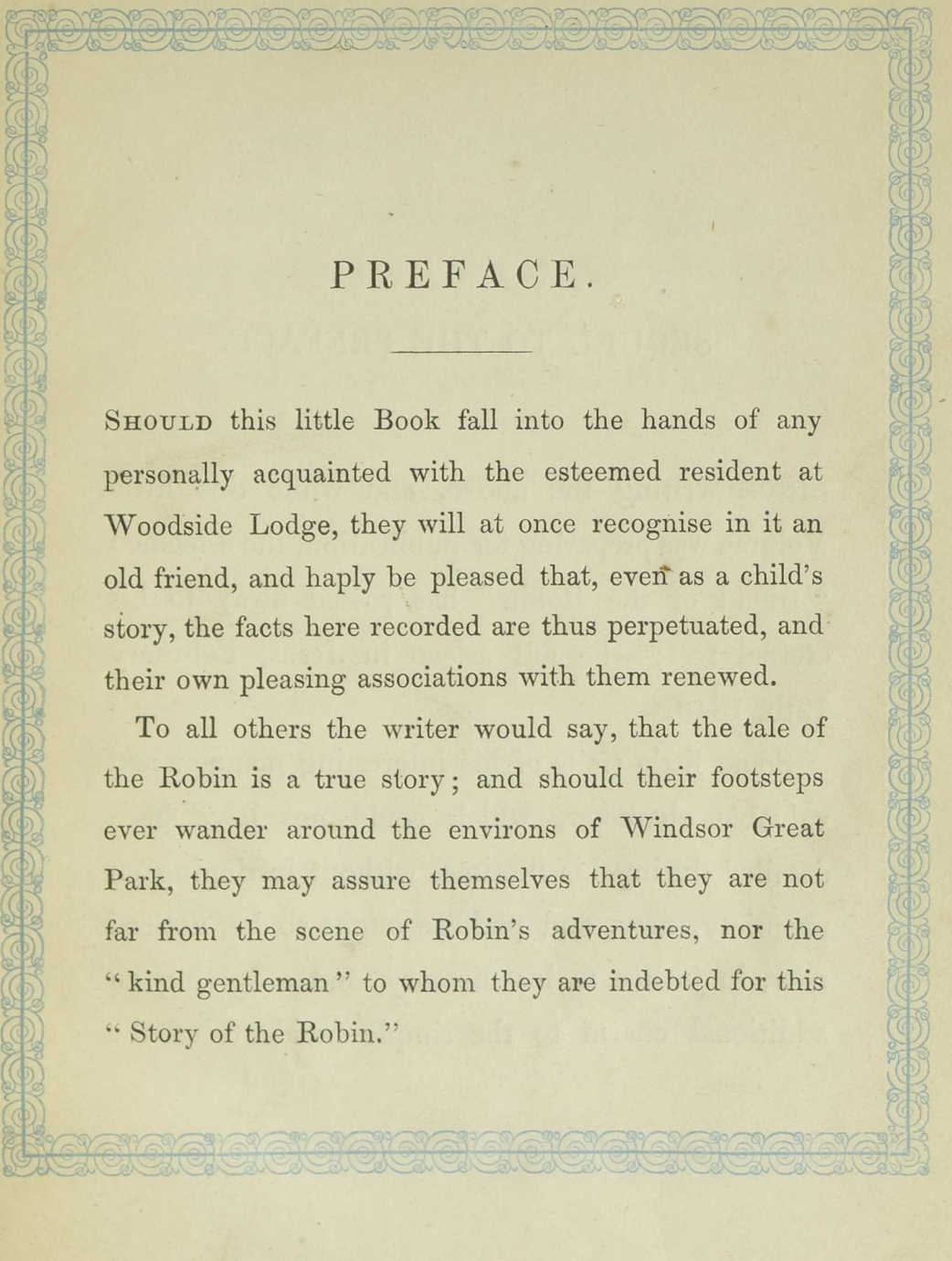
THE ROBIN
OF
WOODSIDE LODGE.

A TRUE TALE.

WRITTEN FOR HER NIECES, ANNE AND KATE,
BY AUNT E.

LONDON:
CHARLES HASELDEN, WIGMORE STREET;
AND S. BAGSTER AND SONS.

1850.



P R E F A C E .

SHOULD this little Book fall into the hands of any personally acquainted with the esteemed resident at Woodside Lodge, they will at once recognise in it an old friend, and haply be pleased that, even as a child's story, the facts here recorded are thus perpetuated, and their own pleasing associations with them renewed.

To all others the writer would say, that the tale of the Robin is a true story; and should their footsteps ever wander around the environs of Windsor Great Park, they may assure themselves that they are not far from the scene of Robin's adventures, nor the "kind gentleman" to whom they are indebted for this "Story of the Robin."

SEQUEL TO THE PREFACE.

SINCE writing the above, and while this little Volume was preparing for publication, the esteemed "friend of the Robin" has passed away to his eternal rest;—he fell asleep in Jesus, February 12th, 1849.

Some little traits of his interesting manners and valuable character, which could not have been detailed during his lifetime, without infringing on propriety, may, and perhaps ought to be, noticed now, in justice to his memory, and as giving an additional charm to the simple incidents of the

Robin's history ; for his kindliness of heart did not confine its range to one little happy bird that found shelter beneath his roof ; he was fond of all kinds of birds and animals, and felt much interest also in the habits of insects.

