Mother's Birthday Review

& Seven other Tales in Verse:

Depicted by R. Andre:

Written by Juliana Horatia Ewing:

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Mother's...
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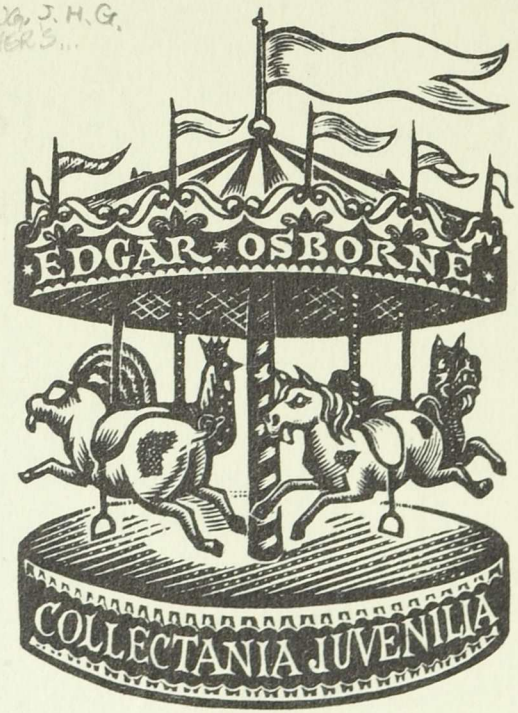

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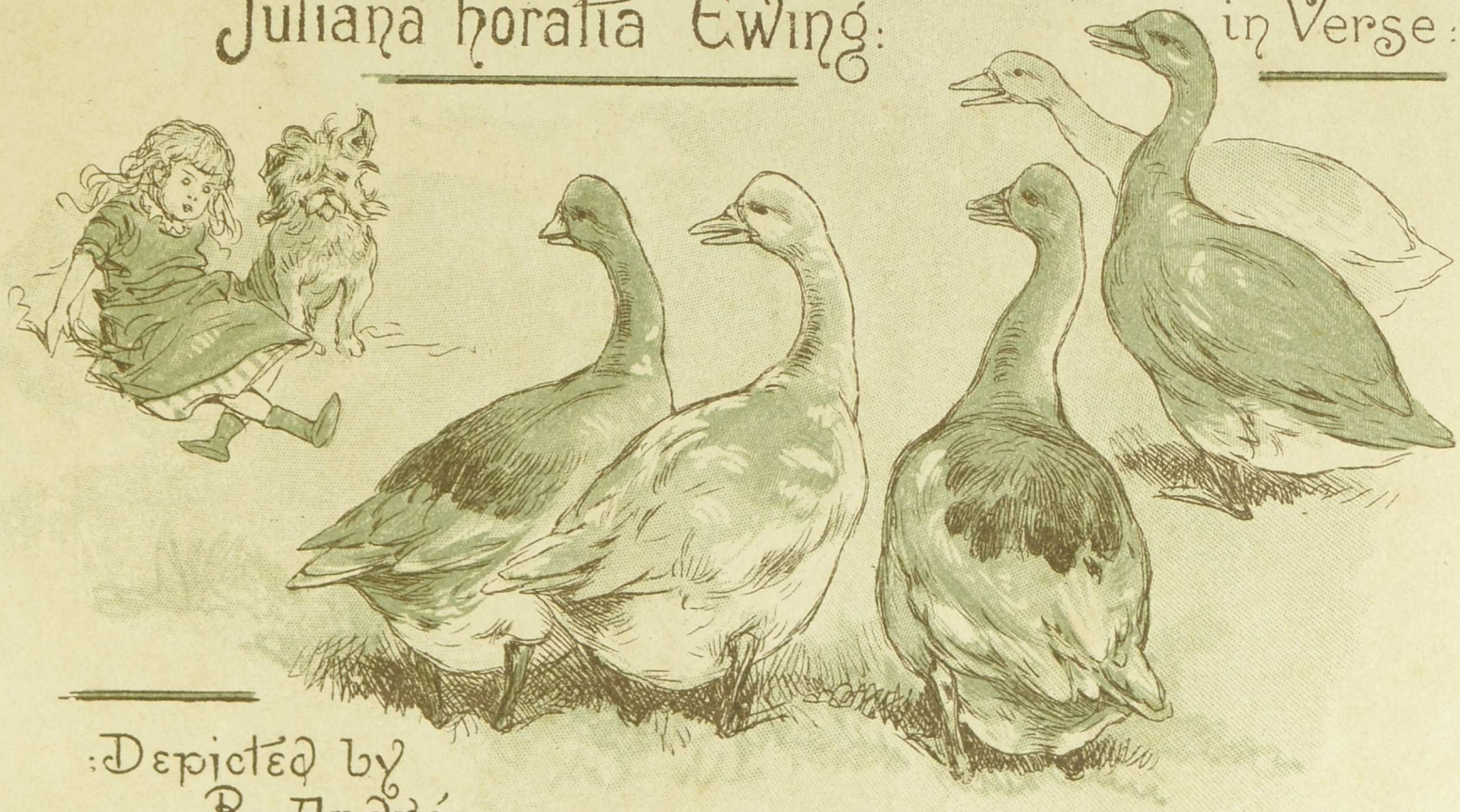
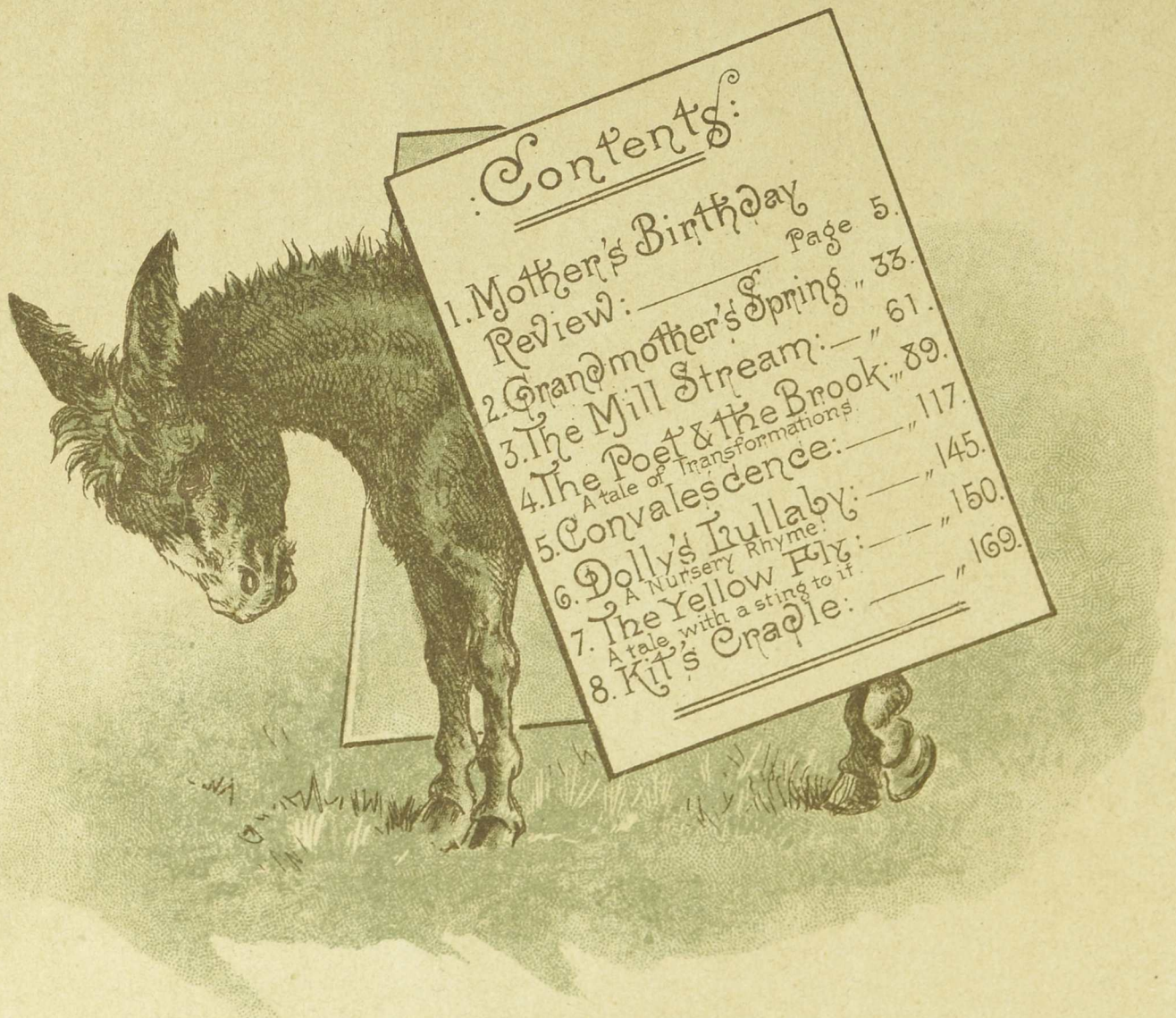


Depicted by
R: André:

BROAD ARROW
R. André

LITH. IN HOLLAND BY EMRIK & BINGER, 21 BERNERS ST LONDON.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Mother's Birthday Review

Brother Bill. To have a good birthday for a grown-up person is very difficult indeed.

We don't give it up, for Mother says the harder things are, the harder you must try till you succeed.

Still, our birthdays are different; we want so many things, and choosing your own pudding, and even half holidays are treats.

But what can you do for people who always order the dinner and never have lessons, and don't even like sweets?

I know Mother does not, Baby put a big red comfit in her mouth, and I saw her take it out again on the sly.

I don't believe she even enjoys going a-gypsying, for she gets neuralgia if she stands about where it isn't dry. And how can you boil the kettle if you're not near the brook. But it's the last time she shall go there.

I told her so; I said "What's the good of having five sons, except to mount guard over you, you Queen of all Mothers that ever were?"

R. Anders

But she's not easy to manage, and she shams sometimes and shamming is a thing I can't bear.

She shammed about the red comfit, when she didn't think Baby could see her;

And (because they're the only things we can think of for birthday presents for her) she shams wearing out a needle-book and a pincushion every year.

The only things we can think of for Father are paper-cutter's; but there's no sham about his wearing them out;

He would always lose them, long before his next birthday, if Mother did not keep finding them lying about.

Last year's paper-cutter was as big as a sword (not as big as Father's sword, but as big as a wooden one, like ours)

And he left it behind in a railway carriage, when he'd had it just thirty six hours

So we knew he was ready for another. It was Mother's birthday that bothered us so

And if it hadn't been for Dolly's Major (he's her Godfather and she calls him "my Major) what we should have done I really don't know

He said "What's the matter?" And Dolly said, "Mother's birthday's the matter" And I said, "We cant think what to devise

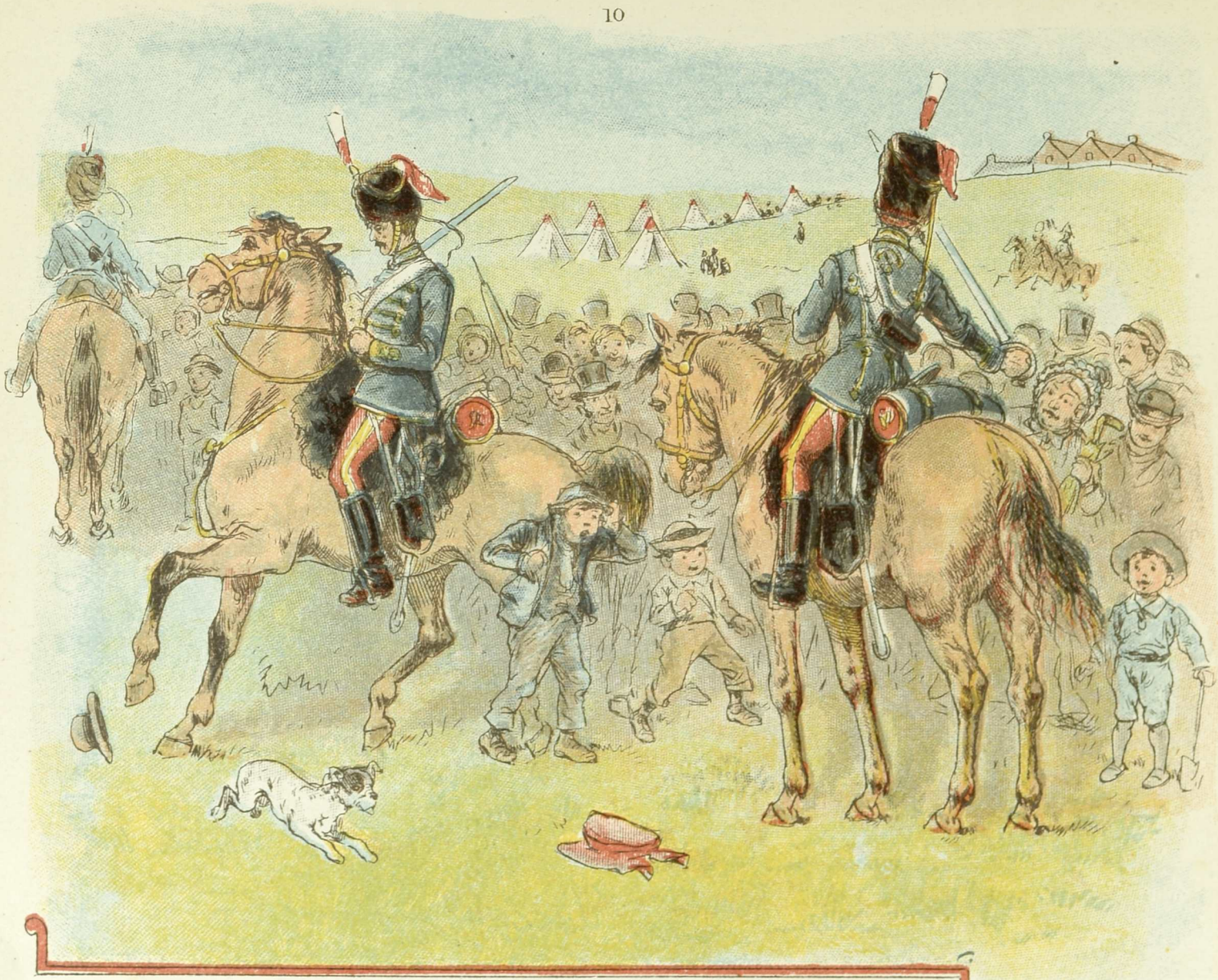
To give her a birthday treat that wont give her neuralgia and will take her by surprise,

Look here's Major! How can you give people treats who can order what they wish for far better than you

I wonder what they do for the Queen! her birthday must be the hardest of all" But he said

Not a bit of it! They have a review

Cocked hats and all the rest of it; and a salute, and a feu de joie, and a March Past



"Cocked hats, and all the rest of it." ..... Page. 9.

R. André

P. André

That's the way we keep the Queen's Birthday; and every year the same as the last"

So I settled at once to have a Mother's Birthday Review; and that she should be Queen, and I should be the General in command

I thought she couldn't come to any harm by sitting in a fur cloak and a birthday wreath at the window, and bowing and waving her hand,

We did not tell her what was coming, we only asked for leave to have all the seven donkeys for an hour and a half

(We always hire them from the same old man) two for the girls, and five for me and my brother's

I told him, "for me and my staff"

We could have managed with five, if the girls would only have been Maids of Honour and stayed indoors with the Queen

Maggie would if I'd asked her; but Dolly

Will go her own way, and that's into the thick of every-thing, to see whatever there is to be seen

She's only four year's old, but she's ridiculously like the picture of an ancient ancestress of our's

Who defended an old castle in Cornwall against the French for hour's and hour's

Her husband was away, so she was in command, and all her household obeyed her

She made them strip the lead off the roofs, and they did, and she boiled it down and gave it very hot indeed to the French invader,

Maggie would have let the French in; She doesn't like me to say so, but I know she would, You can get anything out of Maggie by talking

She likes to hire a donkey, and then sham she'd rather not ride, for fear of being too heavy, and to take Spike out for a run, and than carry him to Save him the trouble of walking

: Dame Elizabeth Treffry (temp. Henry VI.), defended Place House, Fowey, Cornwall, in the circumstances, and with the vigorous measures described: Page. 13.

Page. 13.

But she's very good; she made all our cocked hats and at the review she and Dolly, and Spike, were the loyal crowd

Dick, and Tom, and Harry were the troops, and I was the General, and Mother looked quite like a Queen at the window, and bowed

The donkeys made very good "charger's on the whole, and especially mine

Jem's was the only one that gave trouble, and neither fair means nor foul would keep him in line

Just when I'd dressed all their noses to a nice level (you can do nothing with their ears) then back went Jem's brute

And Jem caught him a whack with the flat of his sword (a thing you never see done on the Staff) and it rather spoilt the salute

But the spirit of the troops was excellent, and we'd a feu de joie with penny pistols (Jem's donkey was the only one that shied) and Dolly's Major says that, all things considered, he never saw a better March Past

And Mother was delighted with her first Birthday Review, and she is none the worse for it, and says she

only hopes that it wont be the last

Dolly

They call me Dolly, but I'm not a doll, and Im not a baby, though Baby is sometimes my name

I behave beautifully at meals and at Church and I can put on my own boots and say a good deal of the catechism; and ride a donkey, and play at any boys' game

I've ridden a donkey that kicks (at least I rode him as long as I was on) and a donkey that rolls, and an old donkey that goes lame

I mean to ride like a lady now, but that's because I ought, not because I easily can

For what with your legs and your pommles (I mean the saddle's pommles) it would be much easier always to ride like a man

Boys looks braver but I think it's really more dangerous to ride side-ways, because of the saddle slipping round

R.Andrad

R. André

(I didn't cry; I played at slipping round the world and getting to New-Zealand with my head upside down on the ground)

The reason the saddle is slippery is not because it's smooth, for it's rather rough; and there's a hard ridge behind

And the horses hair coming trough the donkey's back (I mean through his saddle) scratches you dreadfully, but I tuck my things under me, and pretend I dont mind

They work out again though, particularly when they are starched, and I think frocks get shorter every time they go to the wash

But I dont complain, if it's very uncomfortable I make an ugly face to myself and say, "Bosh!"

We've all of us, had a good deal of practice, so we ought to know how to ride;

We've ridden a great deal since we came to live on the heath, and we rode a good deal when Father was stationed at the sea-side

My Major taught me to ride sideways, and at first he would hold me on

But I don't like being touched; and I don't call it riding like a lady if you're held on by an officer and I'd rather tumble off if I can't stick on, by myself so I sent him away and the nasty saddle slipped round directly he was gone

I only crushed my sun bonnet, and the donkey stood quite still (We always call that one "the old stager"

I wasn't frightened, except just the tiniest bit; but he says he was dreadfully frightened So I said", Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself, considering all your medals, and that you're a Major"

He likes me very much, and I like him, and when my fifth birthday comes, he says I'm to choose a donkey, and he'll buy it for me, but the saddle and bridle shall be quite new:

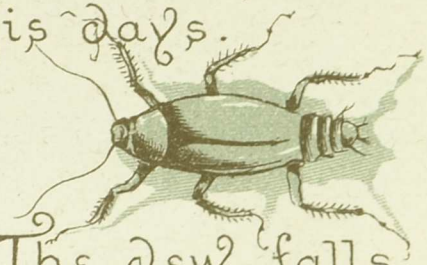
So I've made up my mind to choose the one Brother Bill had for his charger at Mother's Birthday Review;

And Maggie is so glad - she says her life is quite miserable with thinking

How miserable other lives are,

If only we Knew.

Maggie loves every creature that lives.
She won't confess to black beetles, but she can't stamp on them (I've stamped out lots in my winter boots,) and she doesn't even think a donkey ugly when he brays;
And she says she shall buy a brush, out of her pocket money, and brush my donkey every day till he looks like a horse, and that it shan't be her fault if there isn't one poor old brute beast who lives happily to the end of his days.



The dew falls over the heath,
Brother Donkeys, and the darkness falls, but still through the gathering night.
All around us spreads the Heath Bedstraw in glimmering sheets of white.
Dragged and trampled, and plucked and wasted, it patiently spreads and survives;

Kicked and thwacked, and prodded, and over-laden, we patiently cling to our lives

Hee-haw! for the rest and silence of darkness that follow the labours of light

Hee-haw! for the hours from night to morning that balance the hours from morning to night,

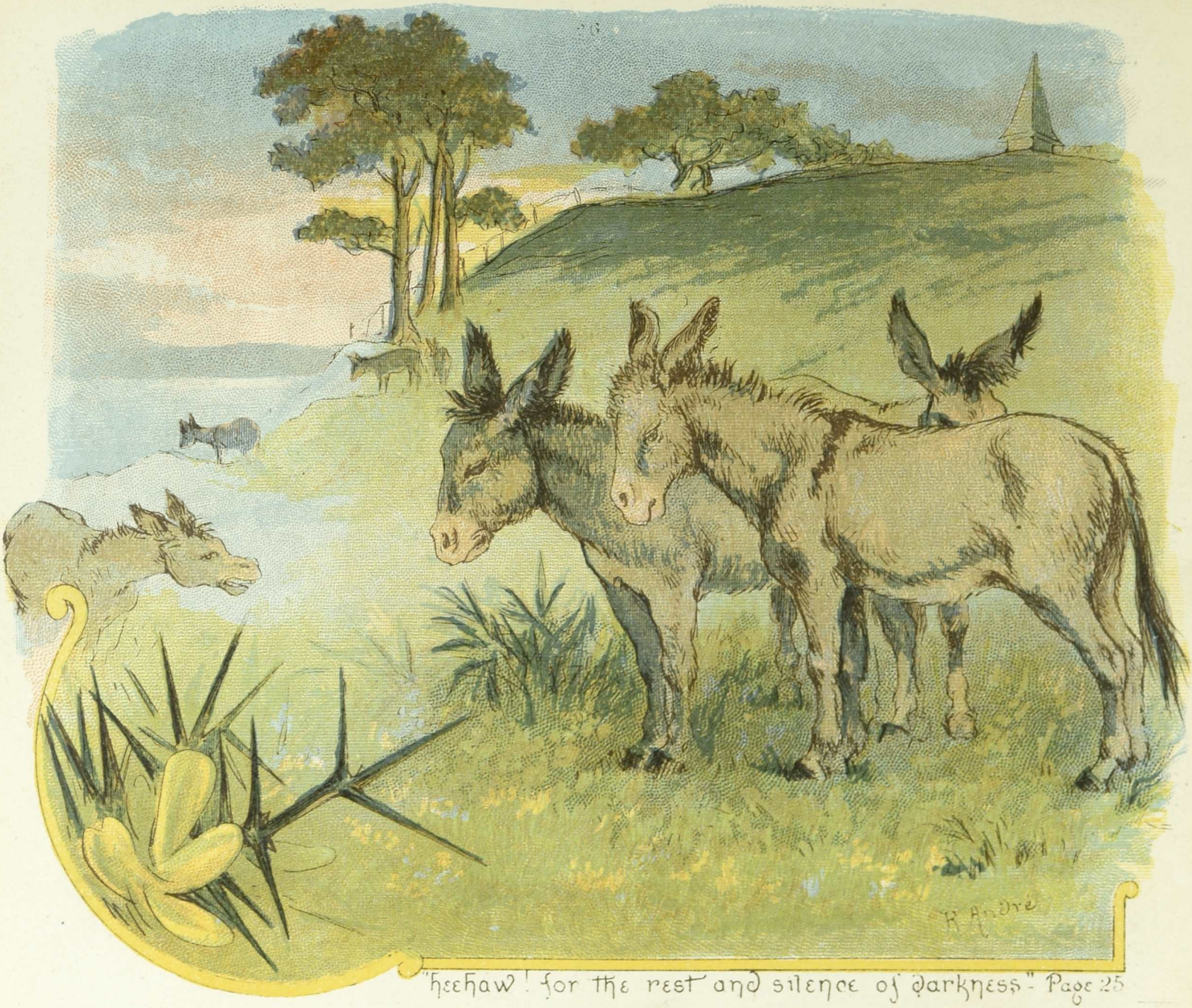
Hee-haw! for the sweet night air that gives human beings cold in the head;

Hee-haw! for the civilisation that sends human beings to bed

Rest, Brother Donkeys, rest, from the bit, the burden, the blow

The dust, the flies, the restless children, the brutal roughs, the greedy donkey-master, the greedier donkey-hirer, the holiday-maker who knows no better, and the holiday makers who ought to know!

When the odorous furze-bush prickles the seeking nose, and the short damp grass refreshes the tongue –



"heehaw! for the rest and silence of darkness." Page 25

"hee-haw! for the hours from night to morning"

Lend, Brother Donkeys, lend a long and attentive ear
Whilst I proudly bray
Of the one bright day
In our hard and chequered career
I've dragged pots, and vegetables, and invalids, and fish, and I've galloped with four costermongers to the races;
I've carried babies, and sea coal and sea sand, and sea weed in panniers, and been sold to the gypsies and bought back for the sea-side, and ridden (in a white saddle-cloth with scarlet braid) by the fashi--onable visitors (There was always a certain distinction in my paces
Though I say it who shouldn't) I've spent a summer on the Heath, and next winter near Covent Garden, and moved the following year to the foot of a mountain, to take people up to the top to show them the view
But how little we know what's before us!
And how little I guessed I should ever be chief charger at a Queen's Birthday Review!

Did I triumph alone? No, Brother Donkeys, no! You also took your place with the defenders of the nation

Subordinate positions to my own, but meritoriously filled, though a little more style would have well become so great an occasion

That malevolent old Moke - may his next .... thistle choke him! - disgraced us all with his jibbing - the ill-tempered old ass!

Young Neddy is shaggy and shy, but not amiss, if he'd held his ears up, and not kept his eyes on the grass

Nothing is more je-june (I may say vulgar) than to seem anxious to eat when the crisis calls for public spirit, enthusiasm, and an elevated tone,

And I wish Brother Donkeys, I wish that all had felt as I felt, the responsibility of a March Past the Throne!

Respect and self-respect delicately blended; one ear up, and the other lowered to salute, as I passed the window from which we were seen

"Rest, Brother Donkeys, rest, from the burden, the dust, the flies."
page 25.

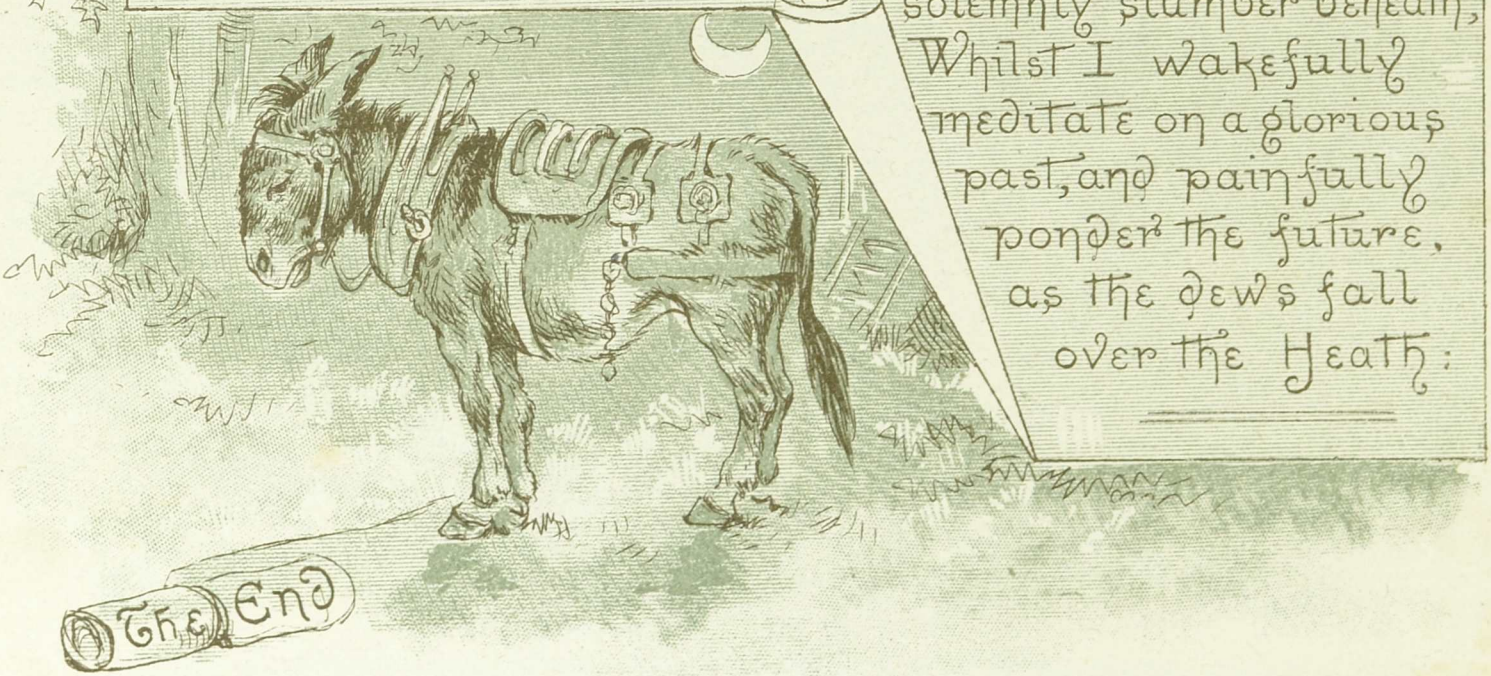
"the holiday-makers who ought to know better"..... Page 25.

Unless I grievously misunderstood the young (General this morning) by no less a personage than Her Most Gracious Majesty THE QUEEN.

Sleep, Brother Donkeys, sleep! But I fancy you're sleeping already, for you make no reply;

Not a quiver of your ears, not a sign from your motionless drooping noses, dark against the dusky night sky.

As black and immoveable as the silent fir trees you solemnly slumber beneath, Whilst I wakefully meditate on a glorious past, and painfully ponder the future, as the dews fall over the Heath:



Grandmother's Spring:

"In my young day's," the grandmother said,
(Nodding her head,
Where cap and curls were as white as snow)
In my young days, when we used to go
Rambling,
Scrambling;
Each little dirty hand in hand,
Like a chain of daisies a comical
band
Of neighbour's children, seriously straying,
Really and truly going a-Maying,
My mother would bid us linger,
And lifting a slender straight forefinger,
Would say —
'Little Kings and Queens of the May,

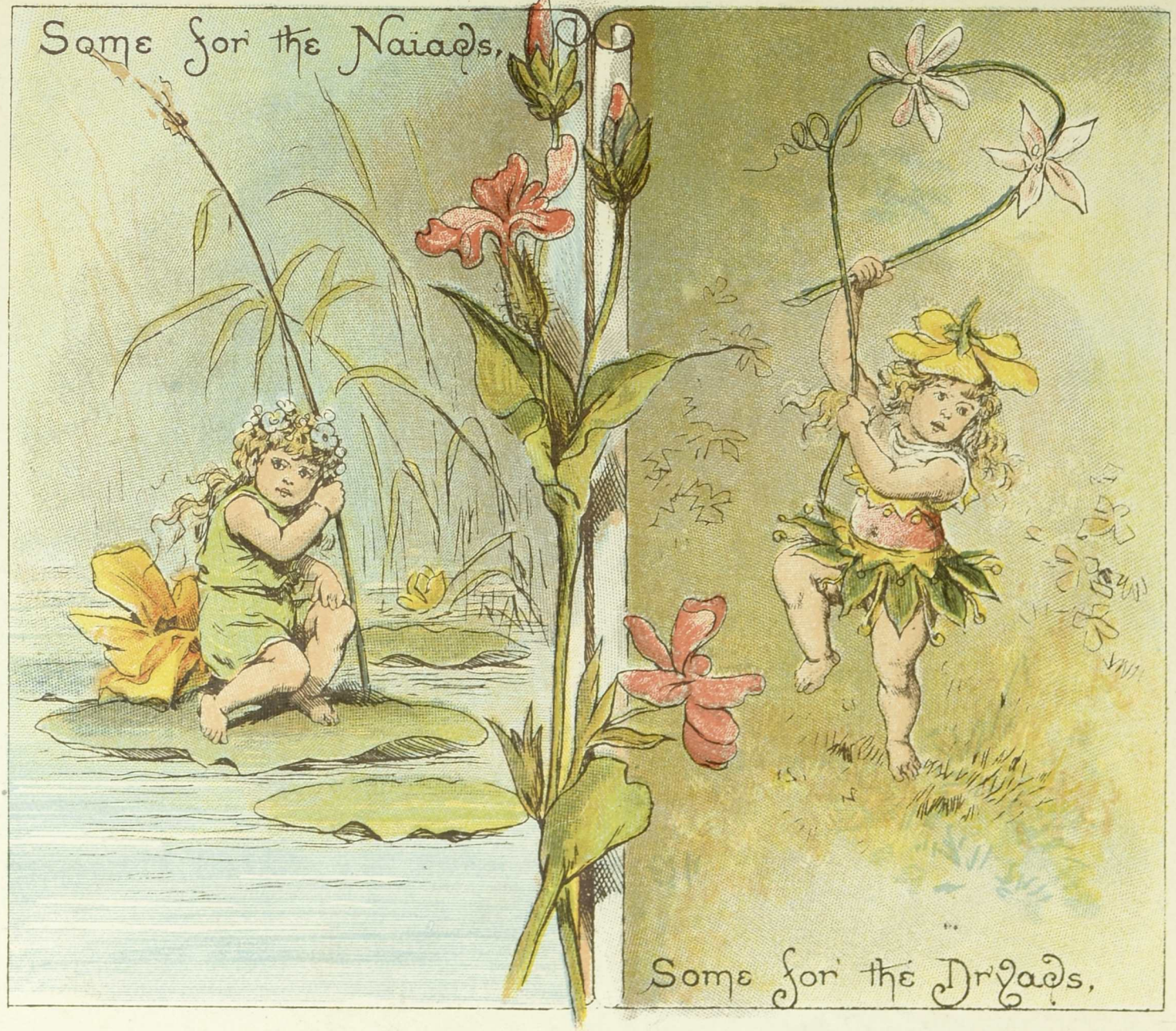
Listen to me!
If you want to be
Every one of you very good
In that beatiful, beautiful, beautiful wood,

Where the little birds' heads get so
turned with delight
That some of them sing all night:

Whatever you pluck,
Leave some for good luck;
R. André.
Picked from the stalk, or pulled up by the root,
From overhead, or from underfoot,

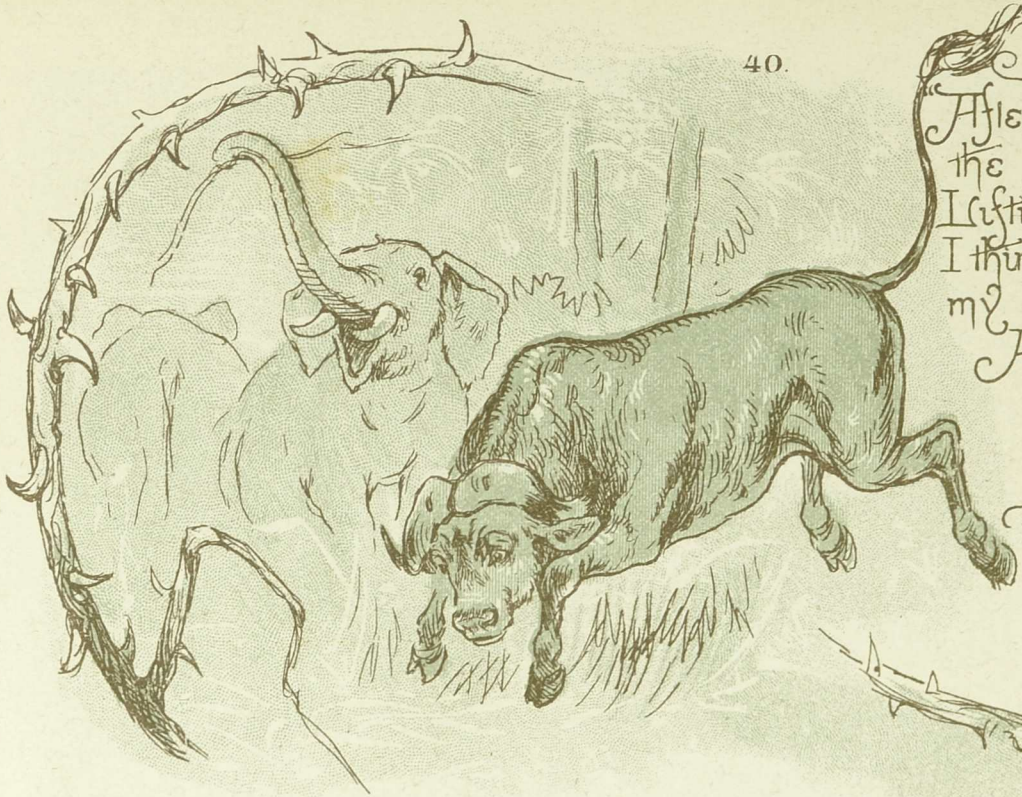
Water wonders of pond or brook;
Wherever you look,

And whatever you find-
Leave something behind;


Some for the Naiads,
Some for the Dryads,

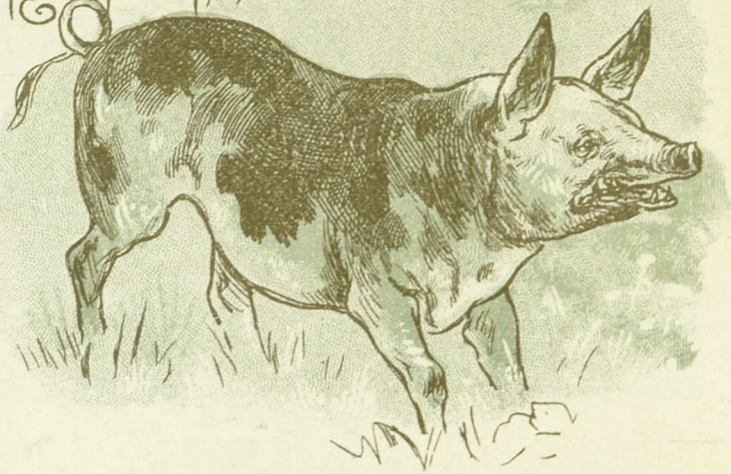
And a bit for the Nixies,

and the Pixies"



"After all these years,"
the grandame said,
Lifting her head,
I think I can hear
my mother's voice
Above all other
noise,
Saying 'hearken
my child!
There is nothing more
destructive and
wild,

No wild bull with his horns,
No wild briar with clutching thorns,
No pig that routs in your
gardenbed,
No robber with ruthless
tread,
More reckless and rude,
And wasteful of all things
lovely and good,



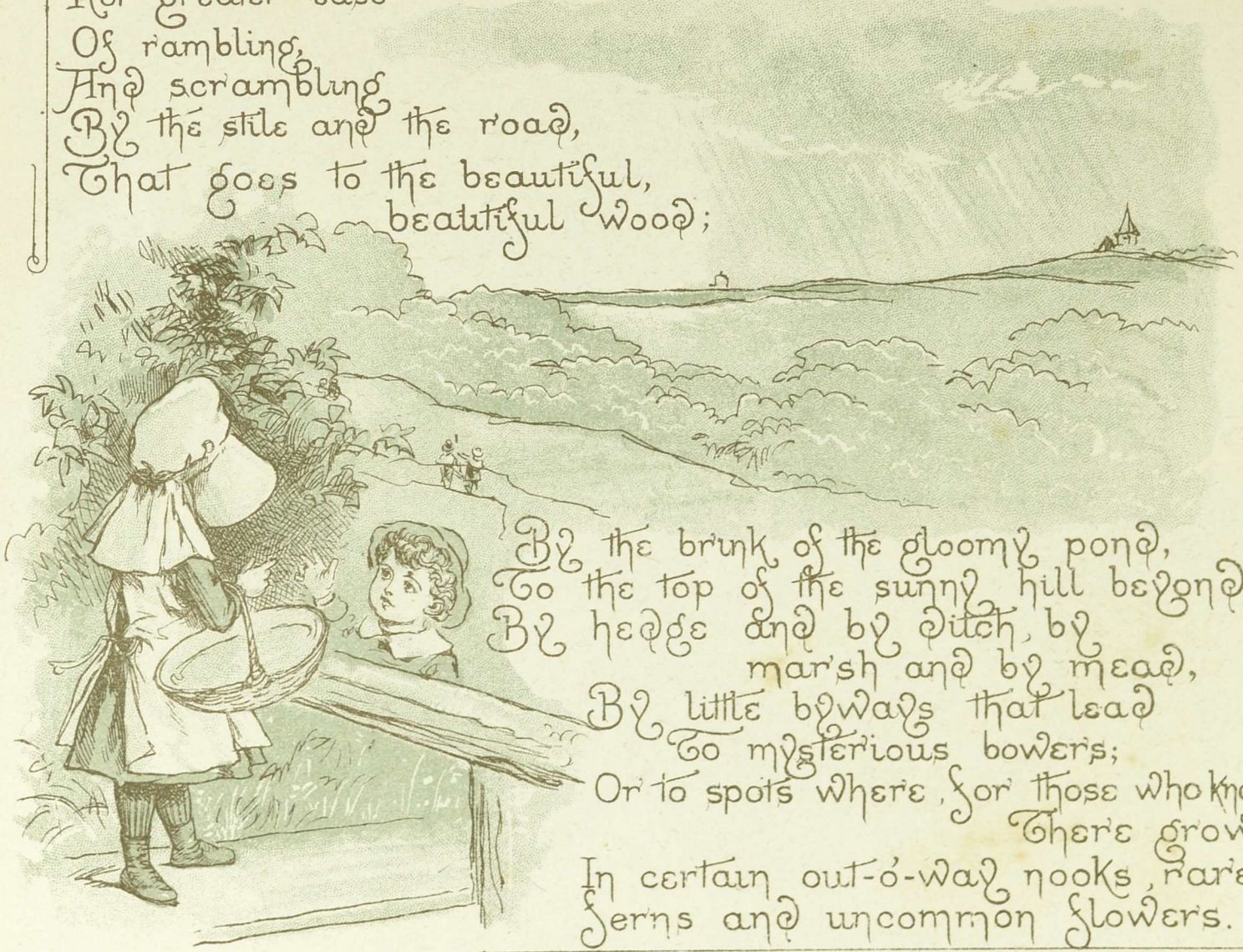
Than a child, with the face of a boy, and the ways of a bear
Who doesn't care,
Or some ignorant little minx
Who never thinks

Now I never knew so stupid an elf
That he couldn't think and care for himself.
Oh, little sisters and little brothers
Think for others, and care for others!
And of all that your little fingers find
Leave something behind!
Pluck, children, pluck!
But leave – for good luck –
Some for the Naiads,
And some for the Dryads,
And a bit for the Nixies, and the Pixies!"

"We were very young"
the grandmother said,
Smiling and shaking
her head;
"And when one is young,
One listens with half
an ear and speaks
with a hasty tongue;
So with should Yeses
And promises sealed
with Kisses,

Stretching the whole wide width of the lane;

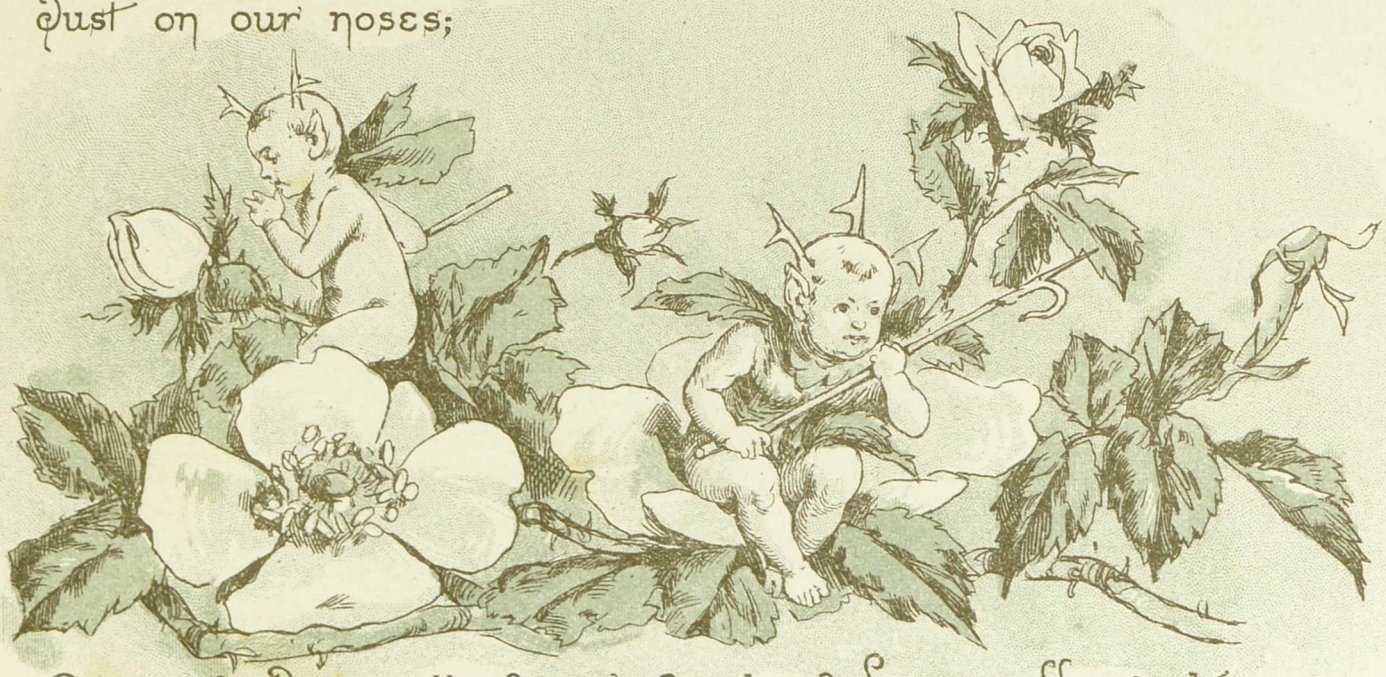
Or in broken links of twos and threes,
For greater ease
Of rambling,
And scrambling
By the stile and the road,
That goes to the beautiful,
beautiful wood;



By the brink of the gloomy pond,
To the top of the sunny hill beyond,
By hedge and by ditch, by
marsh and by mead,
By little byways that lead
To mysterious bowers;
Or to spots where, for those who know,
There grow,
In certain out-o'-way nooks, rare
Ferns and uncommon flowers.

There were flowers everywhere;
Censing the summer air,
Till the giddy bees went rolling home
To their honeycomb,
And when we smell at our posies,

The little fairies inside the flowers rubbed coloured
dust on our noses;

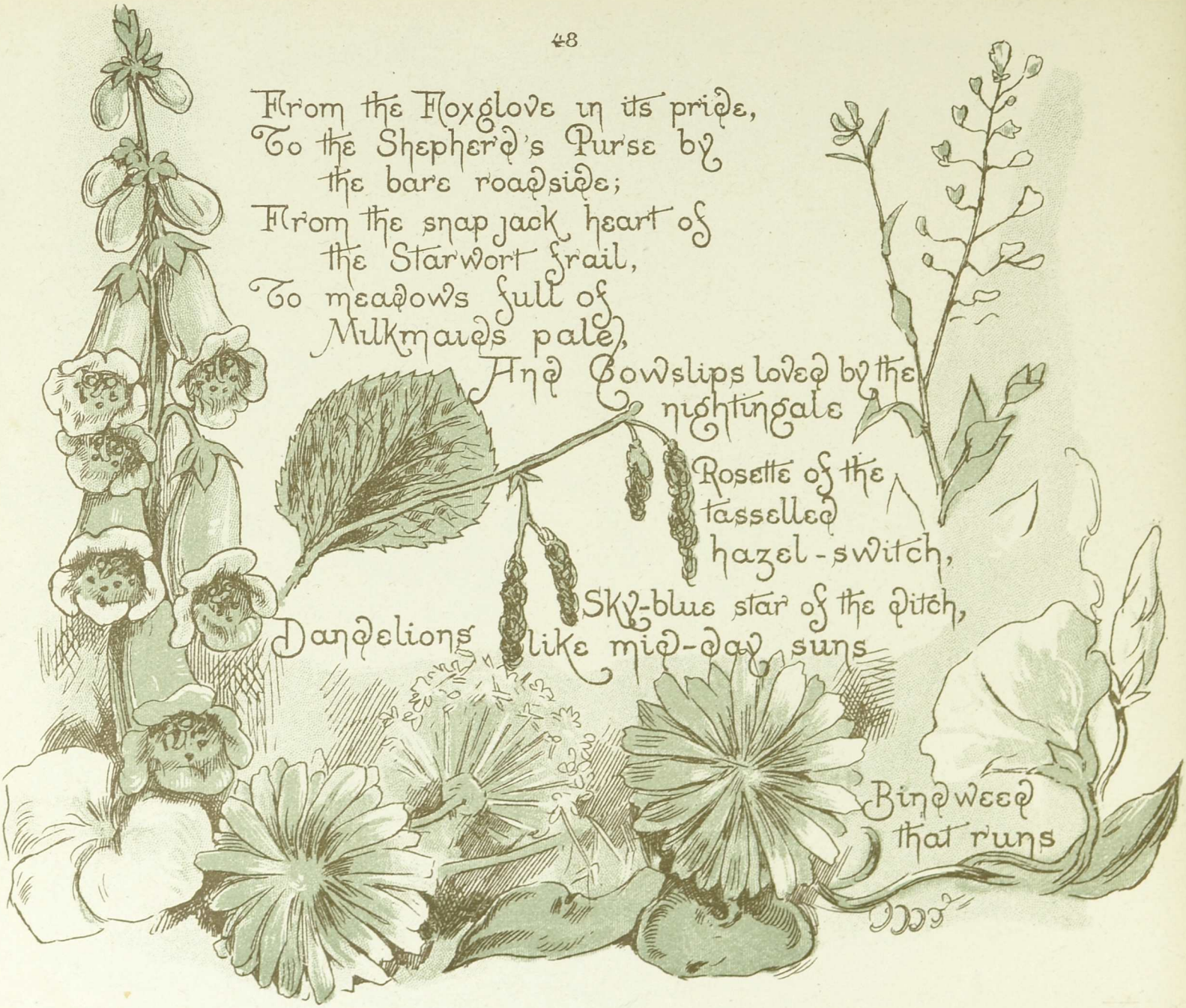


Or pricked us till we cried aloud for snuffing the
dear dog-roses.