He was, in fact, an observer of nature, delighting in the works of Him who made nothing in vain. To trace the instinct that led the mole to nip off the heads of the worms it was storing for its expected brood of young, or watch the beautiful butterfly emerge from its dark coffin of a chrysalis state to sunshine and to day, were to him but as so many stepping-stones to the greater happiness of contemplating that gracious Being whose wisdom, love, and power were manifested in them all.

Of him we might say, while following him

through his interesting observations on nature, that God was in all his thoughts. I well remember one day, when speaking of the beautiful type of the resurrection presented by the change of the butterfly, with what animation he added, "Ah! but there is another type I have just found out—not of resurrection, but that which is connected with that glorious event—the changing of the bodies of the living saints." I listened while he gave me a most graphic account of the transition of the dragon-fly from its pupa state to its perfect development. He said, "I was standing by the pond, and was induced to stoop down and examine more closely a number of large insects, which were very busy, and evidently in an excited state; I thought, perhaps, the tread of my foot had alarmed them; so, sitting

down very gently by the side of the water, I determined to watch their movements: they had legs and eyes, and seemed in all respects perfect insects; but they were *not* so. I kept very still, watching their now more quiet but happy movements: soon I saw one, and then another, stand still, and suddenly the top of their backs seemed to open, and from that small aperture came out a beautiful dragon-fly! Its bright unsullied body grew greener in the dazzling sunshine as it gently expanded its bright and glittering wings, as if to try their new-born power, ere it sprung from the earth, and took its place among the bright inhabitants of the air;—I could but exclaim, ‘We know not what we shall be!’—but it is not one by one that *we* shall have our bodies of earth trans-

formed into glorious bodies, for ‘ We shall *all* be changed *in a moment*, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump ; for the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’ ”

There seemed in him some affinity with the animal world that linked them to him,—it must have been his kindness,—the very calves would scamper across the meadow to meet him ; and his wonderful power over rats (those enemies to man) is too interesting to pass without notice, though he availed himself of his influence in this instance to insure their extirpation, when they became too destructive for his granary. A friend of his once

accompanied him in a nocturnal visit to the haunts of these depredators: he was charged to be very still; as he was a stranger, the rats would be shy: he therefore sat silent and motionless, and soon was repaid for this restriction, for presently our friend whistled, and out came first one rat, and then another. He threw down some favorite article of food for them, and they came nearer; then he scattered a little on his knee, and they ventured up it, the young ones first, and then the old, though more cautiously, until he had thirteen or fourteen rats all around and upon him. "Does this satisfy you?" said he; and his companion, astonished beyond measure, could only answer in the affirmative; and then they both retired, and left the rats in quiet possession of their booty.

But it was not to animals only that he was kind; it was not birds only that he loved; the children of the Village-school will never forget their honored friend. Till within a few days of his death, which was rather sudden, he gave them regular instruction in the Sunday-school, leaving with them, after each exercise, some Scripture portion to be thought over, on which he catechised them the following Sunday; and happy was that little girl or boy to whom the penny or bright sixpence was tossed as a reward for attention. These children followed him to the grave. Nor were the children of the Village-school the only youthful mourners that accompanied the melancholy cortege: there was another band of juvenile mourners, with their neat fustian jackets, trowsers, and caps, all in uniform,

that followed up the sable train : they were the boys from the Parish Union Workhouse ; and well might they mourn his loss, for he had been a kind friend to them, allowing them one of his beautiful meadows for cricket, and delighting to sit and watch them at their play : lame as he was, he would often turn into their school, not only on Sunday, to give them religious instruction, but at other times, rousing them to intellectual improvement, and taking a deep interest in the admirable plans which the Master of the Workhouse so energetically sets at work for the benefit of the young people committed to his care.

It was to Old Windsor Churchyard that they followed his loved remains : no stone marks the spot where they laid him, for he would not have

one; but should the passer-by wish to know the place where the late Robert Kemp Grundy sleeps, he will see one grassy grave on which the children of the Village-school scatter fresh flowers every Sunday morning as they enter the Church. Happy is that child whose garden or hedge-row has furnished the choicest; for with no greater punishment can those children be threatened, than, "If that duty is omitted, you shall not throw a flower on Mr. Grundy's grave."