But above
all our
noise,
I kept
thinking
I heard
my mother's
voice

But it may have been only a fair joke,

For she was at home, and I sometimes thought it was really the flowers that spoke.


From the Foxglove in its pride,
To the Shepherd's Purse by
the bare roadside;
From the snap jack heart of
the Starwort frail,
To meadows full of
Milkmaids pale,
And Cowslips loved by the
nightingale
Rosette of the
tasselled
hazel-switch,
Sky-blue star of the ditch,
Dandelions like mid-day suns
Bindweed
that runs

Lords with their Ladies
cheek by jowl,
In purple surcoat and
pale green cowl,
Family groups of
Primroses fair;
Orchids rare,
Velvet Bee-orchis
that never can sting,
Butterfly-orchis
which never takes wing,
Robert the Herb with
strange sweet scent,
And crimson leaf
when summer is spent:
Clustering neighbourly,
All this gay company,

Said to us seemingly,
'Pluck, children, pluck!
But leave some for good luck;
Some for the Naiads,
Some for the Dryads,
And a bit for the Nixies,
and the Pixies.

"I was but a maid," the
grandame said,
"When my mother was dead.
And many a time have I
stood
In that beautiful wood
To dream that through
every woodland noise,
Through the cracking
Of twigs and the bending
of bracken,
Through the rustling
Of leaves in the breeze,
And the bustling
Of dark eyed, tawny-tailed
squirrels flitting
about the trees,

Through the
purling and
trickling cool
Of the streamlet
that feeds the
pool,
I could hear
her voice.
Should I wonder
to hear it? Why?
Are the voices of
tender wisdom
apt to die?

And now, though
I'm very old,

And the air, that
used to feel fresh,
strikes chilly
and cold,
On a sunny day
when I potter
About the garden,
or totter
To the seat from
whence I can
see, below,
The marsh and
the meadows I
used to know,
Bright with the
bloom of the
flowers that
blossomed there
long ago;

Then, as if it were yesterday,
I fancy I hear them say,

'Pluck, children, pluck,
But leave some for good
luck;
Picked from the stalk or
pulled up by the root,
From overhead, or from
underfoot,

Water-wonders of pond or brook,
Wherever you look,
And whatever your little
finger's find,
Leave something behind;

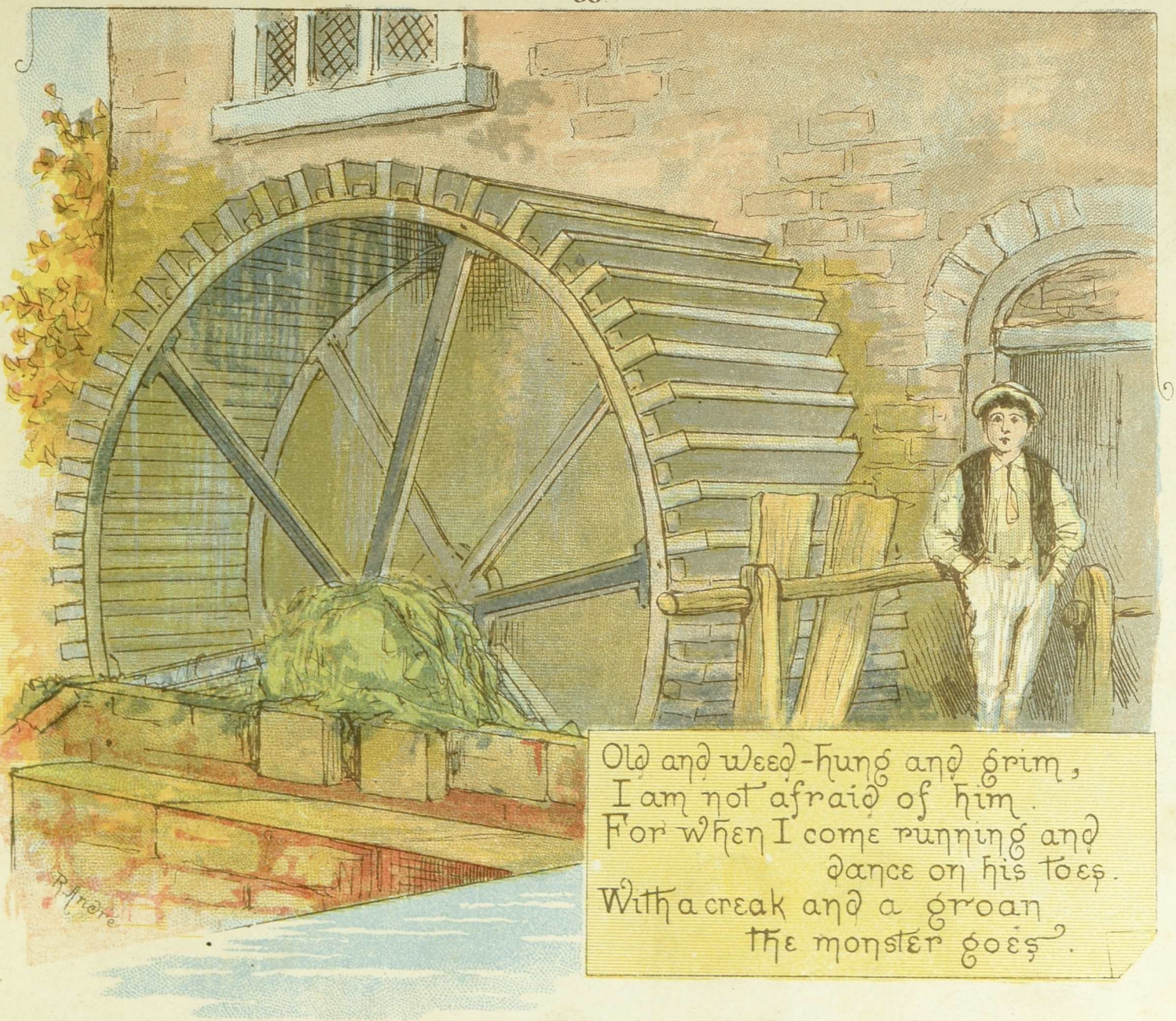
Some for the Naïads
And some for the Dryads,

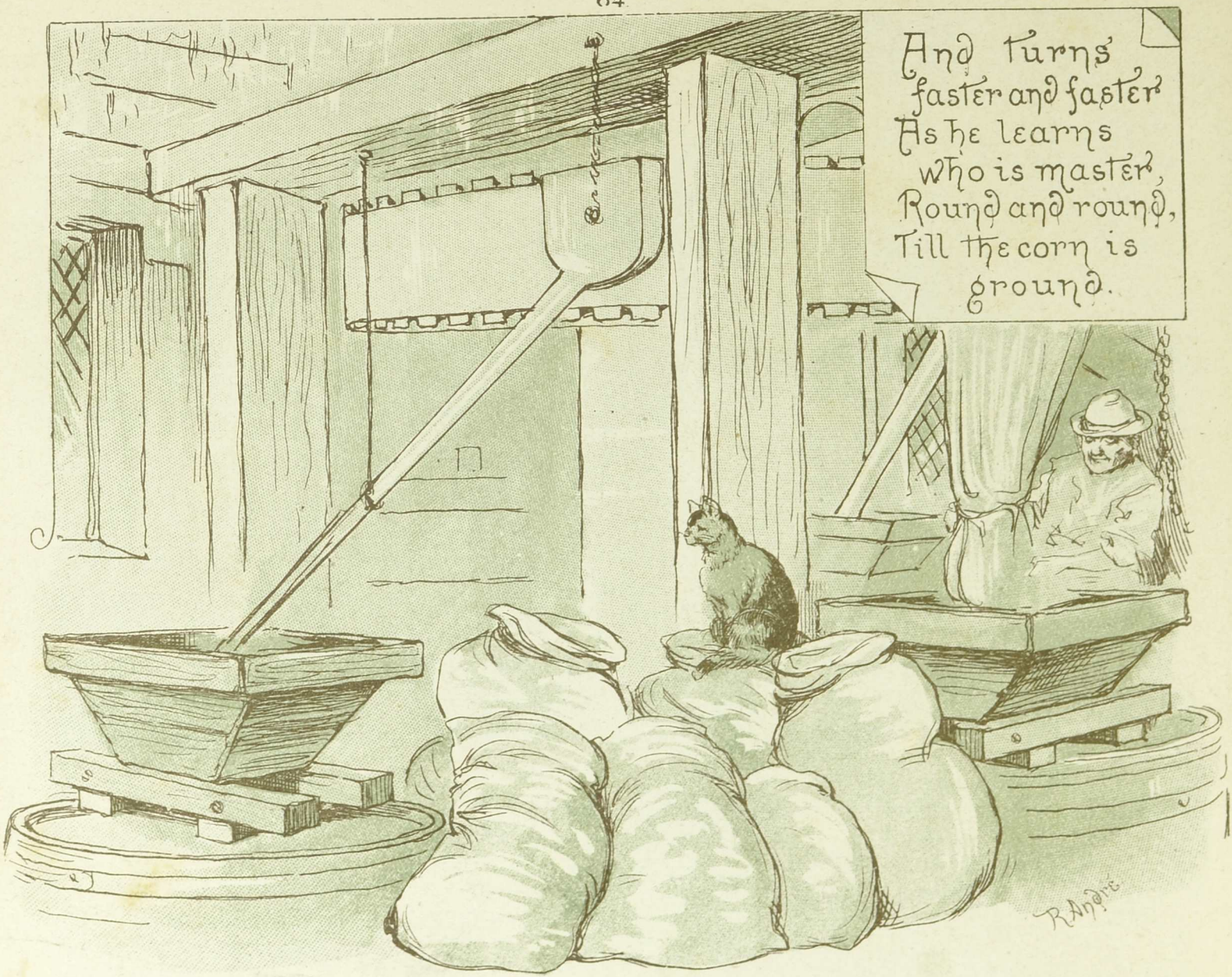
And a bit for the Nixies and the Pixies:

The End:

ONE of a hundred little rills
Born in the hills,
Nourished with dews by the earth, and with tears by the sky,
Sang — "Who so mighty as I?
The farther I flow
The bigger I grow.

I, who was
born but a
little rill,
Now turn the
big wheel of
the Mill,
Though the
surly slave
would rather
stand still.


Old and weed-hung and grim,
I am not afraid of him.
For when I come running and
dance on his toes.
With a creak and a groan
the monster goes.


And turns
faster and faster
As he learns
who is master,
Round and round,
Till the corn is
ground.
R. André

And the miller smiles as he stands on the bank,
And knows he has me to thank
Then when he swings the fine sacks of flour,
I feel my power.

But when the children enjoy their food
I know I'm not only great but good!"

Furthermore sang the brook
"Who loves the beautiful, let him look!
Garlanding me in shady spots
The Forget me nots
Are blue as the summer sky:

Who so lovely as I?
My King cups of gold
Shine from the shade of the
alders old
Stars of the stream!
At the water-rats' threshold
they gleam;

From below
The frog-bit spreads me its blossoms of snow,
And in masses,
The willow-herb, the flags, and the grasses,
Reeds, rushes, and sedges,
Flower and fringe and feather my edges.

To be beautiful is not amiss,
But to be loved is more than this;
And who more sought than I,
By all that run or swim or crawl or fly?

Sober shell fish and frivolous gnats,
Tawny-eyed water-rats,
The poet with rippling rhymes so fluent,
Boys with boats playing truant;

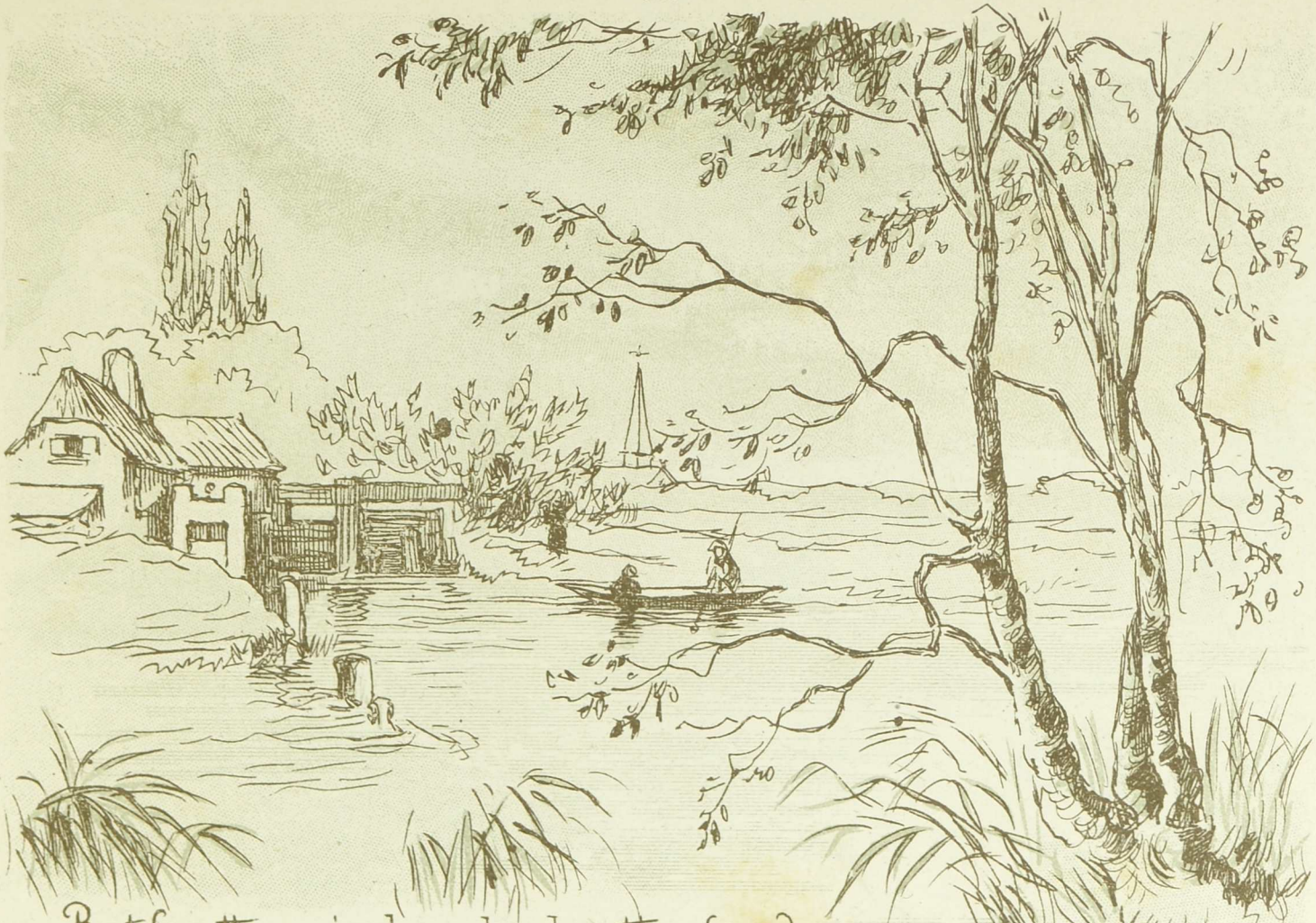
Cattle wading knee-deep for water,
And the flower-plucking parson's daughter.

Down in my depths dwell creeping things
Who rise from my bosom on rainbow wings,
For too swift for a schoolboy's prize.—
Hither and thither above me dart the prismatic-hued dragon flies.

At my side the lover lingers
And with lack-a-daisical fingers,
The Weeping Willow, woe-begone
Strives to stay me as I run on."

There came an hour
When all this beauty and love and power
Did seem
But a small thing to that Mill Stream.

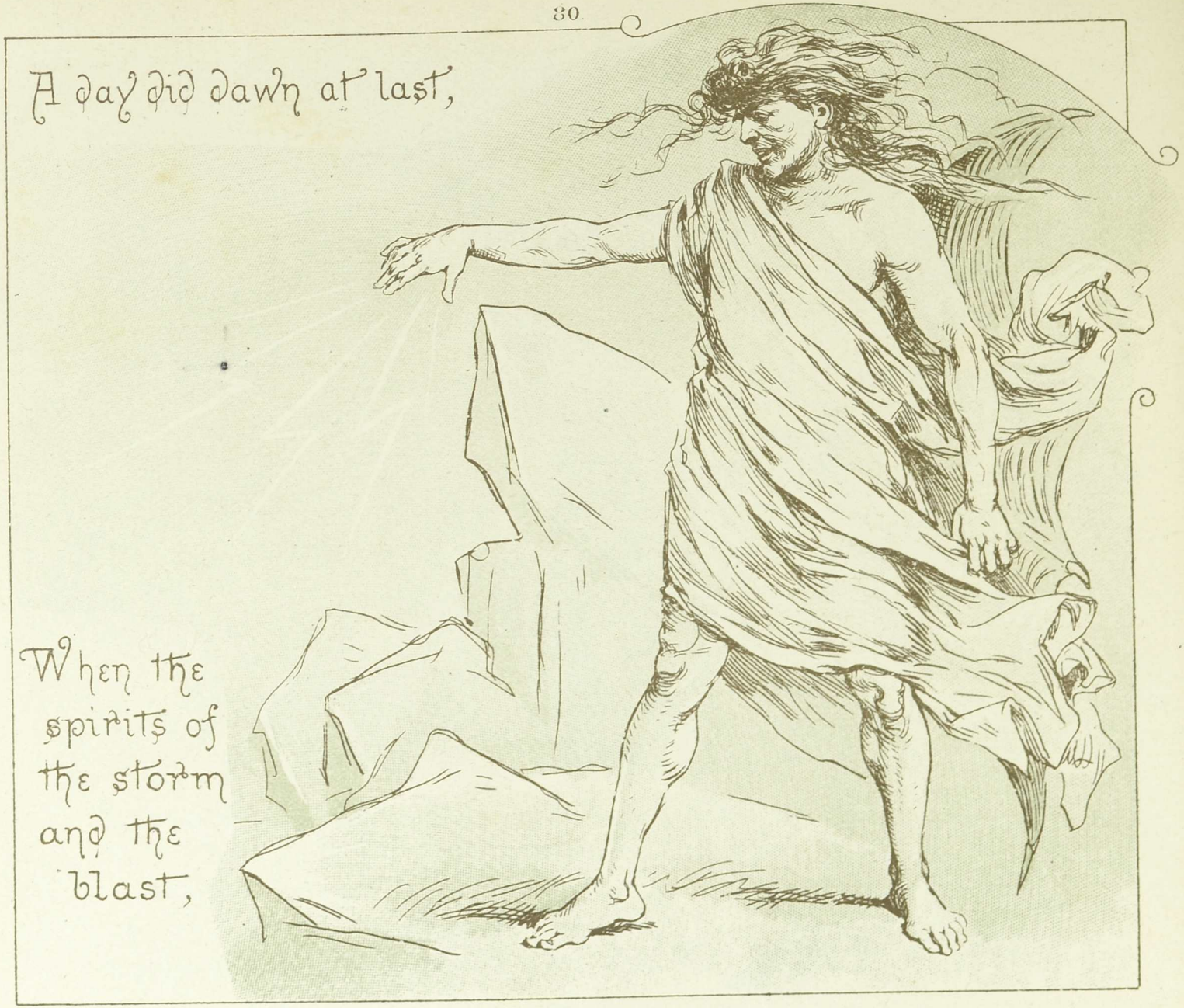
And then his cry
Was, "Why, oh! why
Am I thus surrounded
With checks and
limits, and bounded
By bank and border
To keep me
in order.
Against my will?
I, who was born to
be free and unfettered - a mountain rill!



But for these jealous banks, the good
Of my gracious and fertilising flood
Might spread to the barren highways,
And fill with Forget-me-nots countless neglected by-ways.

Why should the rough barked Willow for ever lave
Her feet in my cooling wave;
When the tender and beautiful Beech
Faints with midsummer heat in the
meadow just out of my reach?

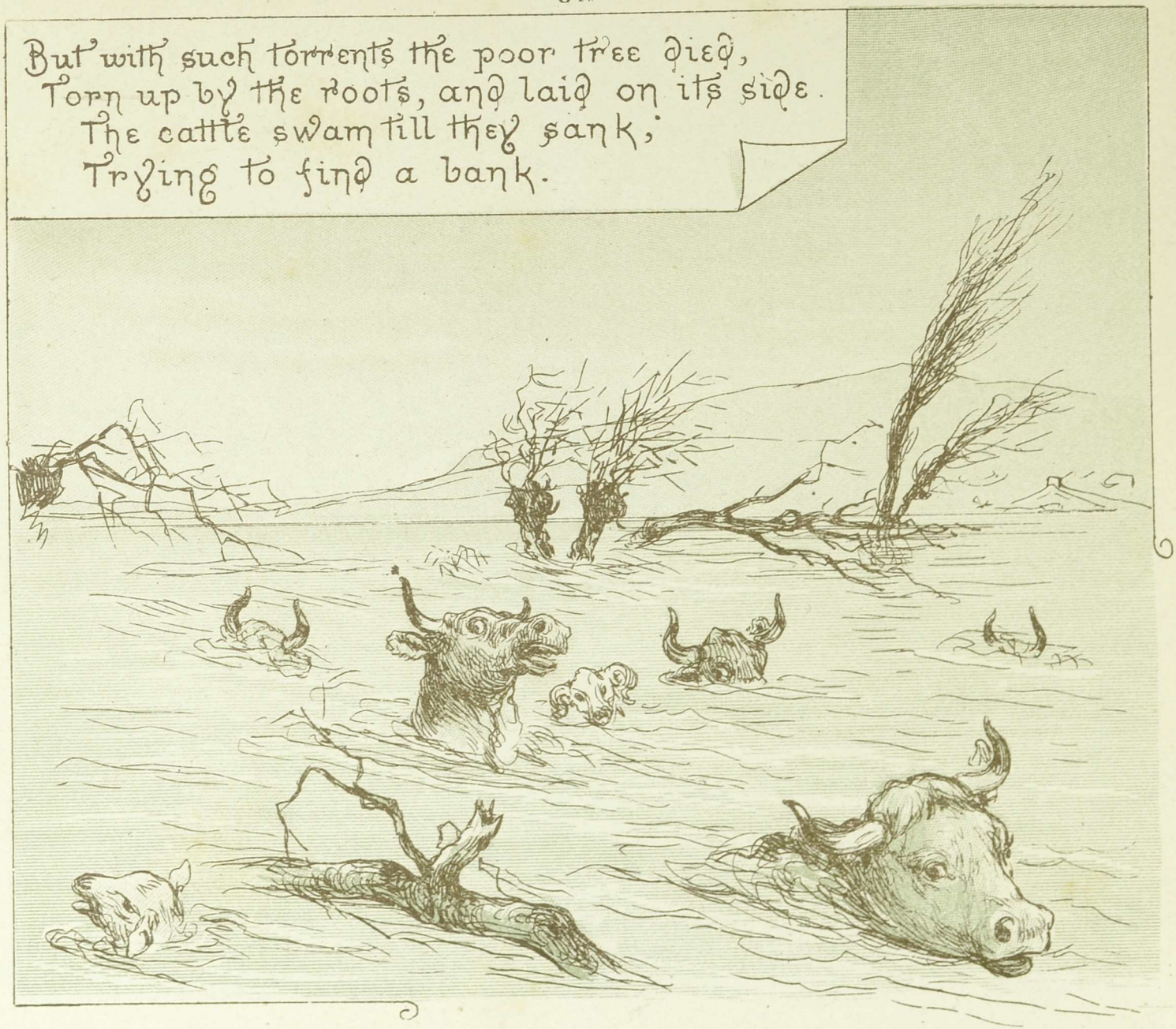
Could I but rush with unchecked power
The miller might grind a day's
corn in an hour.
And what are the ends
Of life, but to serve one's friends?"


A day did dawn at last,
When the spirits of the storm and the blast,

Breaking the bands of the winter's frost and snow
Swept from the mountain source of the stream, and
flooded the valley below.

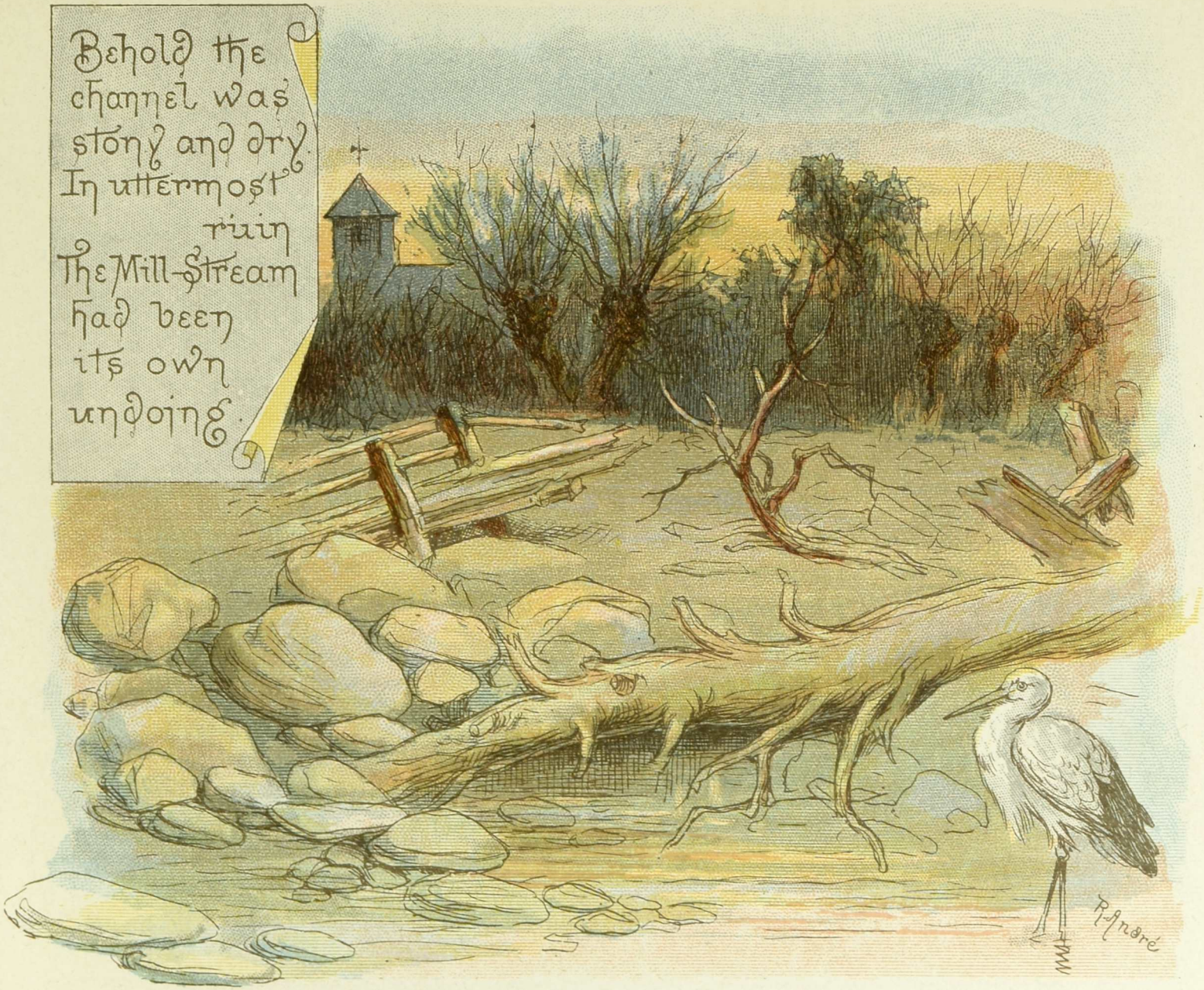
Dams were broken and weirs came down;
Cottage and mill, country and town,
Shared in the general inundation—
And the following desolation.

Then the Mill stream rose in its might
And burst out of bounds to left and to right
Rushed to the beautiful beech,
In the meadow far out of reach.
R. Moore

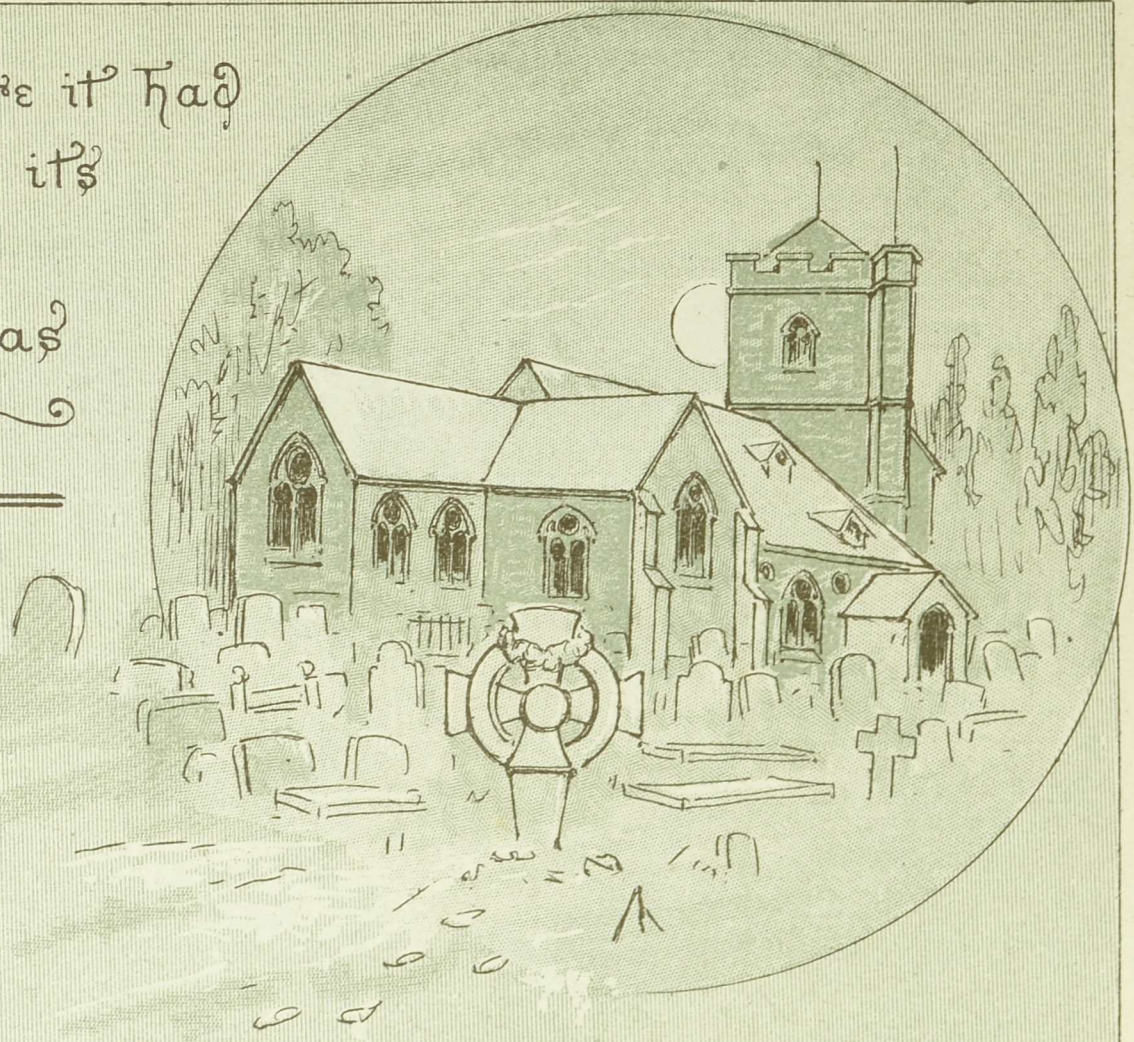

But with such torrents the poor tree died,
Torn up by the roots, and laid on its side.
The cattle swam till they sank,
Trying to find a bank.

Never more shall the broken water-wheel
Grind the corn to make the meal,
To make the children's bread.
The miller was dead.

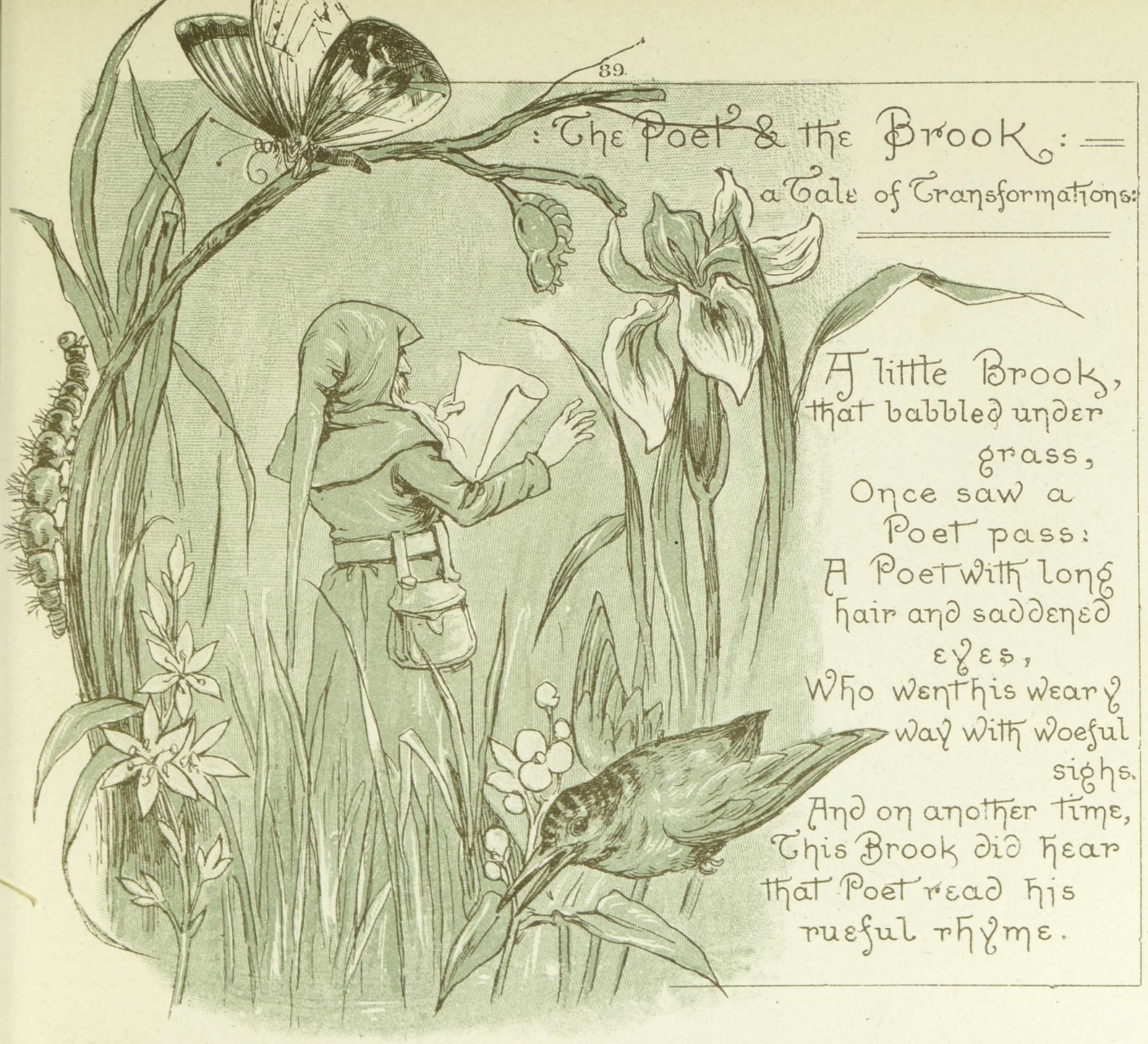
When the setting sun
Looked to see what the
Mill-Stream had done
In its hour
Of unlimited power,
And what was
left when that had
passed by,
R. André


Behold the channel was stony and dry.
In uttermost ruin
The Mill-Stream had been its own undoing.
R. André

Furthermore it had drowned its friend This was the end:



The End:

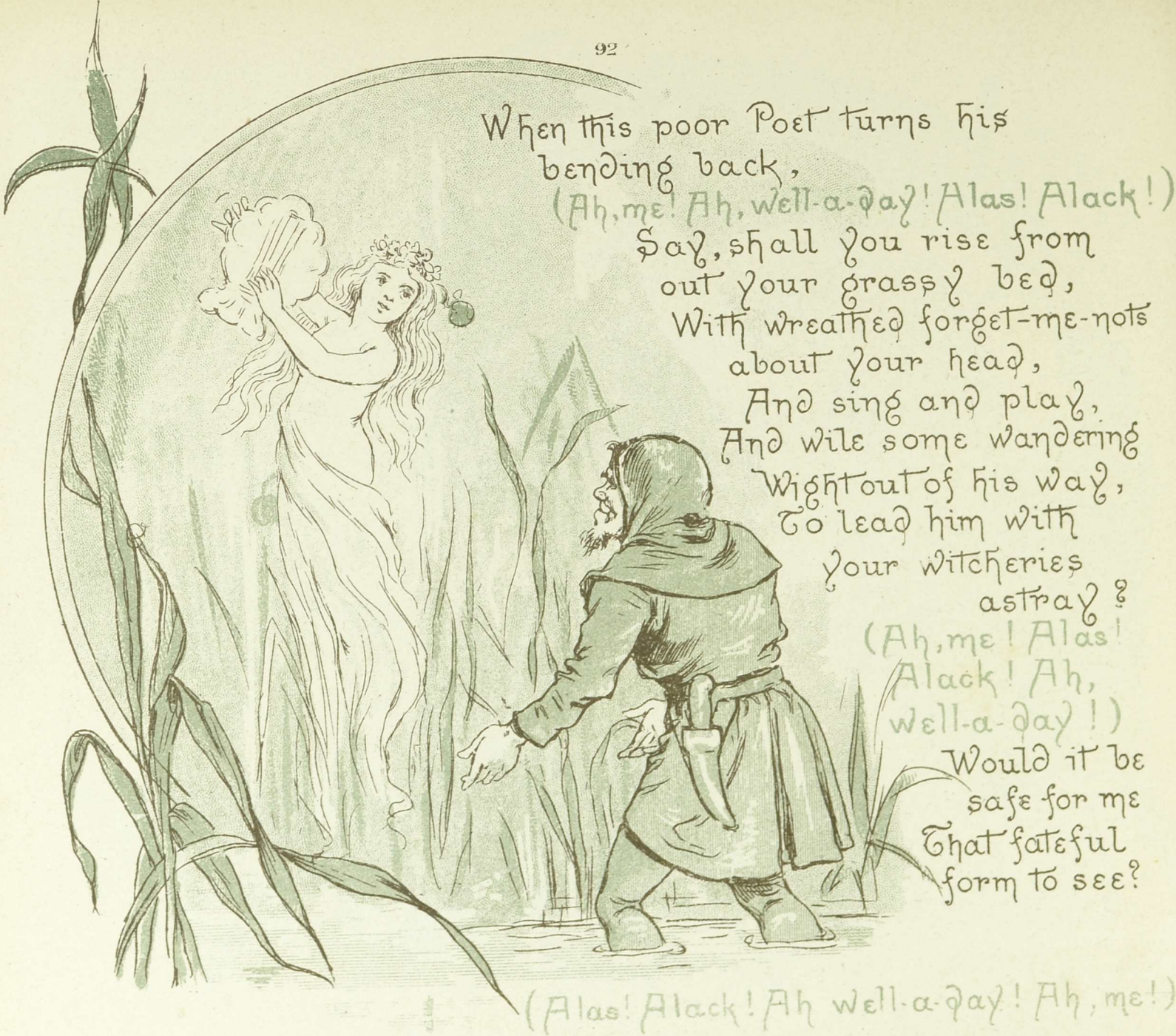


: The Poet & the Brook : —
a Tale of Transformations:

A little Brook,
that babbled under
grass,
Once saw a
Poet pass:
A Poet with long
hair and saddened
eyes,
Who went his weary
way with woeful
sighs.
And on another time,
This Brook did hear
that Poet read his
rueful rhyme.

Now in the poem that he read,
This Poet said:
"Oh! little Brook, that babblest under grass!
(Ah me! Alack! Ah, well-a-day! Alas!)
Say, are you what you seem?
Or is your life, like other lives, a dream?
What time your babbling mocks my mortal moods,
Fair Naiad of the stream!

And are you, in
good sooth,
Could purbling
poesy perceive
the truth,
A Water Sprite,
Who sometimes, for
man's dangerous
delight,
Puts on a human
form and face,
To wear them
with a superhuman
grace?



When this poor Poet turns his
bending back,
(Ah, me! Ah, well-a-day! Alas! Alack!)
Say, shall you rise from
out your grassy bed,
With wreathed forget-me-nots
about your head,
And sing and play,
And wile some wandering
Wight out of his way,
To lead him with
your witcheries
astray?
(Ah, me! Alas!
Alack! Ah,
well-a-day!)
Would it be
safe for me
That fateful
form to see?

(Alas! Alack! Ah well-a-day! Ah, me!)

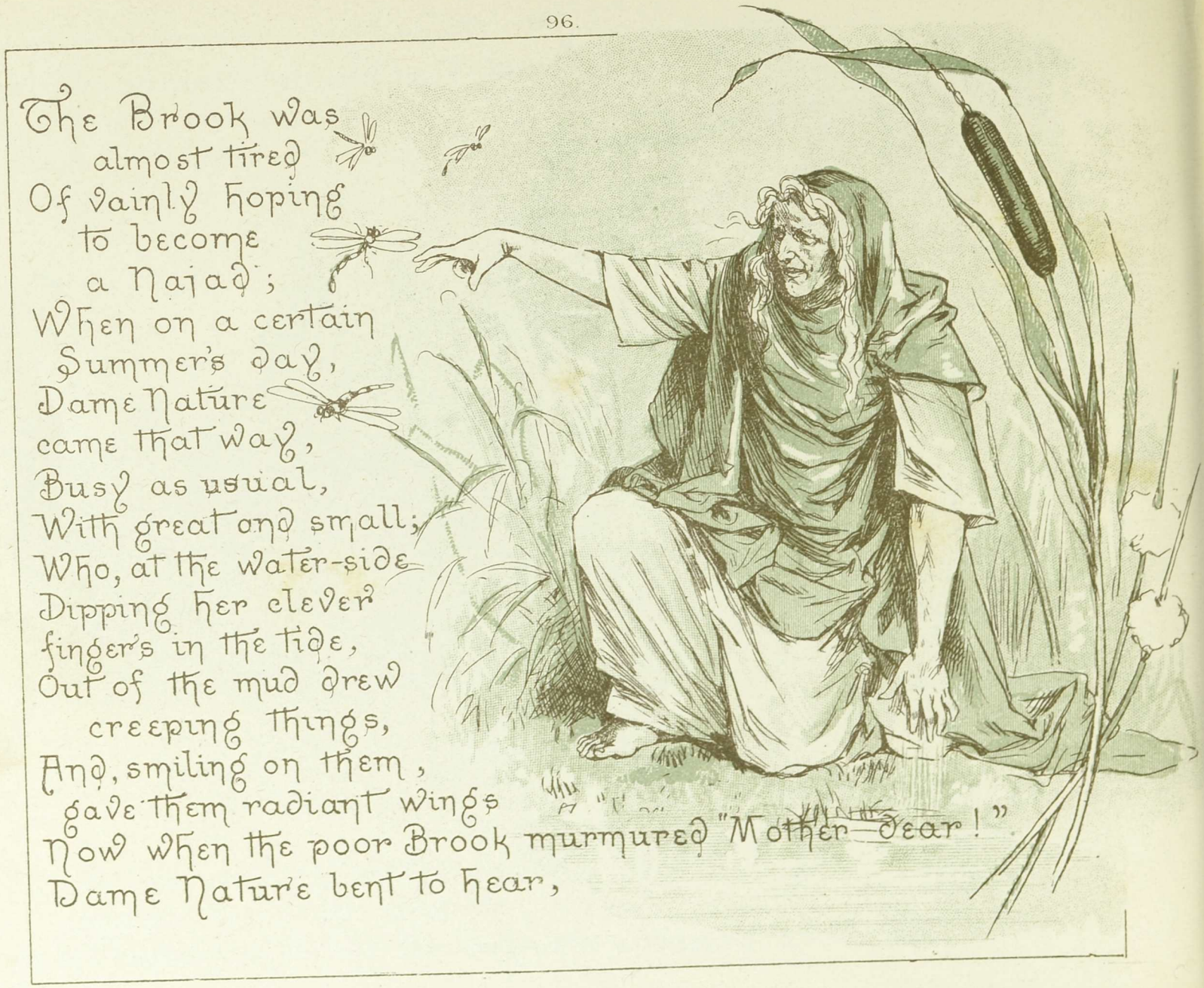
So far the
Poet read his
pleasing strain,
Then it began
to rain.
He closed his book
"Farewell, fair
Nymph!" he cried, as
with a lingering
look,
His homeward
way he took;
And nevermore
that Poet saw
that Brook.

The Brook passed several days in anxious expectation
Of transformation
Into a lovely Nymph
bedecked with flowers;
And longed
impatiently
to prove
those power's

Those dangerous power's-
of witchery and wile,
That should all mortal men mysteriously beguile;

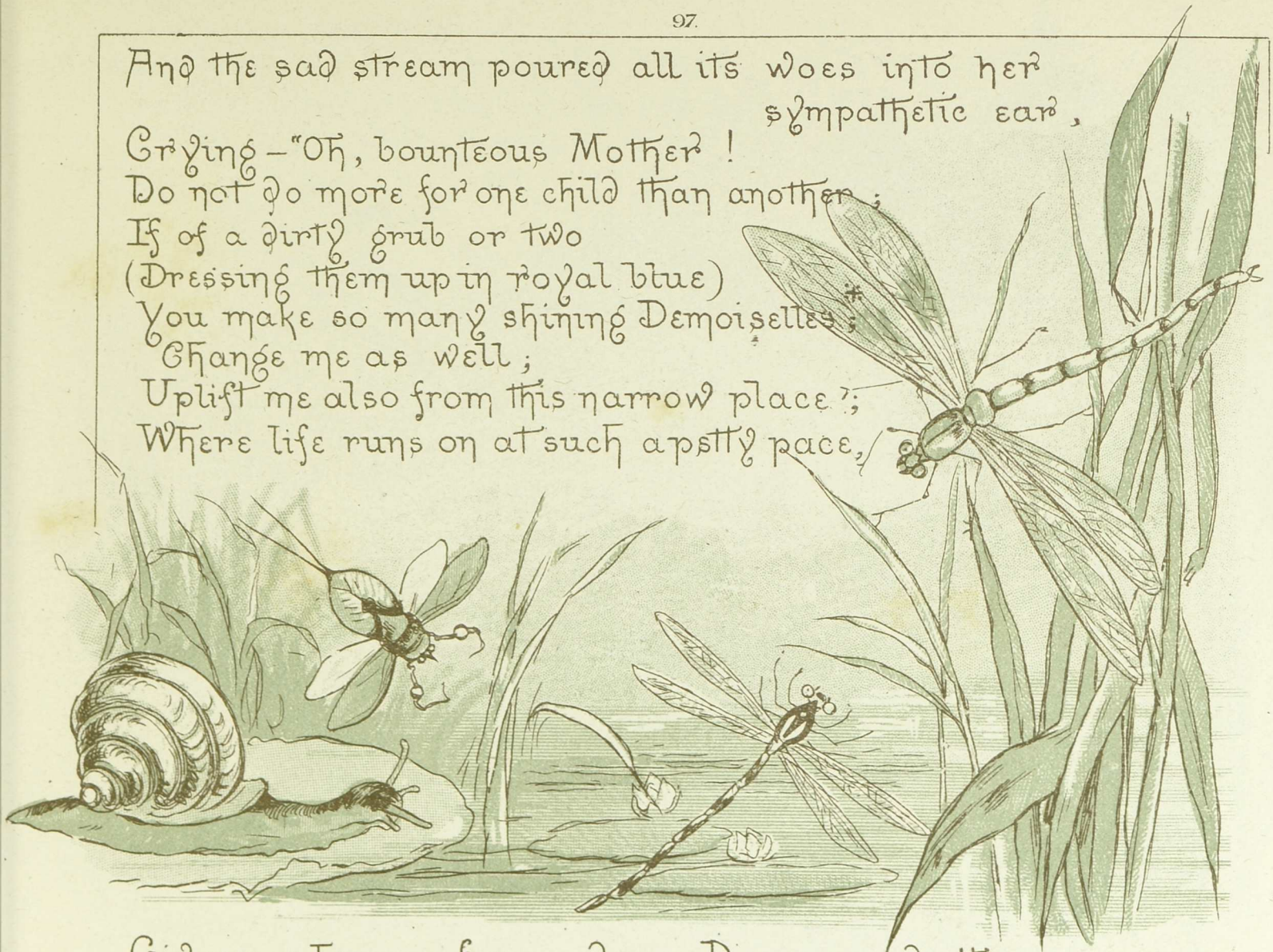
For life as running water
lost its charm
Before the exciting hope
of doing so much harm.

And yet the
hope seemed vain,
Despite the Poet
strain,
Though the days came and went,
and went and came,
The seasons changed the Brook remained the same.