THE

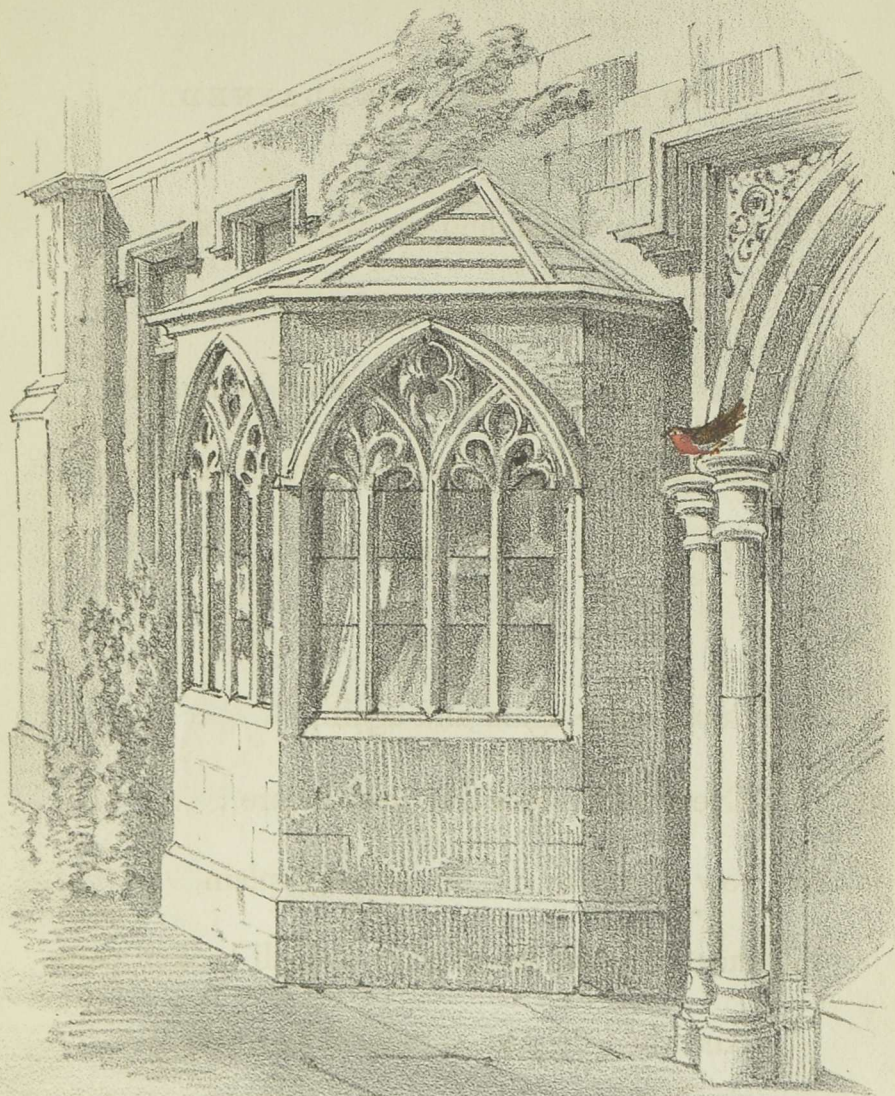
TALE OF THE ROBIN.

THE
TALE OF THE ROBIN.

A SWEET little Robin came one day
To a very kind gentleman's room ;
He did not frighten the Robin away ;
Oh, no ! he liked to see Robin stay,
And gave the poor thing a crumb.

The room was warm, and the weather cold,
So Robin went hopping about ;
And made himself welcome without being told,
For his nature is social, and cheerful, and bold ;—
When tired the Robin flew out.

The Robin came again and again,
Every time more free than before ;
But how he got in, no one could explain,
Till they found in the window a small broken pane,
And then they all wonder'd no more.



External view of Robin's window

Verse 4.

'Twas a very small hole through which Robin crept,
And though it let in the wind,
The gentleman would have the little hole left,
That Robin might not of his door be bereft,
But come in whenever inclined.

Bob ne'er through the window took his flight,
But always flew out at the door ;
Then he'd turn to the left hand, or turn to the right,
As the back door or front door might seem to invite,
Then come in again as before.

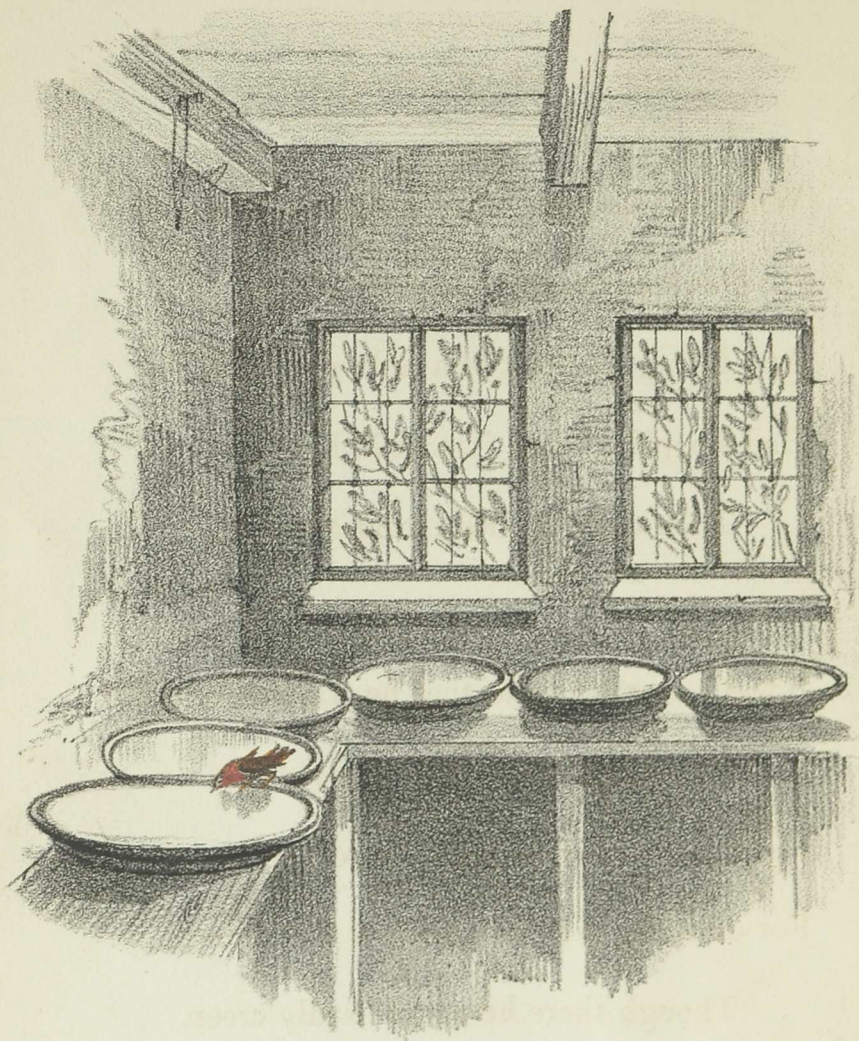
Well, it seem'd as if Master Robin knew
That a very true friend he had found ;
For when out in the garden (so tame he grew),
When call'd by his name to his friend he flew,
And would follow him through the ground.