The Brook was
almost tired
Of vainly hoping
to become
a Najad;
When on a certain
Summer's day,
Dame Nature
came that way,
Busy as usual,
With great and small;
Who, at the water-side
Dipping her clever
finger's in the tide,
Out of the mud drew
creeping things,
And, smiling on them,
gave them radiant wings
Now when the poor Brook murmured "Mother—dear!"
Dame Nature bent to hear,

And the sad stream poured all its woes into her
sympathetic ear,
Crying—"Oh, bounteous Mother!
Do not do more for one child than another;
If of a dirty grub or two
(Dressing them up in royal blue)
You make so many shining Demoiselles*;
Change me as well;
Uplift me also from this narrow place;
Where life runs on at such apsty pace,

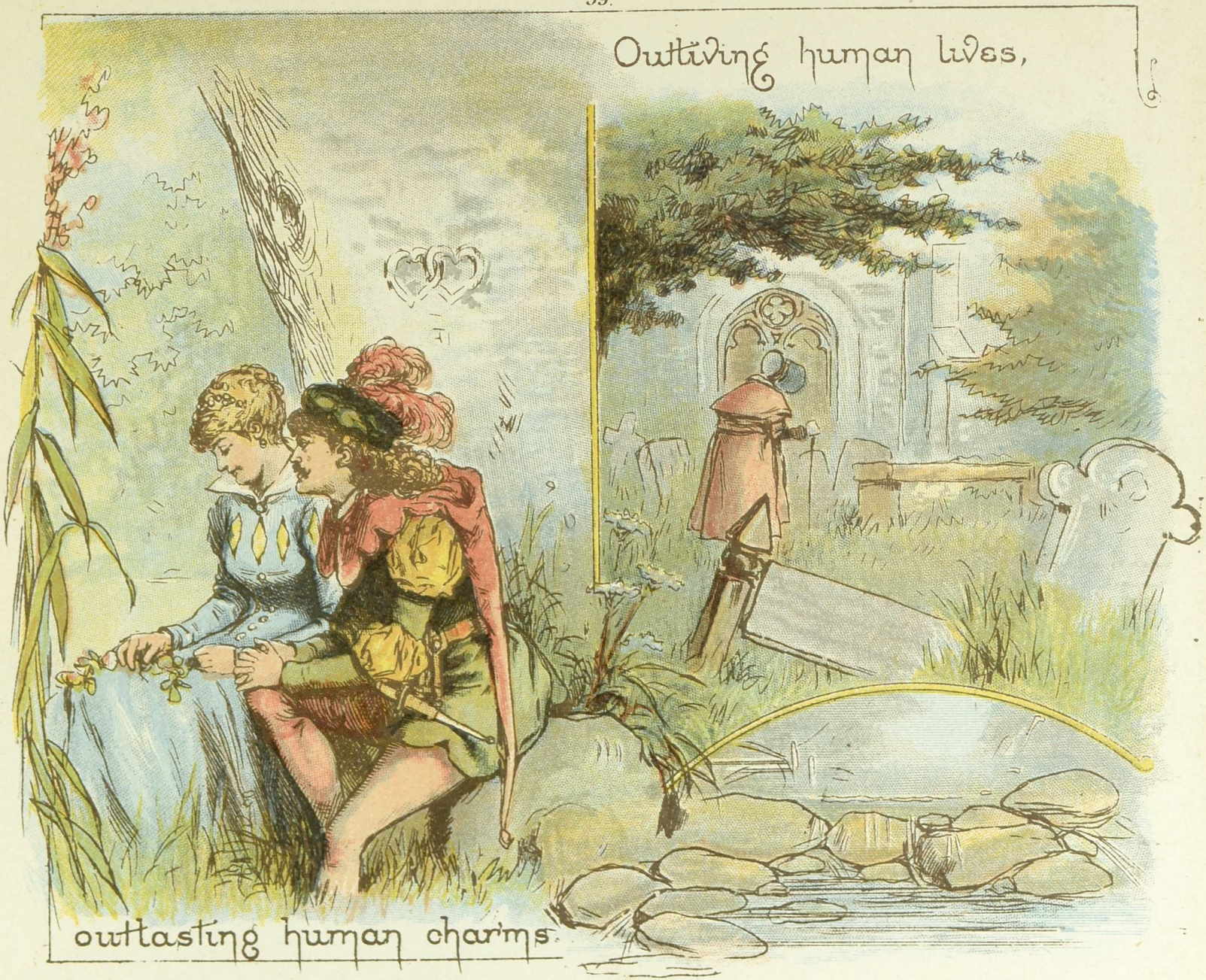


Give me a human form, dear Dame, and then
see how I'll flit, and flash, and fascinate the race of men!"

* The "Demoiselle" Dragon-Fly, a well known slender variety (Libellula), with body of brilliant blue.

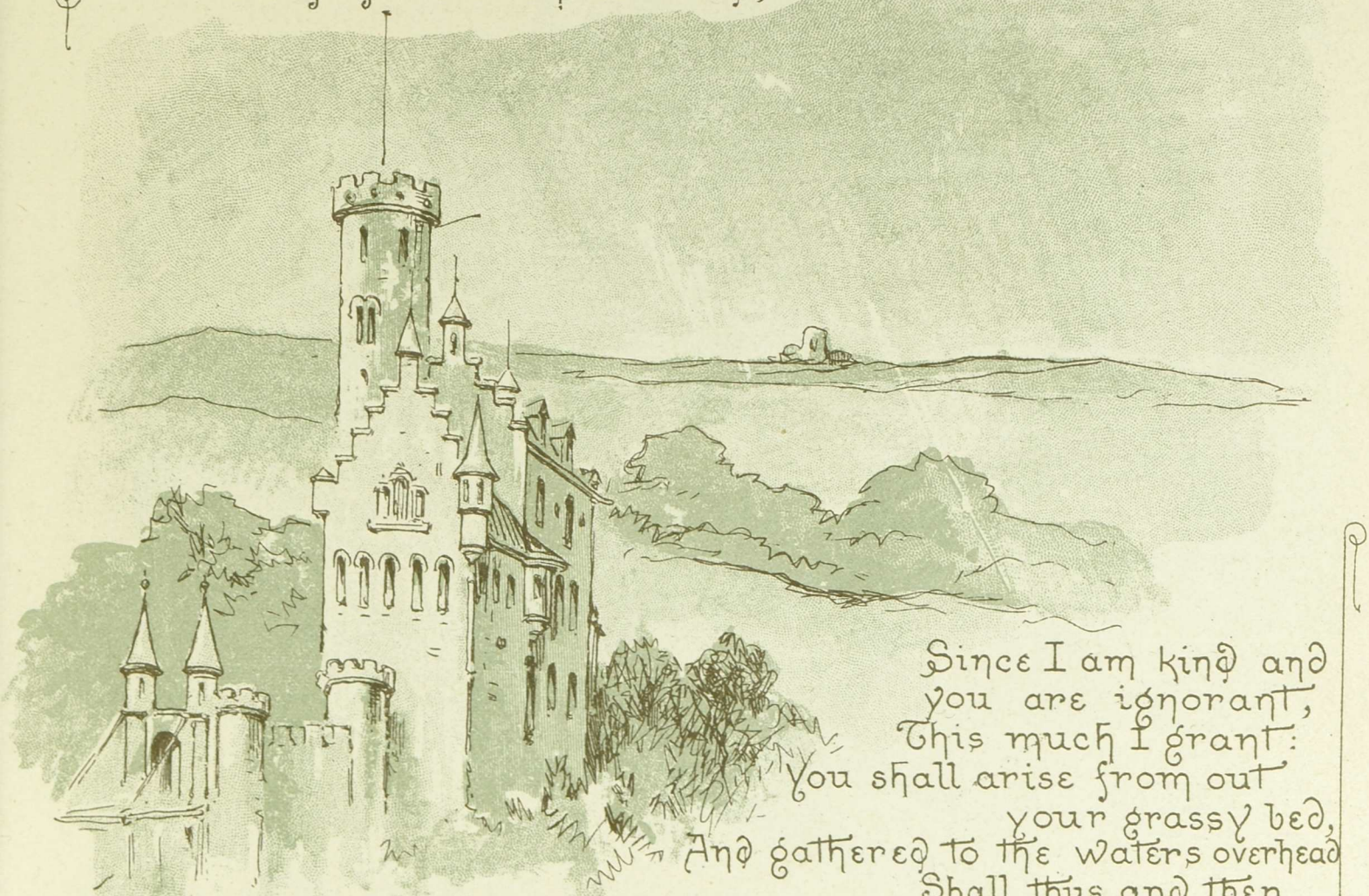
Then Mother Nature, who is wondrous wise,
Did that deluded little Brook advise
To be contented with its own
fair face,

And with a good
and cheerful grace,
Run, as of yore, on its
appointed race,
Safe both from giving
and receiving Harms;

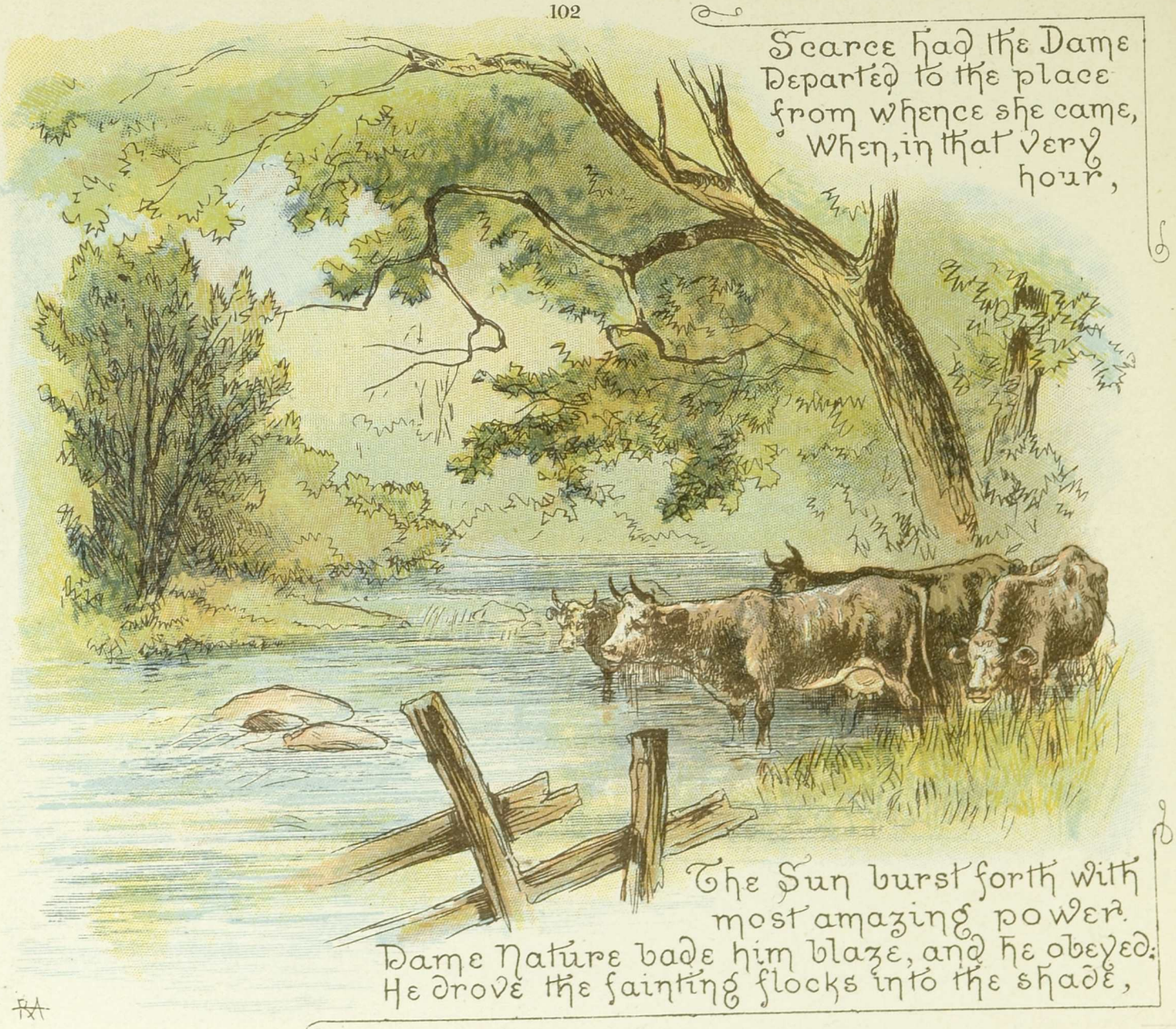

Outliving human lives,
outlasting human charms.

But good advice, however kind,
Is thrown away upon a made-up mind;
And this was all that babbling Brook would say:
"Give me a human face and form, if only for a day!"

Then, quoth Dame Nature: "Oh, my foolish child!
Ere I fulfil a wish so wild,



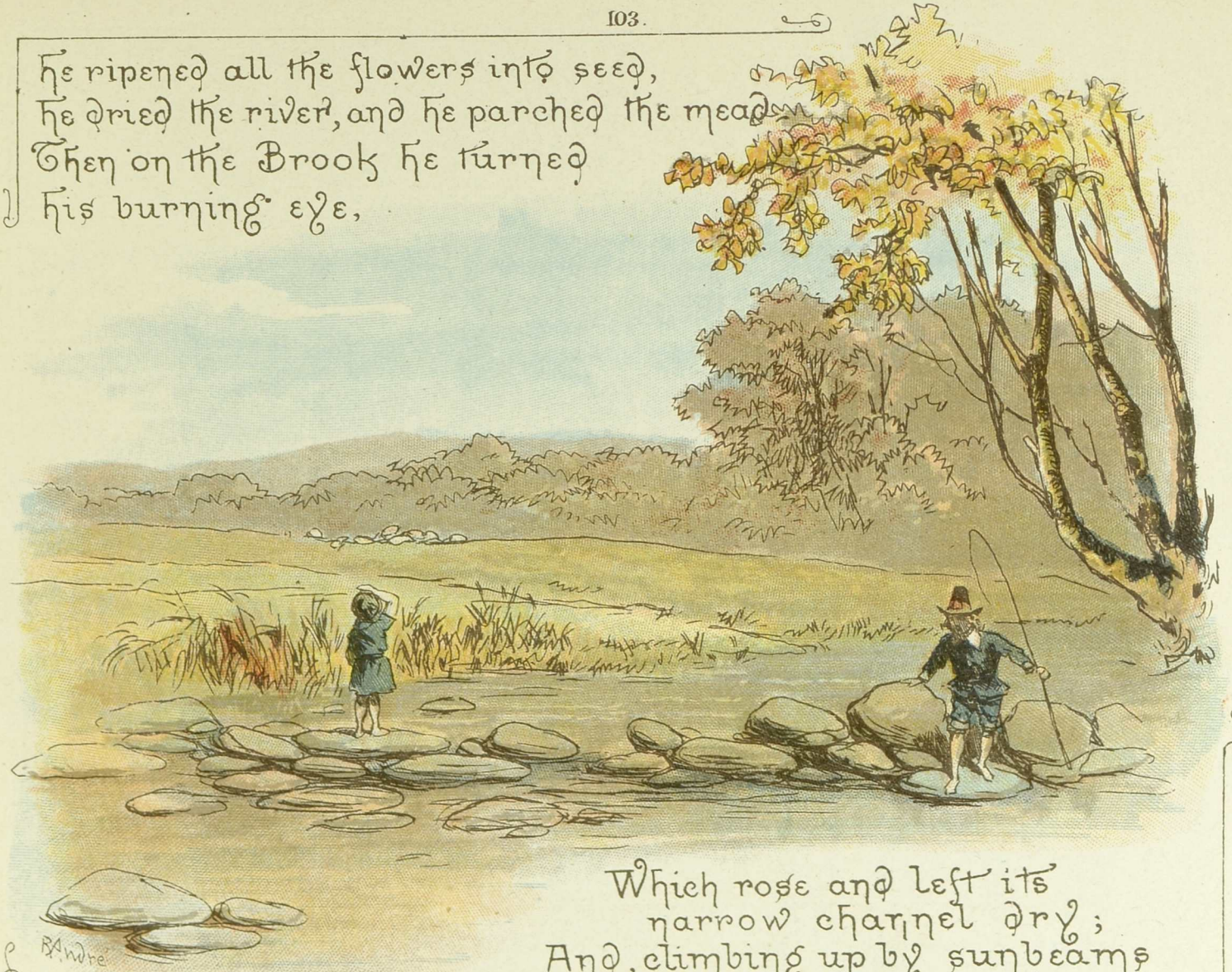
Since I am kind and
you are ignorant,
This much I grant:
You shall arise from out
your grassy bed,
And gathered to the waters overhead
Shall thus and then,
Look down and see the world, and all the ways of men!"



Scarce had the Dame
Departed to the place
from whence she came,
When, in that very
hour,

The Sun burst forth with
most amazing power.
Dame Nature bade him blaze, and he obeyed:
He drove the fainting flocks into the shade,

He ripened all the flowers into seed,
He dried the river, and he parched the mead.
Then on the Brook he turned
His burning eye,



Which rose and left its
narrow channel dry;
And, climbing up by sunbeams
to the sky,
Became a snow white cloud, which softly floated by.

It was a glorious Autumn day,
And all the world with red
and gold was gay;
When, as this cloud athwart the
heavens did pass,
Lying below, it saw a Poet on
the grass,
The very Poet who had such
a stir made,
To prove the Brook was a
freshwater mermaid.
And now,
—Holding his book above his
corrugated brow —
he read aloud,
And thus apostrophised the
passing cloud:
"Oh, snowy-breasted Fair!
Mysterious messenger of
upper air;

Can you be of those female forms so dread,*
Who bear the souls of the heroic dead,
To where undying laurels crown the warrior's head?
Or, as you smile and hover,
Are you not rather some fond goddess of the skies who
waits a mortal lover?
And who, ah who is he?
And what, oh what! — your message to poor me?" —
— So far the Poet. Then he stopped:
His book had dropped.

* The Walkyrie in Teutonic Mythology, whose office it is to bear the souls of fallen heroes from the field of battle.

But ere the delighted cloud could make reply,
Dame Nature hurried by,
And it put forth a wild
beseeching cry:

"Give me a human face and form!"
Dame Nature frowned, and all the heavens grew black with storm.

But very soon,
Upon a frosty winter's noon,
The little cloud returned below,
Falling in flakes of snow;
Falling most softly on the floor most hard,
Of an old manor-house court yard.

And as it hastened to
the earth again,
The children sang
behind the window
pane:
"Old woman, up
yonder, plucking
your geese,
Quickly pluck them,
and quickly
cease;
Throw down the
feathers, and when
you have done,
We shall have fun —
we shall have
fun."
The snow had fallen,
when with song
and shout,

The girls and boys
came out;
Six sturdy little
men and maids,
Carrying heather
brooms and
wooden spades,
Who swept and
shovelled up the
fallen snow,
Which whimpered
—"Oh! oh! oh!
Oh! Mother, most
severe!
Pity me lying here,
I'm shaken all to
pieces with
that storm,
Raise me and clothe
me in a human
form."

They swept up much, they shovelled up more,
There never was such a Snow-man before!

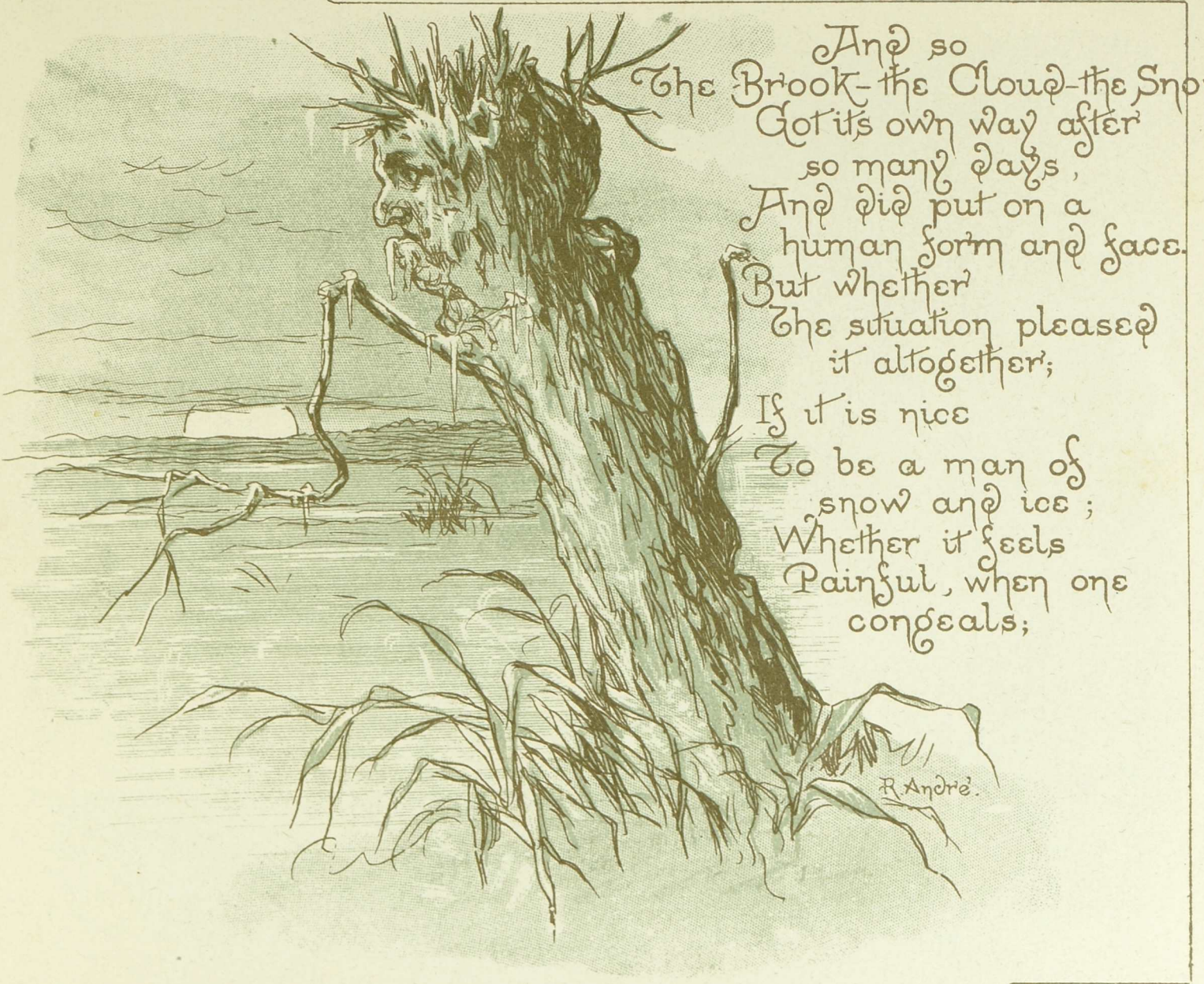
They built him bravely with might and main,
There never will be such a Snow-man again!

His legs were big, his body was bigger,
They made him a most imposing figure;

His eyes were large and as black as coal
For a cinder was placed in each round hole.

And the sight of his teeth would have made yours ache,
Being simply the teeth of an ancient rake.
They smoothed his forehead, they patted his back,

There wasn't a single unsight-ly crack:
And when they had given the final pat,
They crowned his head with the Scare-crow's hat.



And so
The Brook—the Cloud—the Snow
Got its own way after
so many days,
And did put on a
human form and face.
But whether
The situation pleased
it altogether;
If it is nice
To be a man of
snow and ice;
Whether it feels
Painful, when one
congeals;

How this man
felt
When he began
to melt:
Whether he wore
his human
form and face
With any
extra-ordinary
grace;
If many mortals
fell
As victims to
the spell:

Or if,
As he stood, stark
and stiff,
With a bare
broomstick in
his arms,
And not a trace
of transcendental
charms,
That man of snow
Grew wise
enough to know
That the
Brook's hopes
were but a
Poet's dream,

And well content to be again a stream,
On the first sunny day,
Flowed quietly away;
Or what the end was — You
must ask the Poet,
I don't know it.

Convalescence:

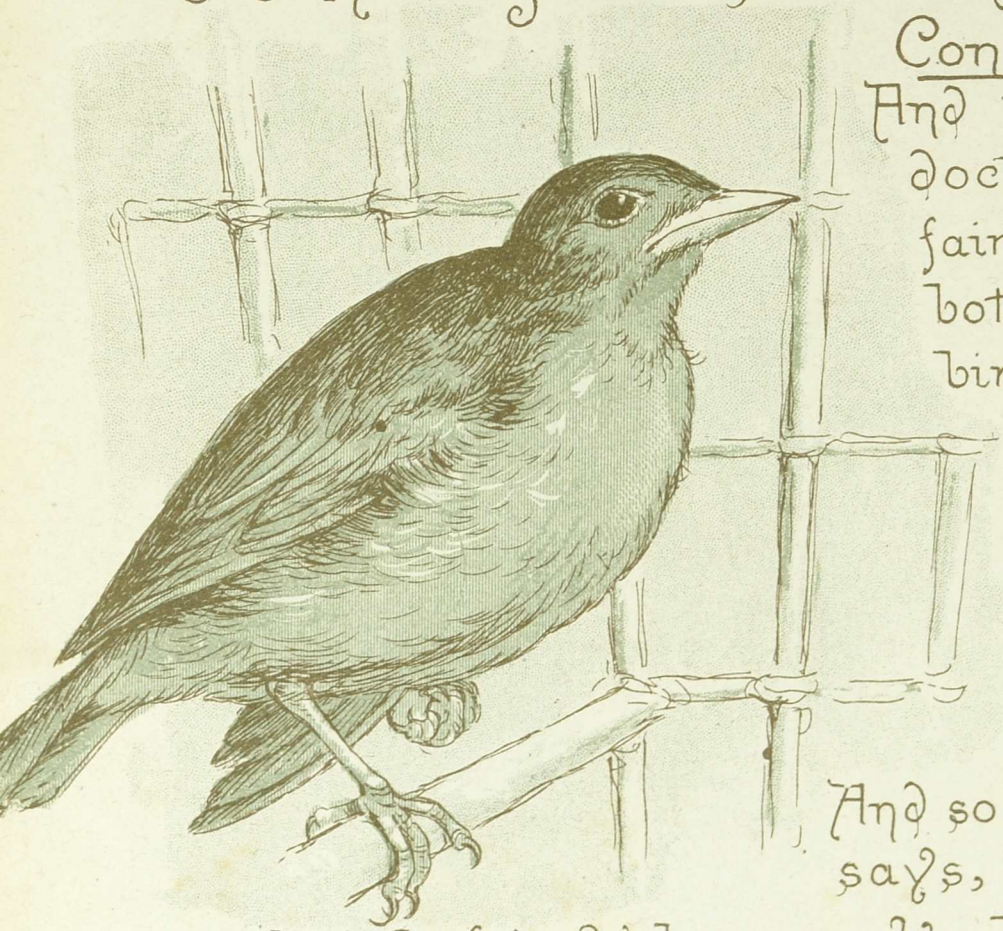
Hold my hand, little sister, and
nurse my head whilst I try
to remember the word,
What was it? that the doctor
says is now fairly established
both in me and my bird

C-O-N-con, with a con,
S-T-A-N-stan, with a stan —
no! Thats Constantinople, that is
The capital of the country
where rhubarb-and-magnesia
comes from,

and I wish they would keep it in that country,

and not send it to this.

C-O-N-con-how my head swims! now I've got it
C·O·N·V·A·L·E·S·C·E·N·C·E.



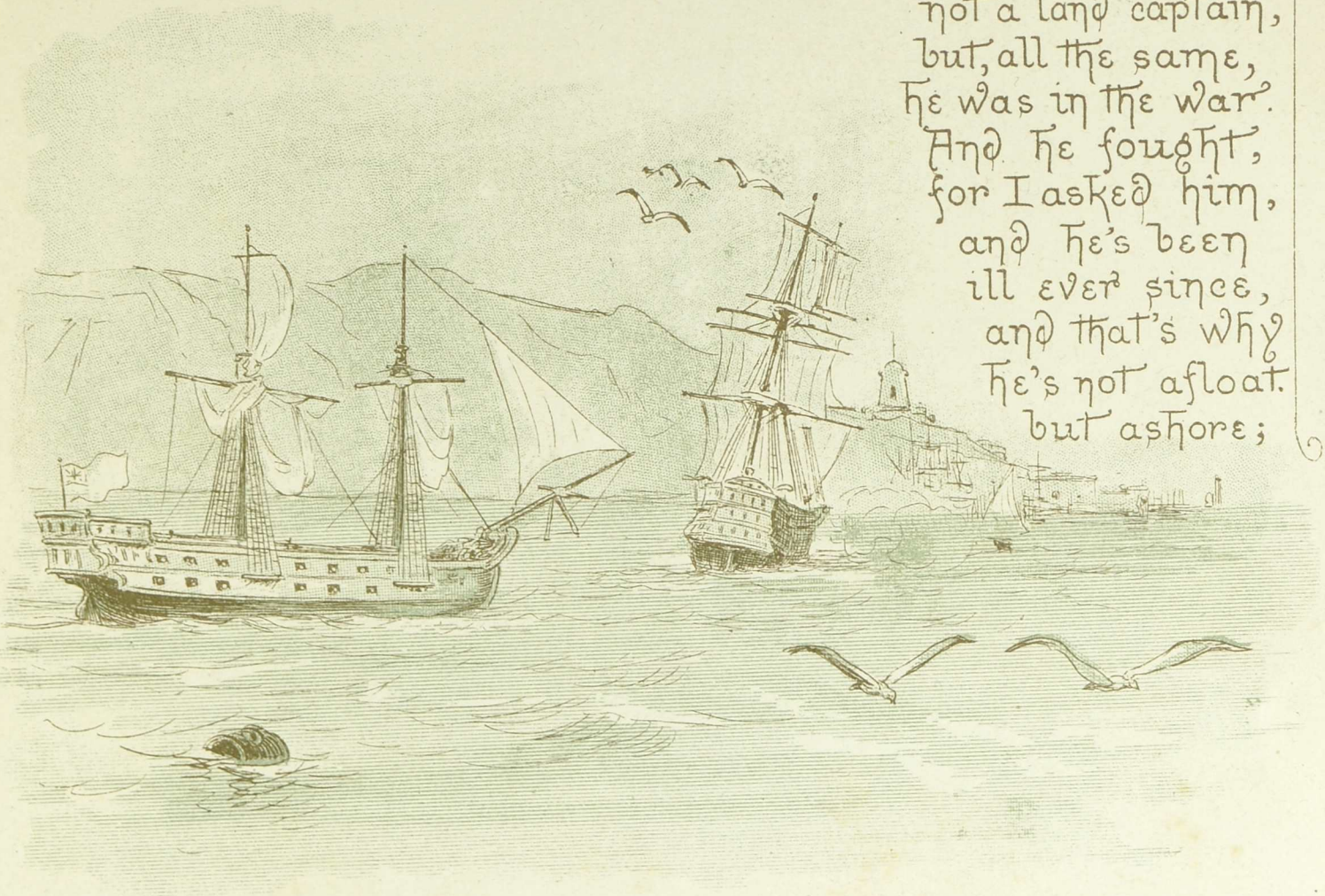
Convalescence!
And thats what the doctor says is now fairly established both in my blackbird and me.

He says it means that you are better, and that you'll be well by and bye.

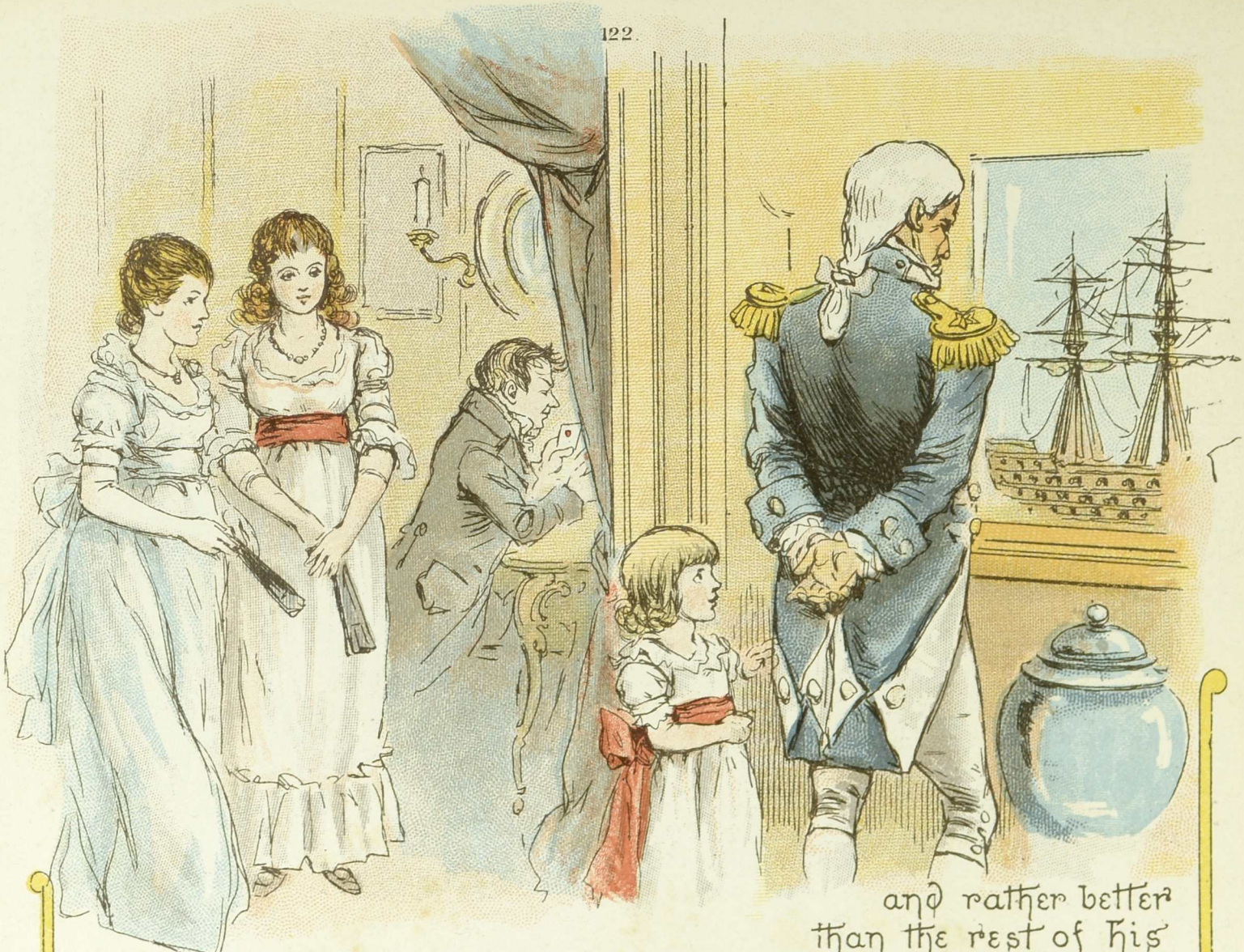
And so the Sea Captain says, and he says he ought to be friends, because we're both convalescents, at least we're all three convalescents the blackbird.

and the captain and I

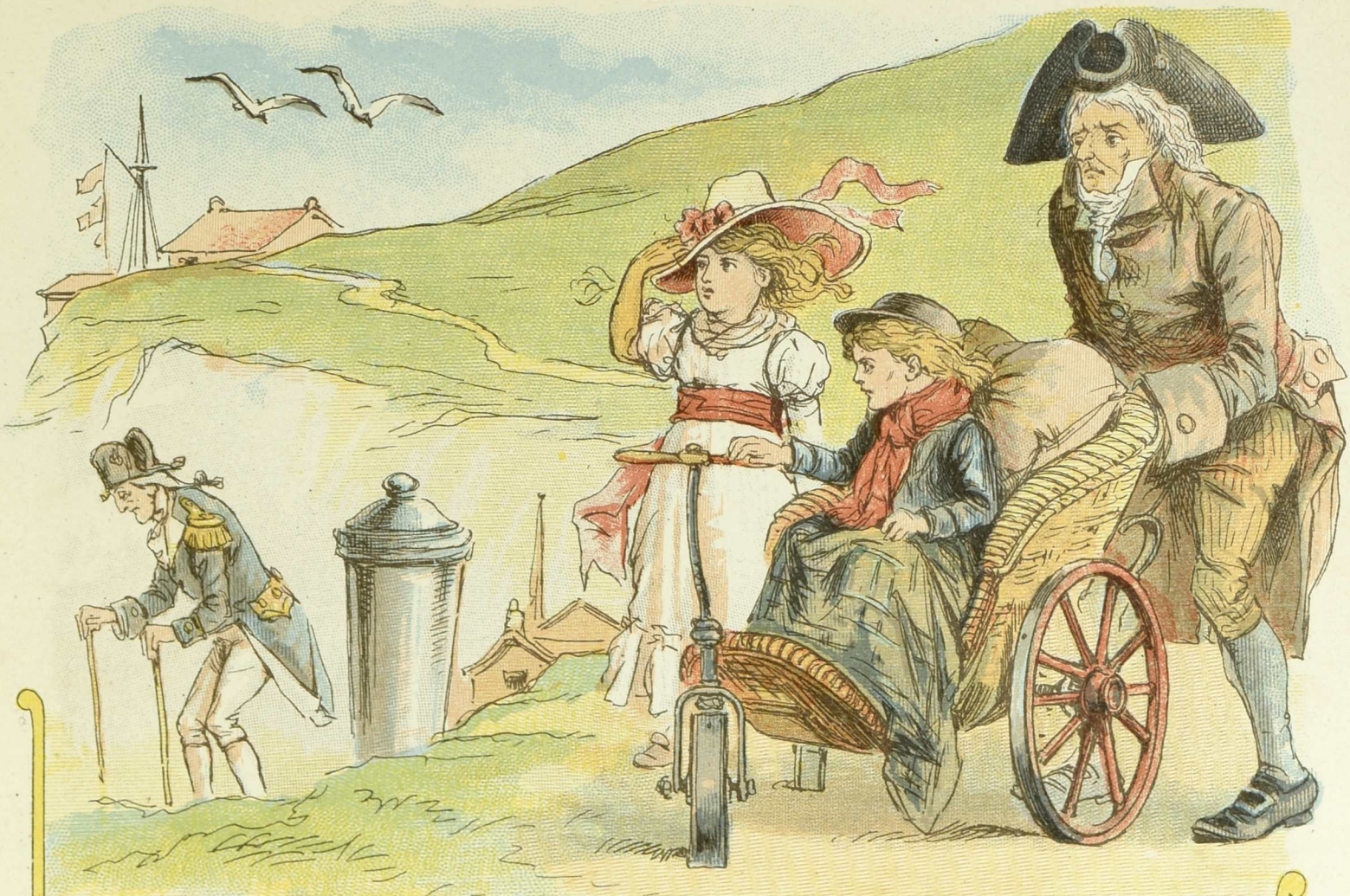
He's a sea captain,
not a land captain,
but, all the same,
he was in the war.
And he fought,
for I asked him,
and he's been
ill ever since,
and that's why
he's not afloat
but ashore;



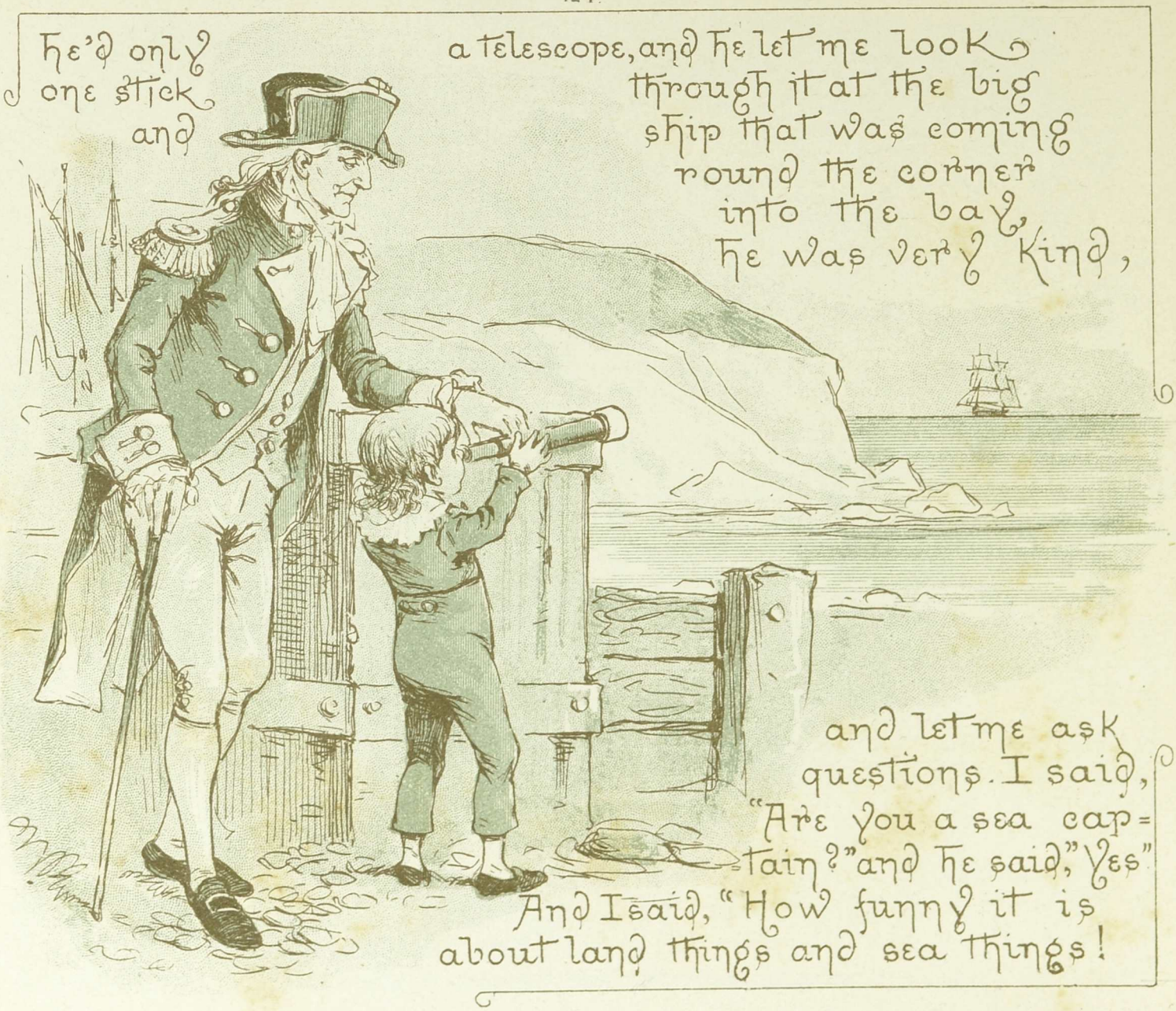
And why somebody else has got his ship, and she behaved so beautifully in the battle, and he loves her quite as much as his wife



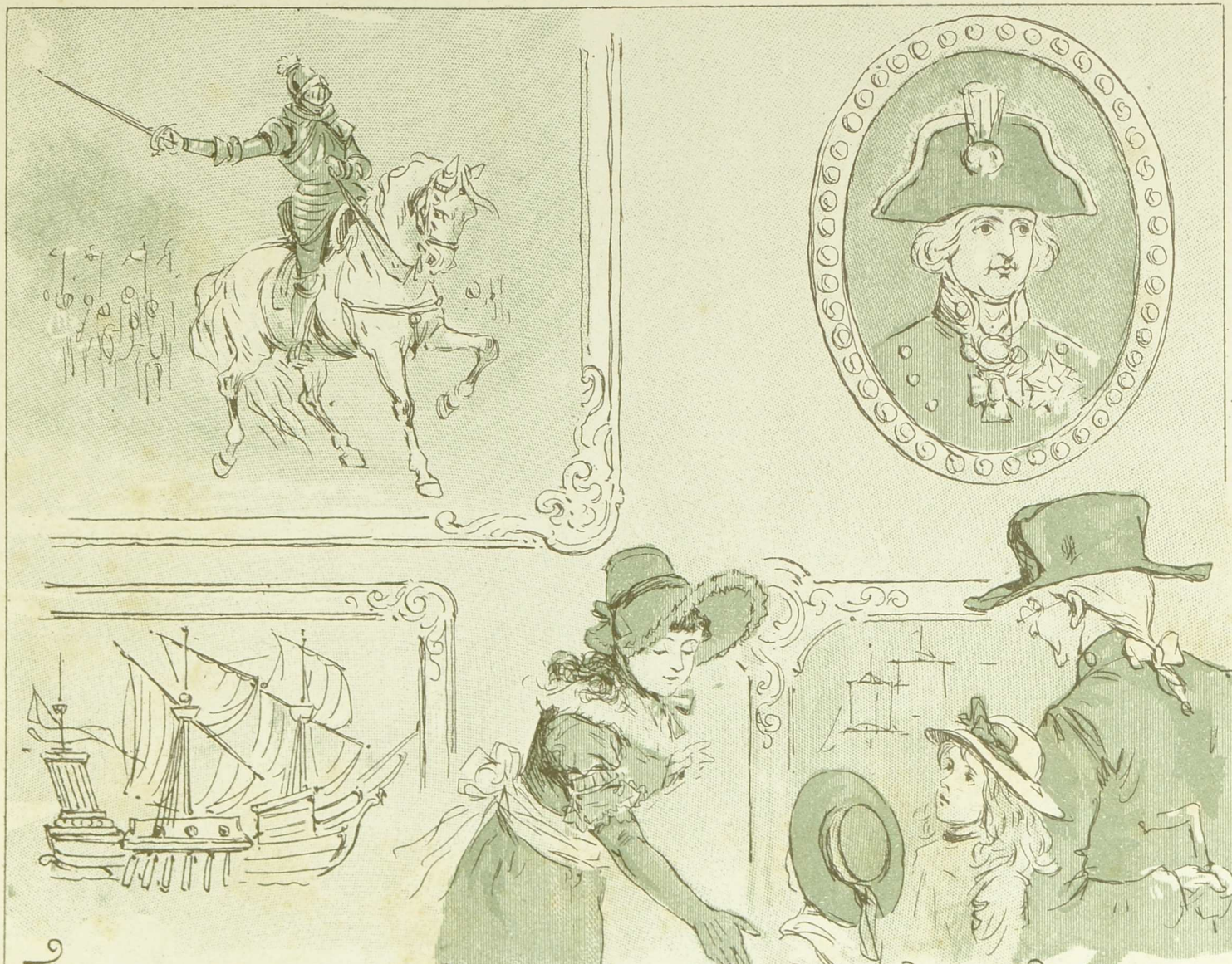
and rather better than the rest of his relations, for I asked him; and now he's afraid she will never belong to him any more.



I like him
I've seen him three
times out walking with two sticks, when I was driving in the
bath chair, but I never talked to him till today.



He'd only one stick and a telescope, and he let me look through it at the big ship that was coming round the corner into the bay. He was very kind, and let me ask questions. I said, "Are you a sea captain?" and he said, "Yes." And I said, "How funny it is about land things and sea things!



There are captains and sea captains, and weeds and sea weeds, and serpents and sea serpents. ——

Did you ever meet one,

and is it really like.
the dragons on our very old best blue tea things?

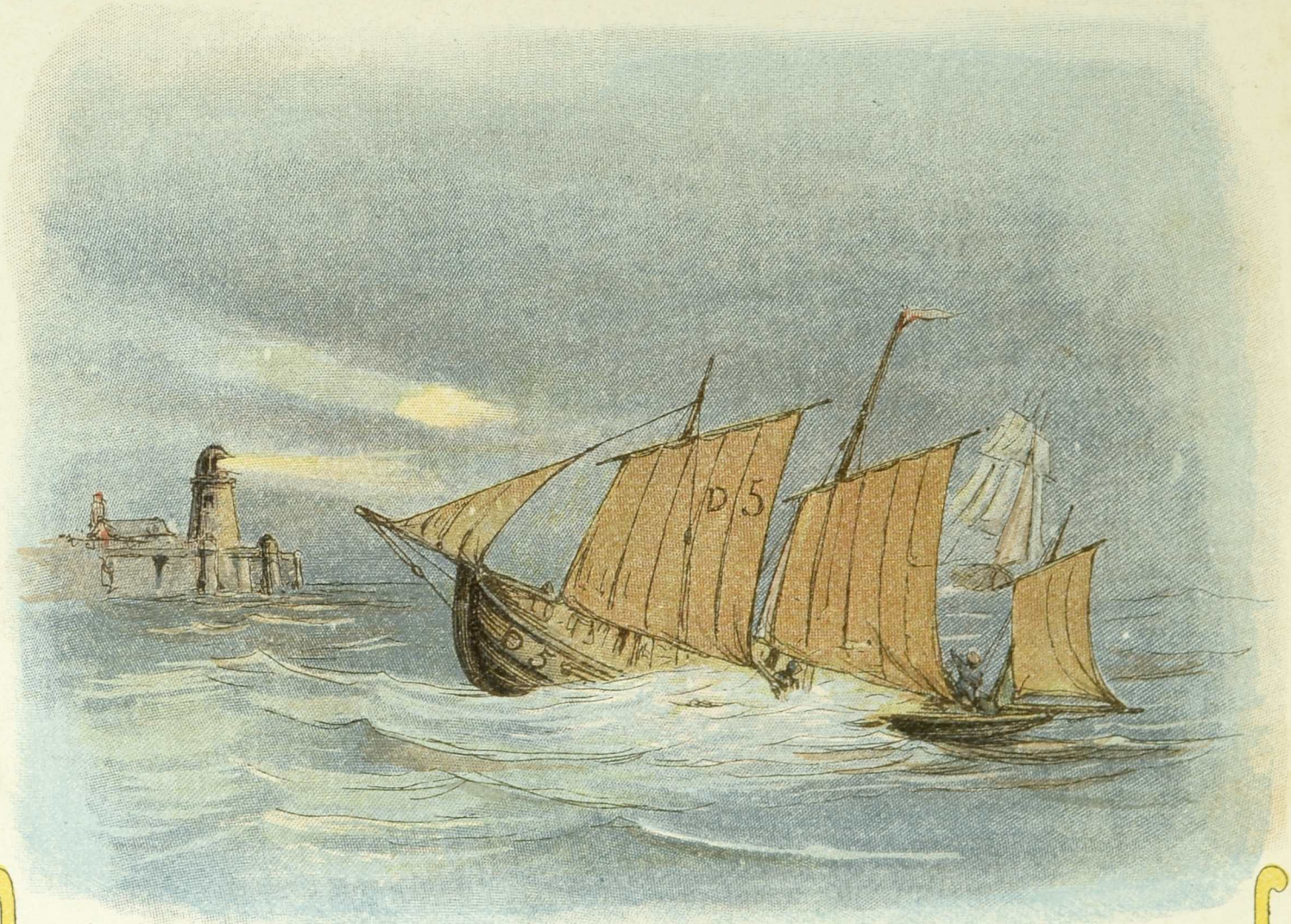
But he never did. So I asked him, "have you got convales--cence? Does your doctor say it is fairly established? Do your eyes ache if you try to read, and your neck if you draw, and your back if you sit up, and your head if you talk.