One Sunday morning the Robin, poor thing !
Got into a sad disaster :
When the family all from Church came in,
The poor little fellow droop'd his wing,
He seem'd to be cover'd with plaister.



Robin in trouble.

Verse 7.



Robin pilfering the cream.

Verse 8.

What had he been doing?—I will tell,—

He had been in the dairy about,
And liking the look of a milk-pan well,
Had stoop'd to taste it, and in he fell,
Then cover'd with cream got out.

'Twas a wonder great that he was not drown'd,
For the pan was full and deep;
But he somehow manag'd to get on the ground,
For on it the poor little fellow was found,
Though there he could hardly creep.

His friend most kindly took him up,

And wash'd him in water warm ;

Carefully rinsing out every drop

Of the cream, which made him all of a sop ;

And so Robin got no harm.

But after this, oh dear ! 'twas so droll

To see him ever washing !

For he could not be happy, poor little soul,

But in ev'ry puddle of water would roll,

And clean himself with a splashing.

His friend would place a saucer down
 When the Robin came to stay ;
 And then he would dip his little crown,
 And wash his feathers of red and brown,
 And that several times a day.

So that his feathers were always wet,
 And the weather being cold,
 He was very glad by the fire to get ;
 And as no one disturb'd the little pet,
 He daily became more bold.

His favorite place was a little stool,

Which stood very near the fire ;

When wash'd, he would comb out his feathers by rule,

For he well knew how without going to school,

And of this he would never tire.

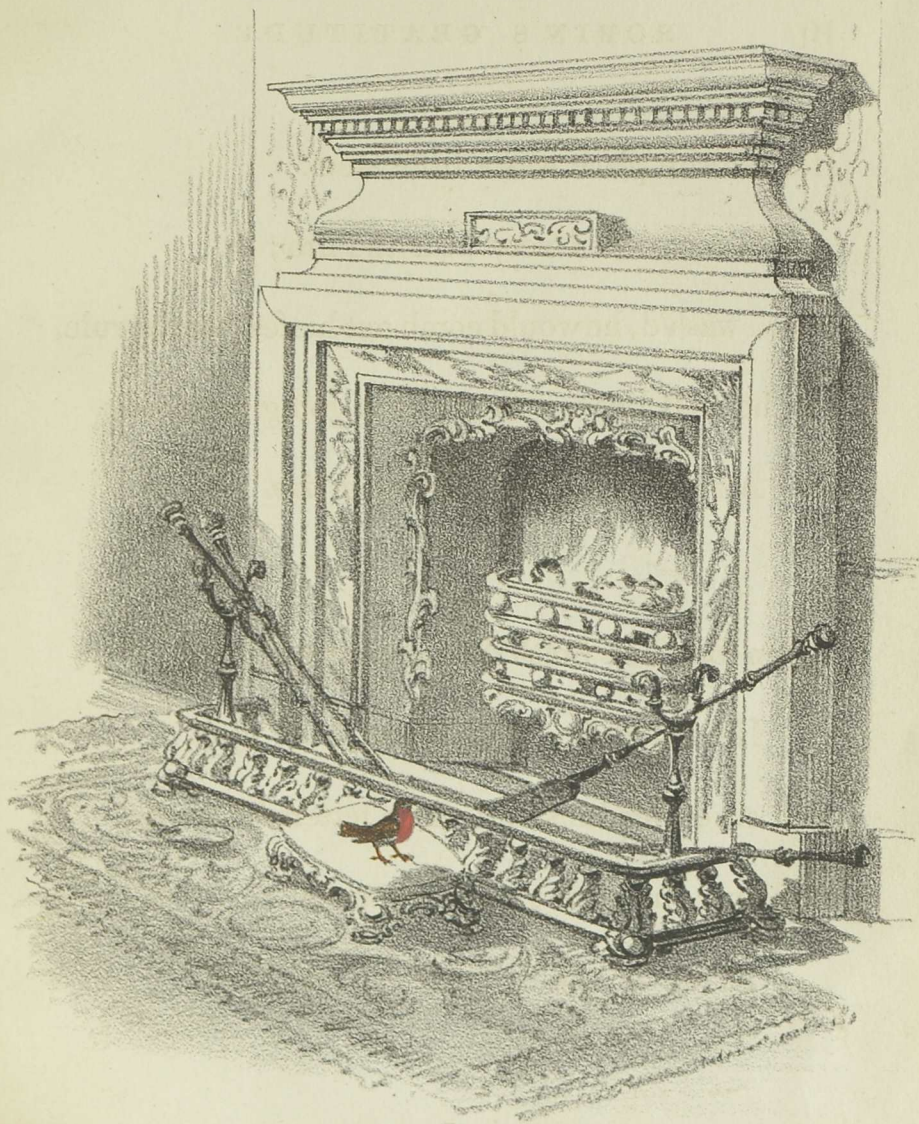
When Bob had finish'd trimming his coat,

He would fly to his friend quite near,

And sit on his inkstand while letters he wrote,

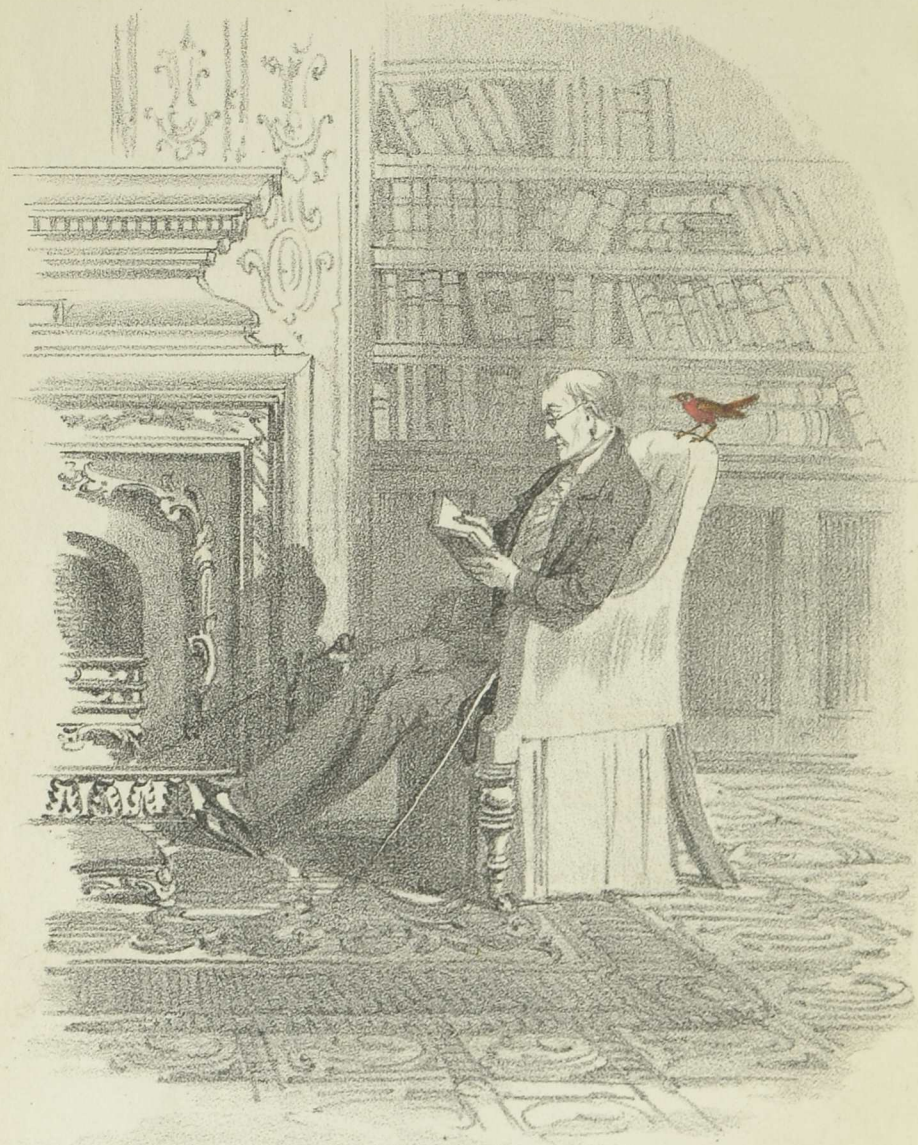
And sing the softest and sweetest note,

That ever could charm the ear.



Robin basking.

Verse 13.



Robin on the back of the chair.