"Don't you get tired of doing nothing, and worse tired still if you do any thing; and does everything wobble about when you walk?

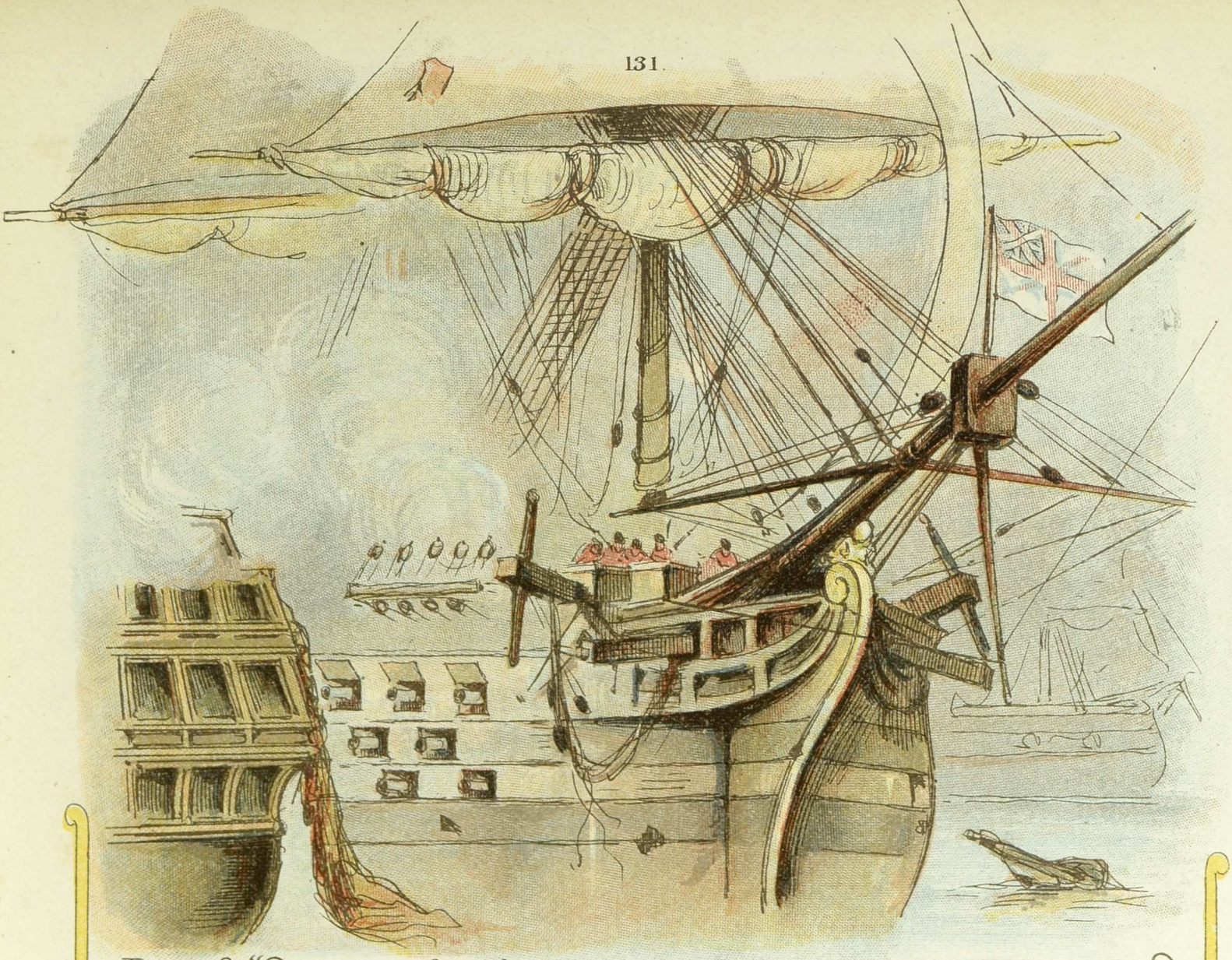
"Wouldn't you rather go back to bed? I think I would. Don't you wish you were well? Wouldn't you rather be ill than only better? I do hate convalescence, don't you?"

Then I stopped asking, and he shut up his telescope, and sat down on the shingle, and said, "When you come to my age, little chap, you won't think 'What is it I'd rather have'? but 'what is it I've got to do?'

"What have I got to do or to bear; and how can I do it or bear it best?



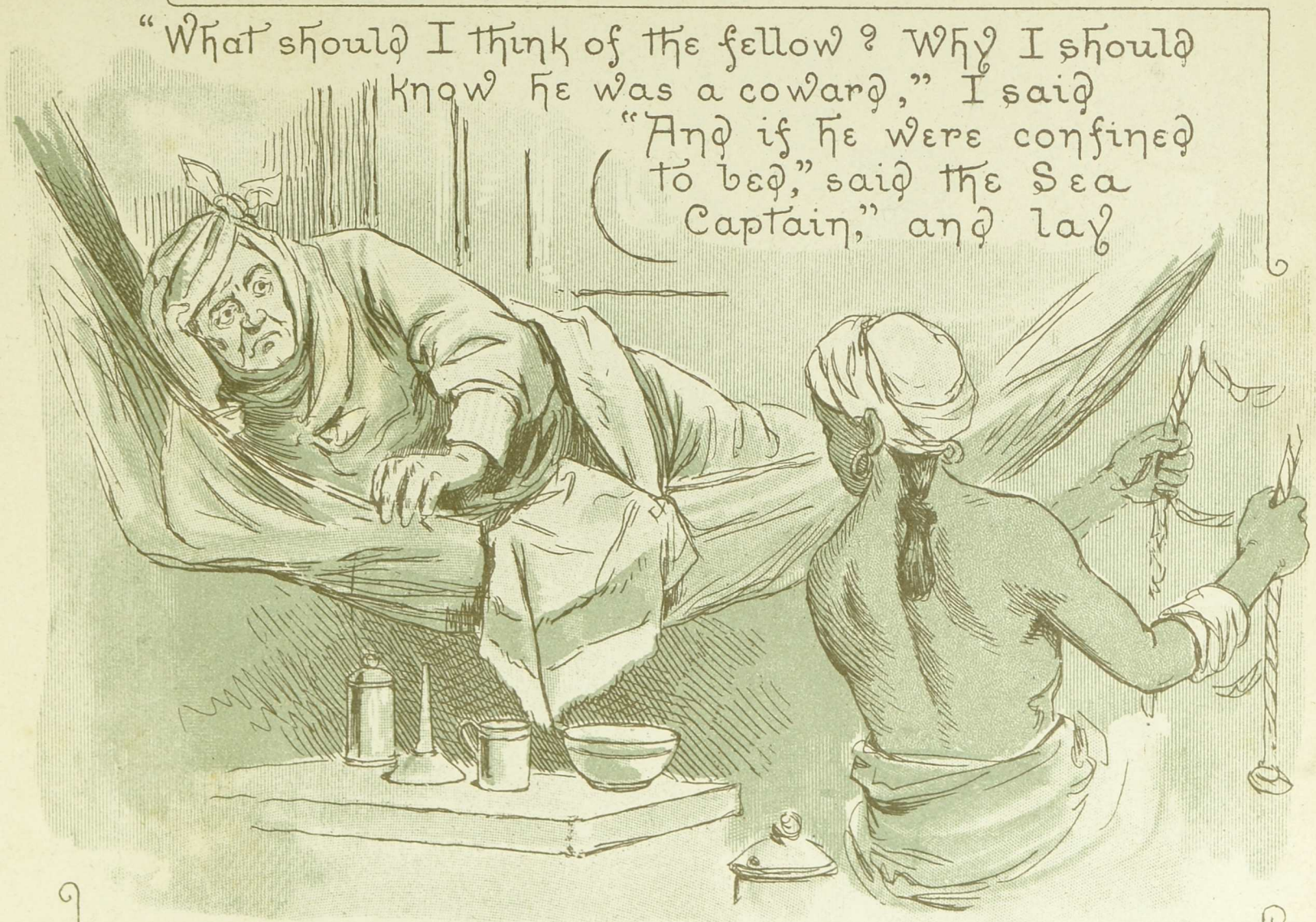
"That's the only safe point to make for, my lad. Make for it, and leave the rest!"



I said, "But wouldn't you rather be in battles than in bed, with your head aching as if it would split?"

And he said, "Of course I would; so would most men But, my little conva= =lescent, that's not it.

What would you think of a man who was ordered into battle, and went grumbling and wishing he were in bed?"



grumbling and wishing he were in battle, I should give him no better a name.

For the courage that dares,

and the courage that bears,
are really one and the same".

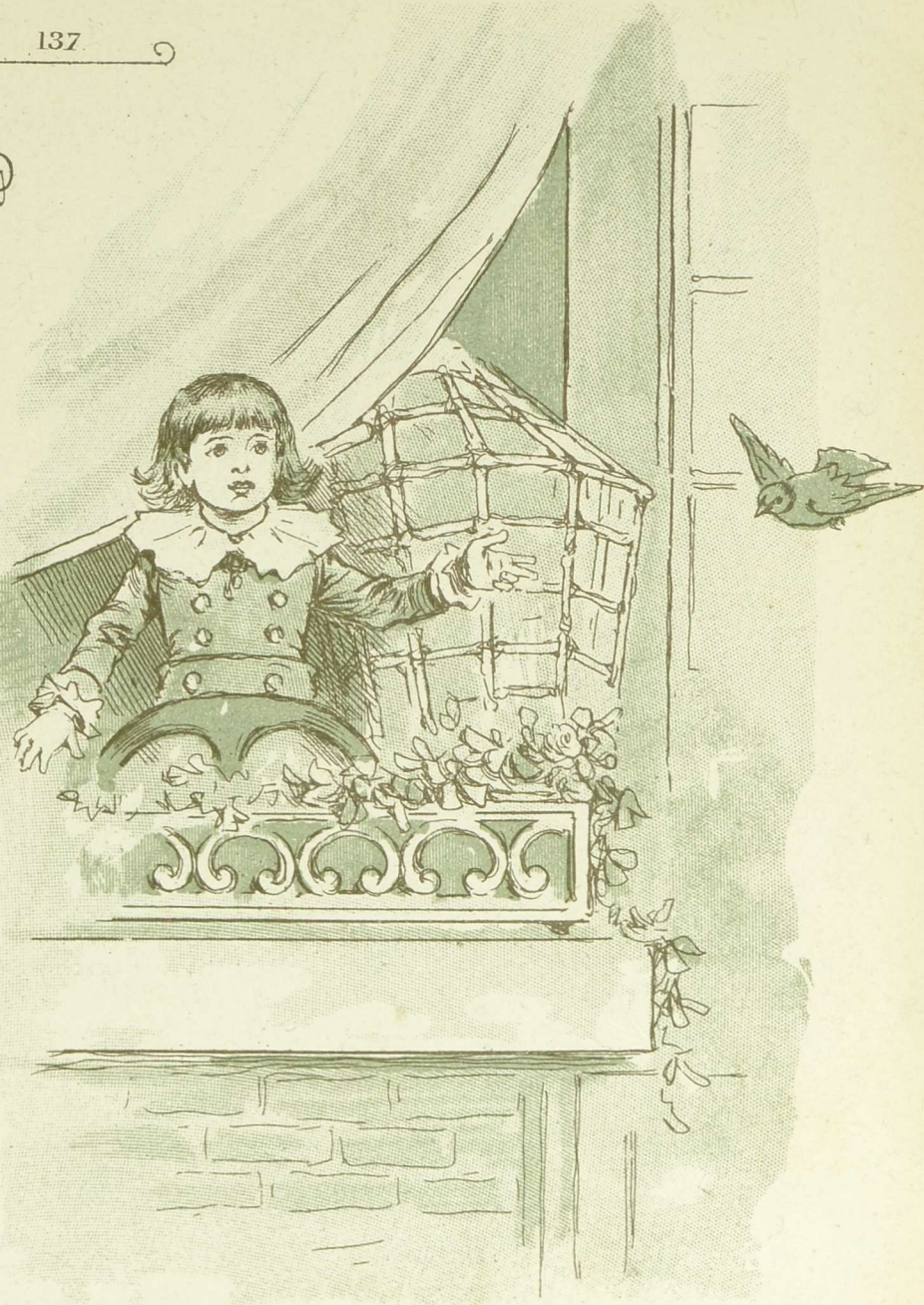
Hold my hand, little sister, and nurse my head, for I'm thinking, and I very much fear.
You've had no good of being well since I was ill; I've led you such a life; but indeed I am obliged to you, Dear!
Is it true that nurse has got something the matter with her legs, and that Mary has gone home because she's worn out with nursing, And won't be fit to work for months; (will she be convalescent, because it was such hard work waiting on me?) and did Cook say, "so much

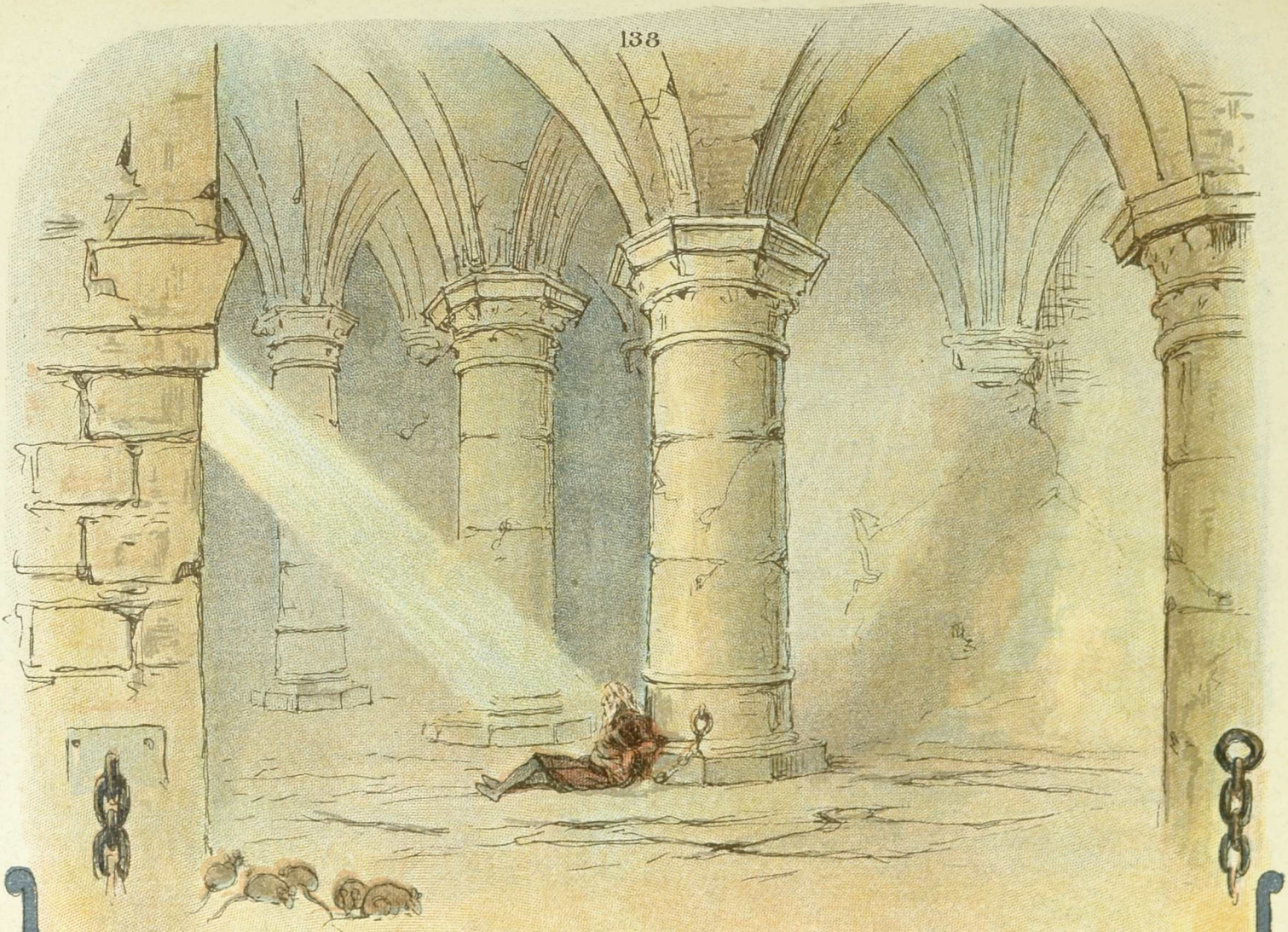
grumbling and complaining is
nigh as big a sin as swearing and cursing?"

I wish I hadn't been so cross with poor Mary, and I wish I hadn't given so much trouble about my medicine and my food I didn'I think about her. I only thought what a bother it was. I wish I hadn't thought so much about being miserable, that I never thought of trying to be good.

I believe the Sea Captain is right, and I shall tell him so tomorrow when he comes here to tea.

He's going to look at my black bird's leg, and if it is really set, he wants me to let it go free.





He says Captivity is worse than Convalescence, and so I should think it must be.

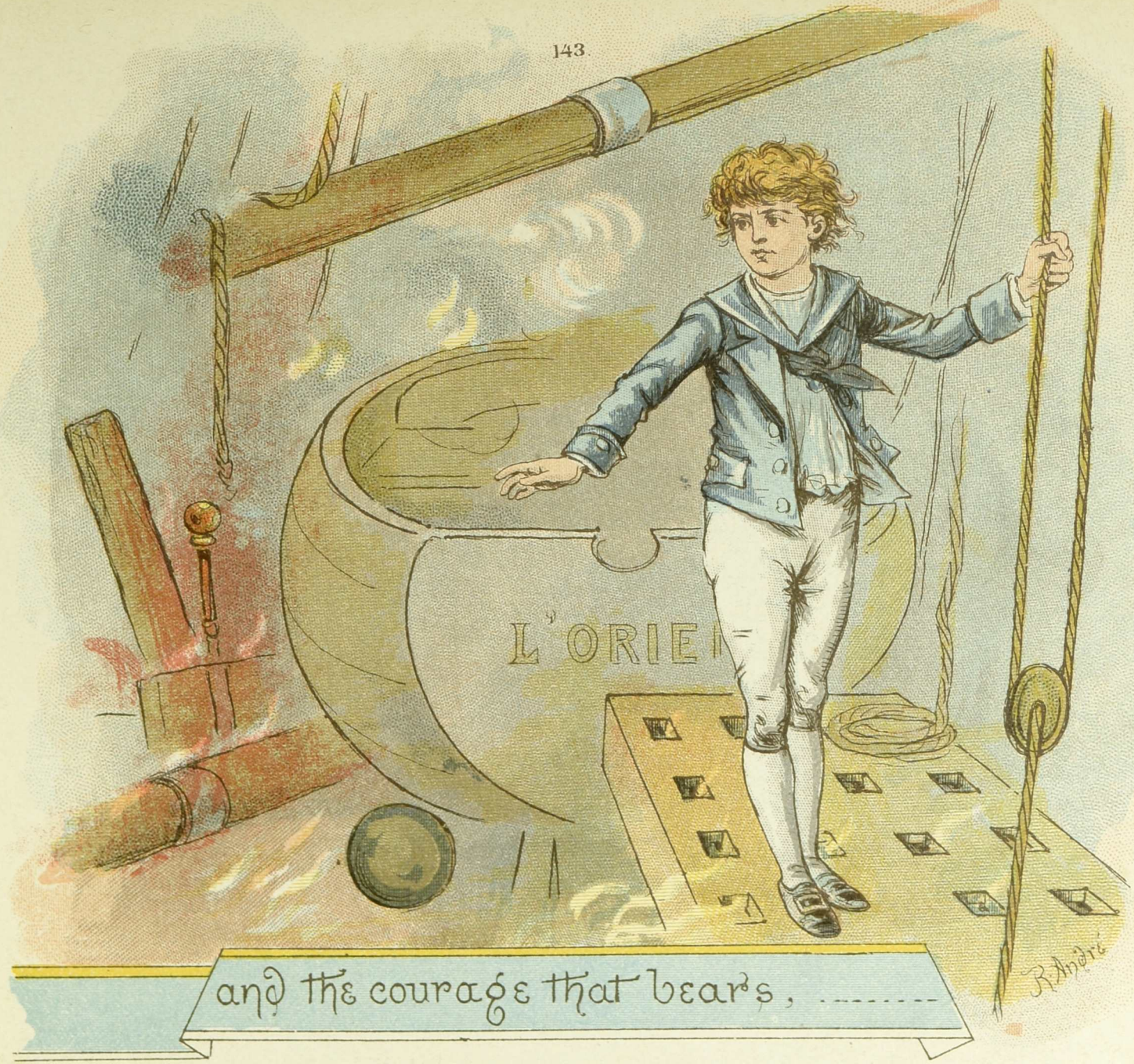
Are you tired, little sister? You feel shaky. Don't beg my pardon, I beg yours. I've not let you out of my sight for weeks. Get your things on and have a gallop on Jack.

Ride round this way and let me see you I won't say a word about wishing I was going too; and if my head gets bad whilst you're away, I will bear it my very best till you come back Tell me one thing before you start. If I learn to be patient, shall I learn to be brave, do you think? The Sea Captain says so.

He says, "Self Command is the making of a man," and he's a finely-made man himself, so he ought to know.

Perhaps, if I try hard
at Convalescence now, I
may become a brave Sea
Captain hereafter, and take
my beautiful ship into battle, and
bring her out again with flying colours and fame,

If the courage that dares,.....

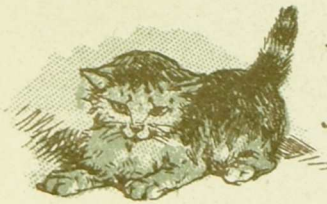


and the courage that bears, ...

are really one and the same:

Dolly's Lullaby:

A Nursery Rhyme:



Hush-a-by, Baby! Your baby, Mamma,
No one but Pussy may go where you are;
Soft-footed Pussy alone may pass by,
For, if he wakens, your baby will cry.

Hush-a-by, Dolly! My baby are you,
Yellow-haired Dolly with eyes of bright blue;
Though I say "Hush!" because Mother does so,
You wouldn't cry like her baby, I know!

Hush-a-by, Baby! Mamma
walks about,
Sings to you softly, or
rocks you without;
If you slept sounder, then
I might walk too,
Sing to my dolly, and
rock her like you.