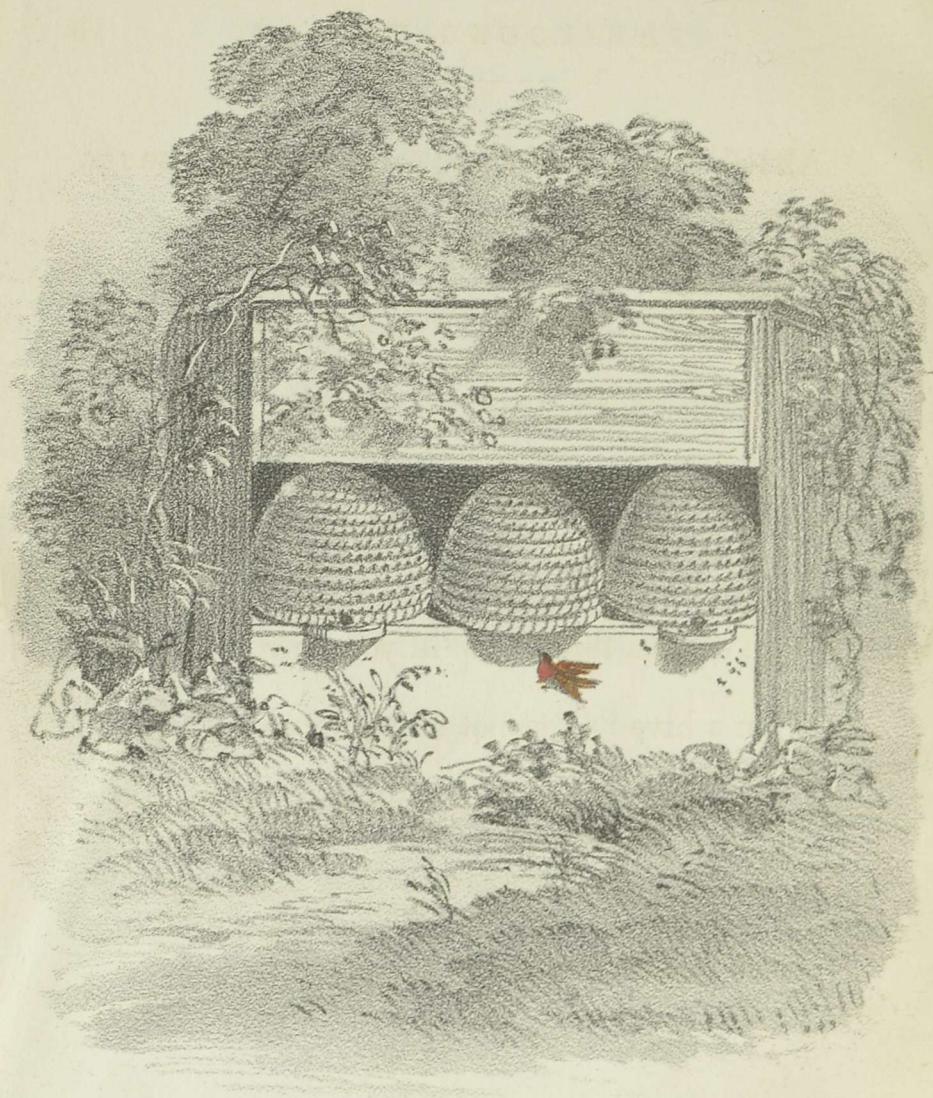
Verse 16.

Sometimes his friend he would overlook
From the back of his easy chair ;
Though his friend might rustle the leaves of his book,
No notice the sweet happy creature took,
But would whistle his wild notes there.

At last the time when all birds do cast
Their feathers, and have them new,
Came, and Robin got rid of his coat at last,
Which had never been free from the creamy paste,
When into the dairy he flew.

It was now the Spring : the flow'rs were gay,
And the trees were cover'd with green,
The birds sang sweetly on ev'ry spray,
'Twas just about Katy's birthday, in May,
That the sweet little Robin was seen,

When his meat was given him, fly away,
Then come back again for more ;
And he'd almost ask for it day by day,
And not taste a bit till he'd carried away
A very plentiful store.



Robin's family mansion.

Verse 21.

“Ah! ah!” said his friend; “my Bob, like the rest,

Has got some young, I suppose;”

So he softly follow’d his sweet Redbreast,

And found indeed its pretty nest;—

Such a funny place it chose!

Where do you think? Will you guess, or I tell?

In a hive! But not *with* the bee:

Oh, no! they could not together dwell,

For the bee wants the hive for her waxen cell,

So industrious is she.

'Twas an empty hive the Robin chose,—

A spare one, just set away;

There on the bench, not far from the ground,

The pretty nest the gentleman found,

Where his Robin's young ones lay.

He left them there ;—he was kind and good,—

He could not have robb'd a nest ;

Oh, no ! he preferr'd to send them food ;

He lov'd, too, to rear the pretty brood,

That belong'd to his own Redbreast.

Thus Spring time and Summer pass'd away,

While Robin rear'd his young :

Till, like the parent birds, blythe and gay,

The young ones took wing, and flew away ;

Then, when Robin's business was done,

Back to his friend he came once more,

To his parlour and home again ;

For well he remember'd the nice little door,

Where often he'd crept in so snugly before,

Through the small gothic broken pane.

Sometimes, indeed, he staid all night ;

And then Master Bob might be found
Perch'd near the ceiling, and safe out of sight,
Secure from Miss Pussy, who otherwise might
Have caught him, if nearer the ground.

Robin had now grown so very tame,
That seldom he wanted to roam ;
Yet friends who call'd, and had heard his fame,
Wanting to see him, whenever they came
Ne'er found the young rogue at home.

The fact is, Robin would never stay,
But would always take to his wing ;
And thus the young rogue would linger away,
The whole or a part of ev'ry day,
When the gentleman's friends came in.

Katy, I dare say, can tell us the same,
For to Woodside a visit she paid,
And heard Mr. G—— call the Robin by name ;
Tho' "Twit, twit," he answer'd, no nearer he came,
But safe in the evergreens staid.

But strangers gone, then there he would be

Ready to pick up each meal ;

Breakfast, or dinner, or supper, or tea ;

None were more welcome than Robin, and he

Seem'd really the welcome to feel.

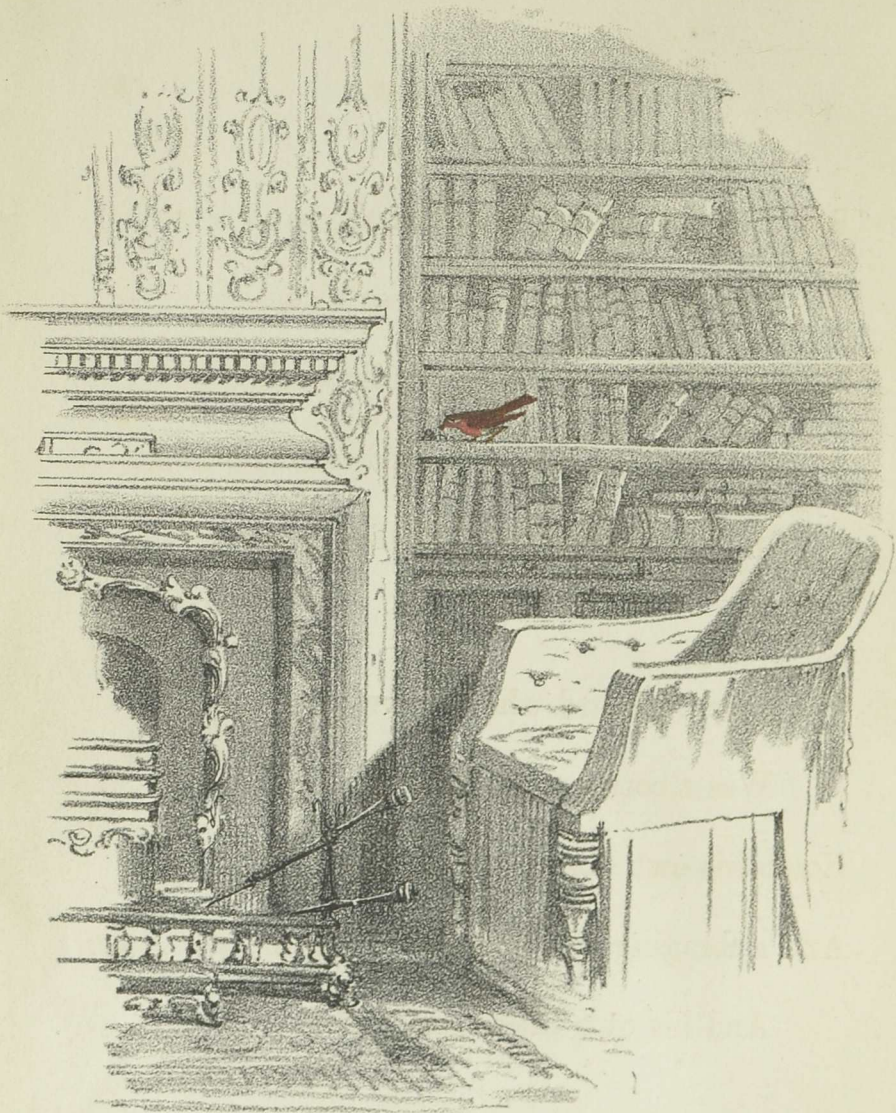
Sometimes, when hunger did not much press,

Master Bobby would not want his share ;

But if he were absent, his favorite mess

Was put by for the tiny one, nevertheless,

For the Robin was ne'er forgot there.



Robin feeding, on the bookshelves.

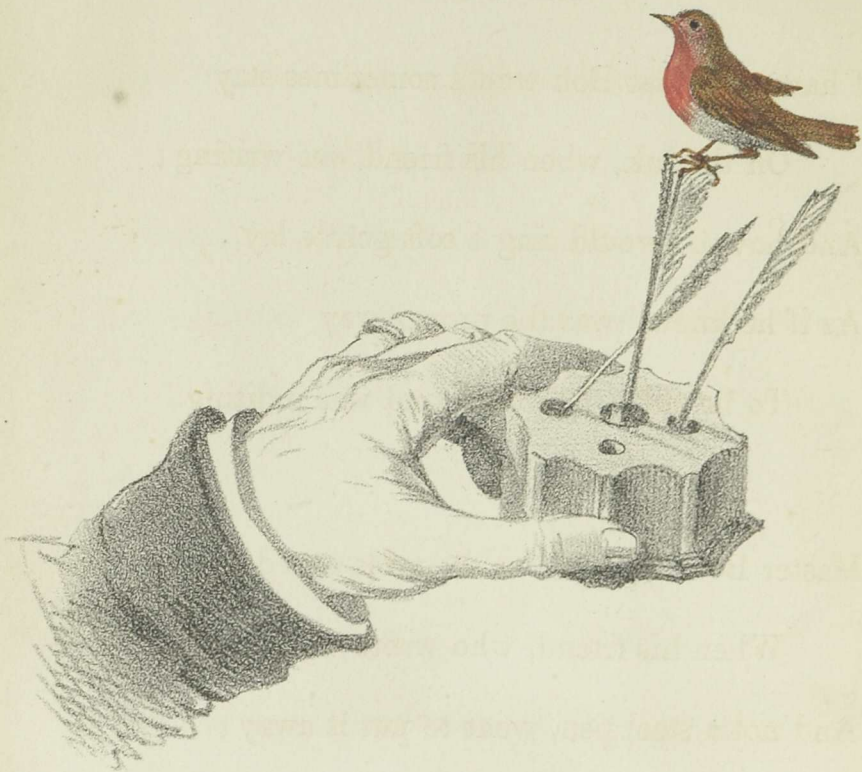
Verse 34.