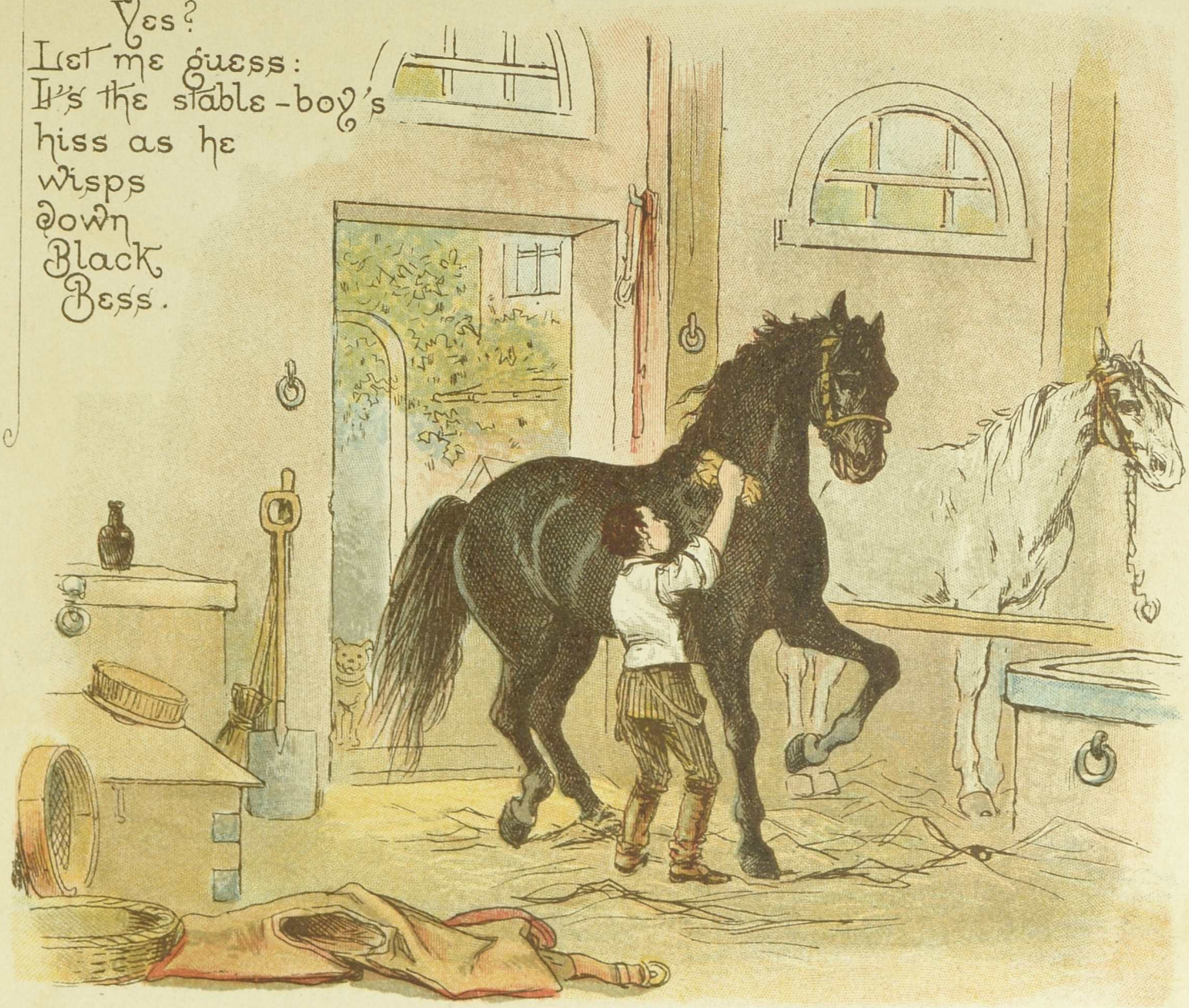
Hush-a-by Dolly! sleep
sweetly, my pet!
Dear Mamma made you
this fine berceaunette,
Muslin and rose-colour,
ribbon and lace -
When had a baby a
cosier place?

Hush-a-by, Baby! the
baby who cries -
Why, dear Mamma,
don't you shut
Baby's eyes?
Pull down his
wire, as I do, you see,
I lay him by Dolly,
and come out with me.

Hushaby, Dolly! Mamma
will not speak;
You, my dear baby, would
sleep for a week.
Poor Mamma's baby
allows her no rest,
Hushaby, Dolly, of babies
the best!

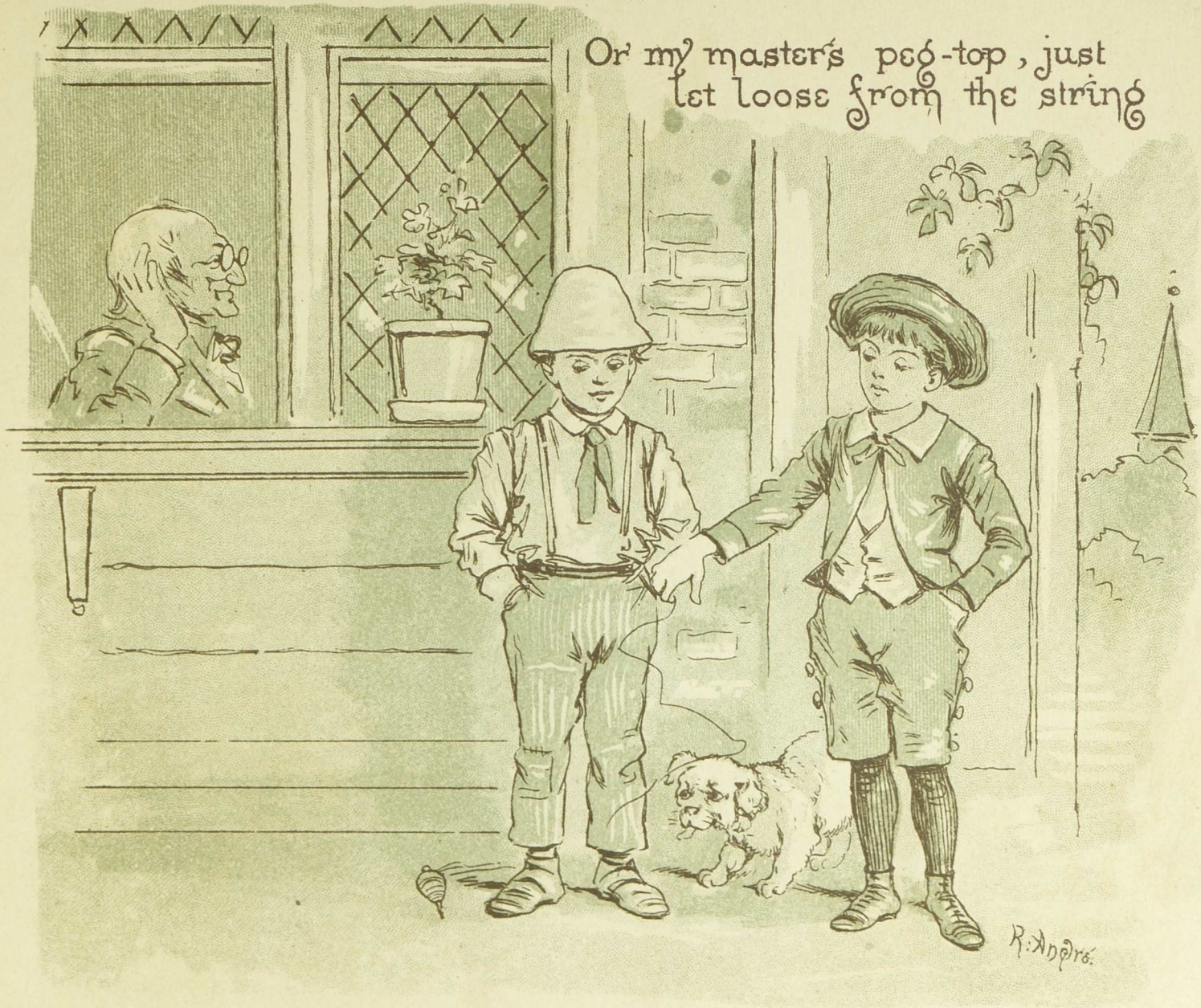
End of Dolly's Lullaby:

The Yellow Fly: a tale with a sting in it
Ah!
There's you are!
I was certain I heard
a strange voice from afar
Mamma calls me a pup, but I'm wiser than she
One ear cocked, and I hear half an eye
and I see
Wide awake though I doze, not a thing escapes me



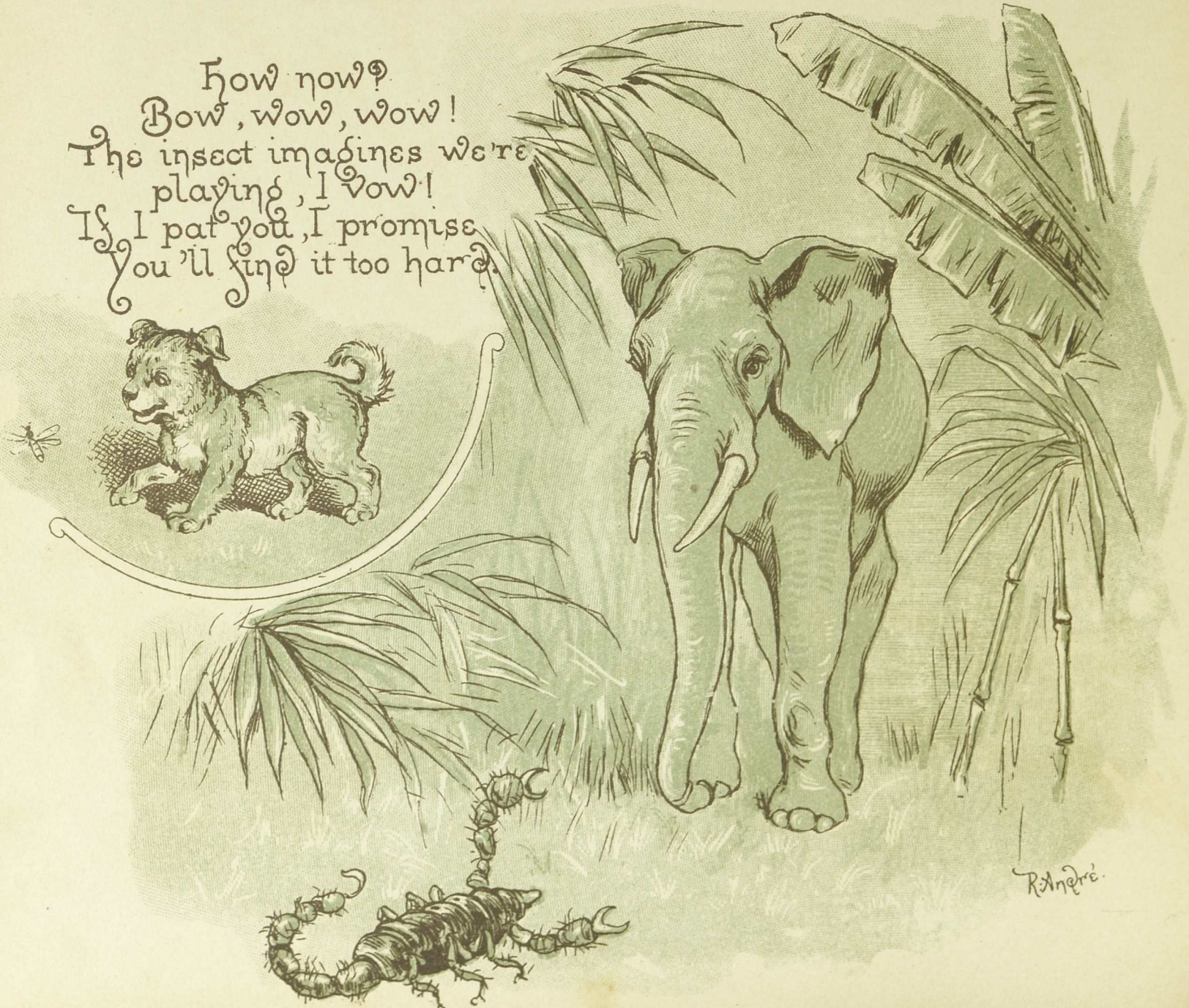
Yes?
Let me guess:
It's the stable-boy's
hiss as he
wisps
down
Black
Bess.

It sounds like a
Kettle
beginning
to sing;
Or a bee on
a pane; or
a moth on
the wing;
R. André


Or my master's peg-top, just
let loose from the string
R. Andre.

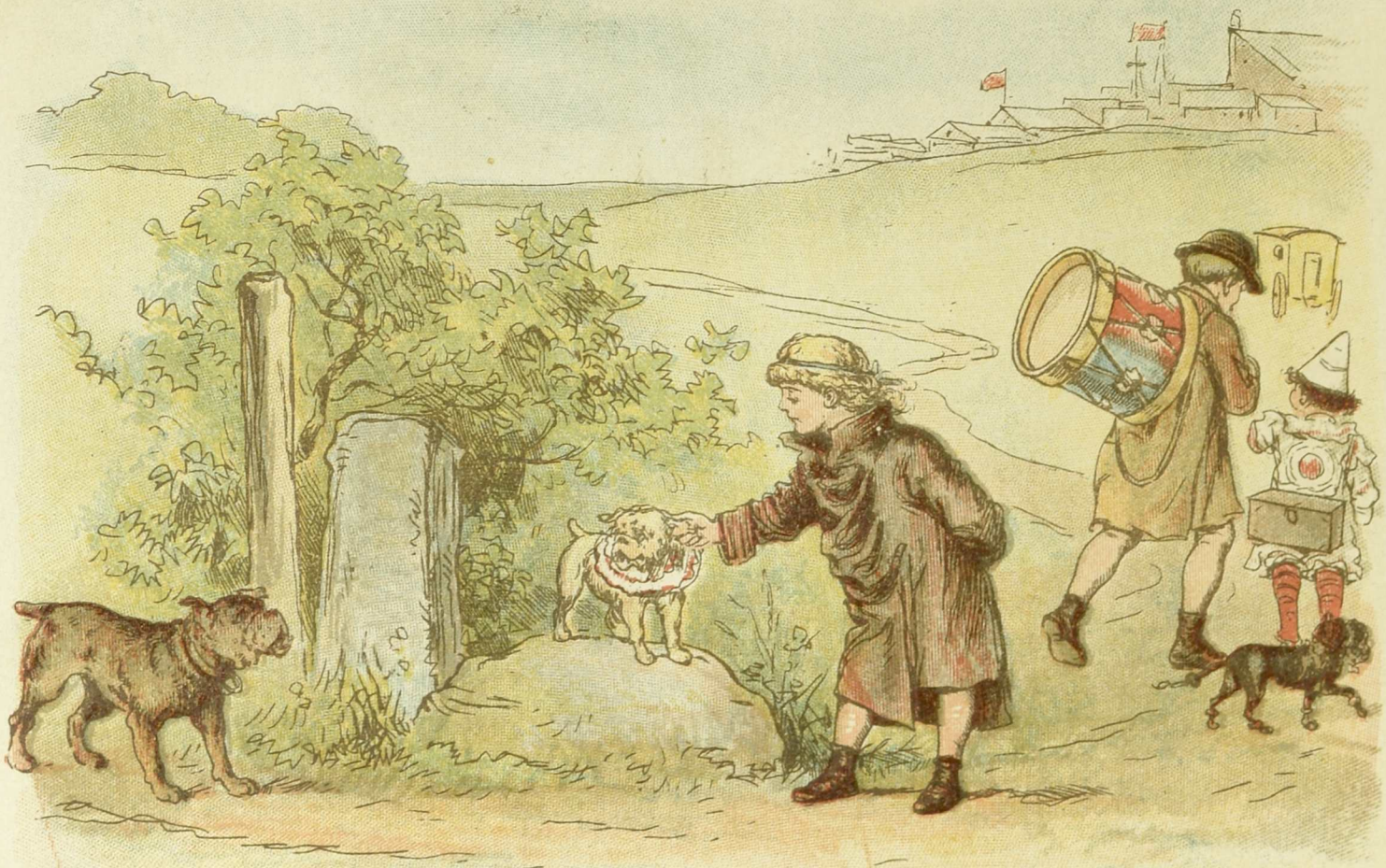
Well!
Now I smell,
I don't know who you
are, and I'm
puzzled to tell.
You look like a fly
dressed in very
gay clothes.

But I blush to have troubled my mid-day repose
For a creature not worth half a twitch of my nose.


How now?
Bow, wow, wow!
The insect imagines we're
playing, I vow!
If I pat you, I promise
You'll find it too hard.
R. André.

Be off! when a watch-dog like me is on guard.
Big or little, no stranger's allowed in the yard.

Eh?
"Come away!"
My dear little master, is that what you say?



I am greatly obliged for your Kindness and cares,

But I really can manage my own small affairs,
And banish intruders who give themselves airs.

Snap!
Yap! Yap! Yap!
You defy me? You pigmy, you insolent scrap!
What—this to my teeth,
that have worried
a score
Of the biggest
rats bred in the
granary floor!
R. Andre

Come on, and be swallowed! I spare you no more!

Help
Yelp! Yelp! Yelp!
Little Master, pray save
an unfortunate whelp,
Who began the attack,
but is now in retreat
R. André

Having shown all his teeth just escapes on his feet,
And is trusting to you to make safety complete.

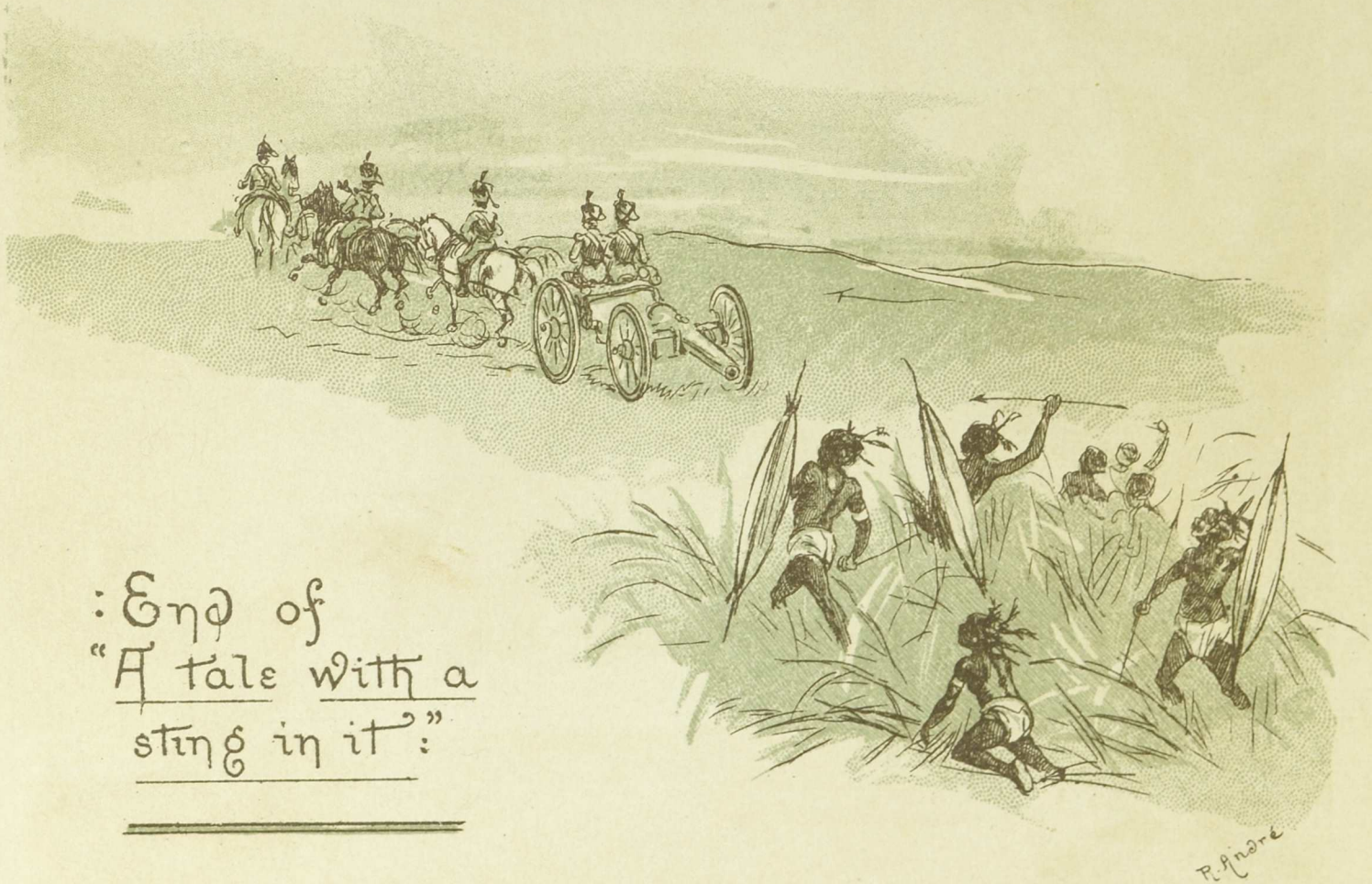
Pray excuse my remarks, for I meant no such thing.
Don't trouble to come — oh, the brute's on the wing!

I'd no notion, I'm sure, there were flies that could sting.

Dear me!
I can't see,
My nose burns,
my limbs shake,
I'm as ill as can be—

I was never in such an undignified plight.

Mamma told me, and now I suppose she was right:
One should know what one's after before one .....
shows fight:



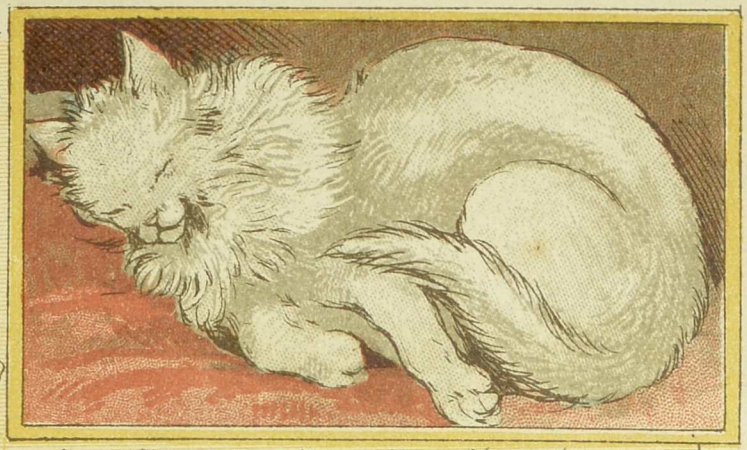
: End of
"A tale with a
sting in it":

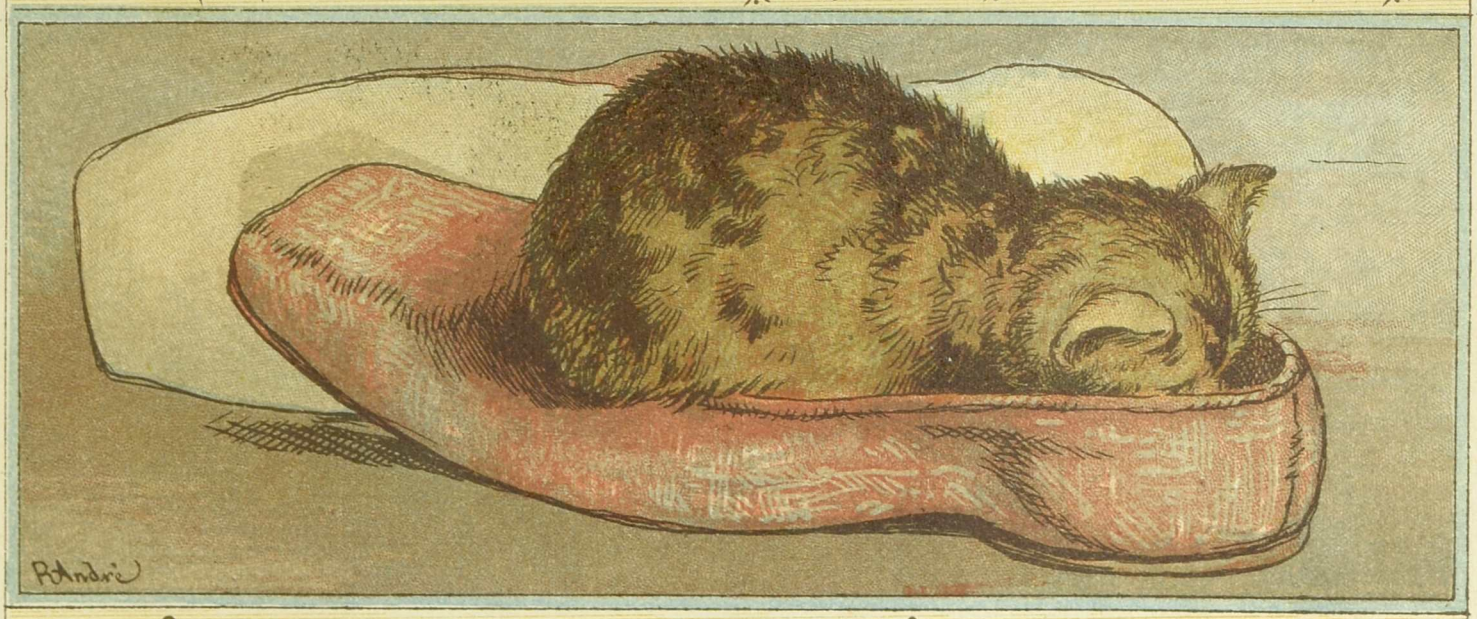
Kit's Cradle:
They've taken the cosy bed away
That I made myself with the Shetland shawl,
And set me a hamper of scratchy hay
By that great black stove in the entrance-hall.
R. André

I won't sleep there; I'm resolved on that!
They may think I will, but they little know
There's a soft persistence about a cat
That even a little kitten can show.

I wish I knew what to do but pout
And spit at the dogs and refuse my tea
My fur's feeling rough, and I rather doubt
Whether stolen sausage agrees with me.

On the drawing room sofa they've
closed the door,
They've turned me out of the
easy chairs;
I wonder it never struck me
before
That they make their beds for
themselves upstairs.





I've found a crib where they won't find me,
Though they're crying "Kitty!" all over the house,
Hunt for the slipper! and riddle my ree
A cat can keep as still as a mouse

It's rather unwise
perhaps to purr,
But they'll never
think of the
wardrobe shelves
I'm happy in ev'ry
hair of my fur;
They may keep the
hamper and
hay themselves.

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