Boil'd batter-pudding he liked above all
The dainties around him so nice,
(Except at the time of his family's call,
When mutton or beef he coax'd for them all,)
So his friend always cut him a slice.

The little cupboard where it was laid
Was a corner made by a book ;
Robin his own observations made,
And a foraging visit full soon he paid,
And his own little morsel took.

His friend had put it by, that he might
Feed Bobby from his own hand ;
But this was really as pretty a sight,
More pretty, perhaps, and as curious quite,
To see him so well understand.

There are many traits of this Robin's skill,
That my willing pen could relate,
Which would more than this little poem fill,
If time and patience obey'd my will,
And could longer on Robin wait.



Robin perched on the pen.

Verse 37.

I have said that Bob would sometimes stay

On the ink, when his friend was writing ;

And how he would sing a soft gentle lay,

As if he knew 'twas the proper way

To be still when his friend was inditing.

Master Bob was thus on the table one day,

When his friend, who wrote with a feather

And not a steel pen, went to put it away ;

When Bob perch'd upon it so saucy and gay,

He carried them both off together !

Robins are fond of spiders and flies ;
And Bobby now being so tame,
He would many a hapless insect surprise,
Not prepared to expect a Robin's bright eyes,
When into the parlour they came.

However happy they'd been before,
(In spite of Betty's long broom,)
No spider was safe in this sitting-room more,
For Robin would every cranny explore,
Directly he enter'd the room.

His roosting-place was the valence frill,
Above the window on high ;
Where, with all a Robin's intuitive skill,
He would many a wandering spider kill,
That from his dark corner he'd spy.

Thus time passed on.—Two Winters were gone,
And the Summers that come in between ;
The Robin had rear'd his brood as before,
And fed them again from the same friendly store,
That so long his larder had been.

The blust'ring Winter the third time appear'd,
Master Bob, as "a winter friend," came ;
Took up his old haunts, now by custom endear'd,
Again with his sweet notes the sitting-room cheer'd,
And answer'd to "Bob," his old name.

But, alas ! my story must suddenly close.

The Robin, sweet bird, is no more !
How he has died there is no one who knows,
Though each some tragical end will suppose,
As Robins have oft died before.



Robin at breakfast.

Verse 44.

The last sad day on which he was seen
Was while the breakfast was laid ;
There was poor Bobby, with hunger as keen,
And cheerful and gay as he'd ever been,
When as usual this visit he paid.

Some think the cat has eaten the bird,
Some that a weasel, or stoat ;
But all we can say is this sorrowful word,
That his sweet little twitter no more can be heard,
Nor his pretty form seen about.

'Tis sorrowful work o'er his relics to weep,—

To gaze on the small broken pane !

To know that he ne'er in his cupboard will peep !

That now 'tis of no use sweet morsels to keep,—

That he never will come back again !

His friend thus mourns o'er his favorite dead :

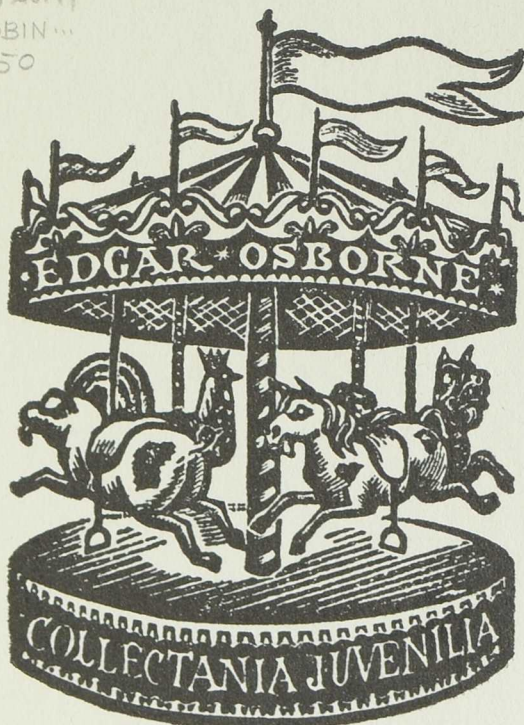
But, as grief is of no avail,

He takes up his pencil, and sketches instead

The scenes through which Robin's short history led,

While I tell the Robin's tale !

P
E., AUNT
ROBIN...
1850



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