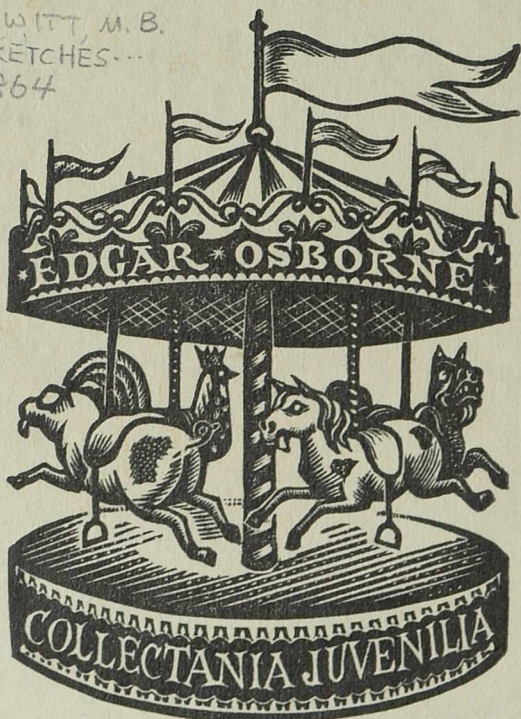


Sketches
of
Natural
History.

P
HOWITT, M.B.
SKETCHES...
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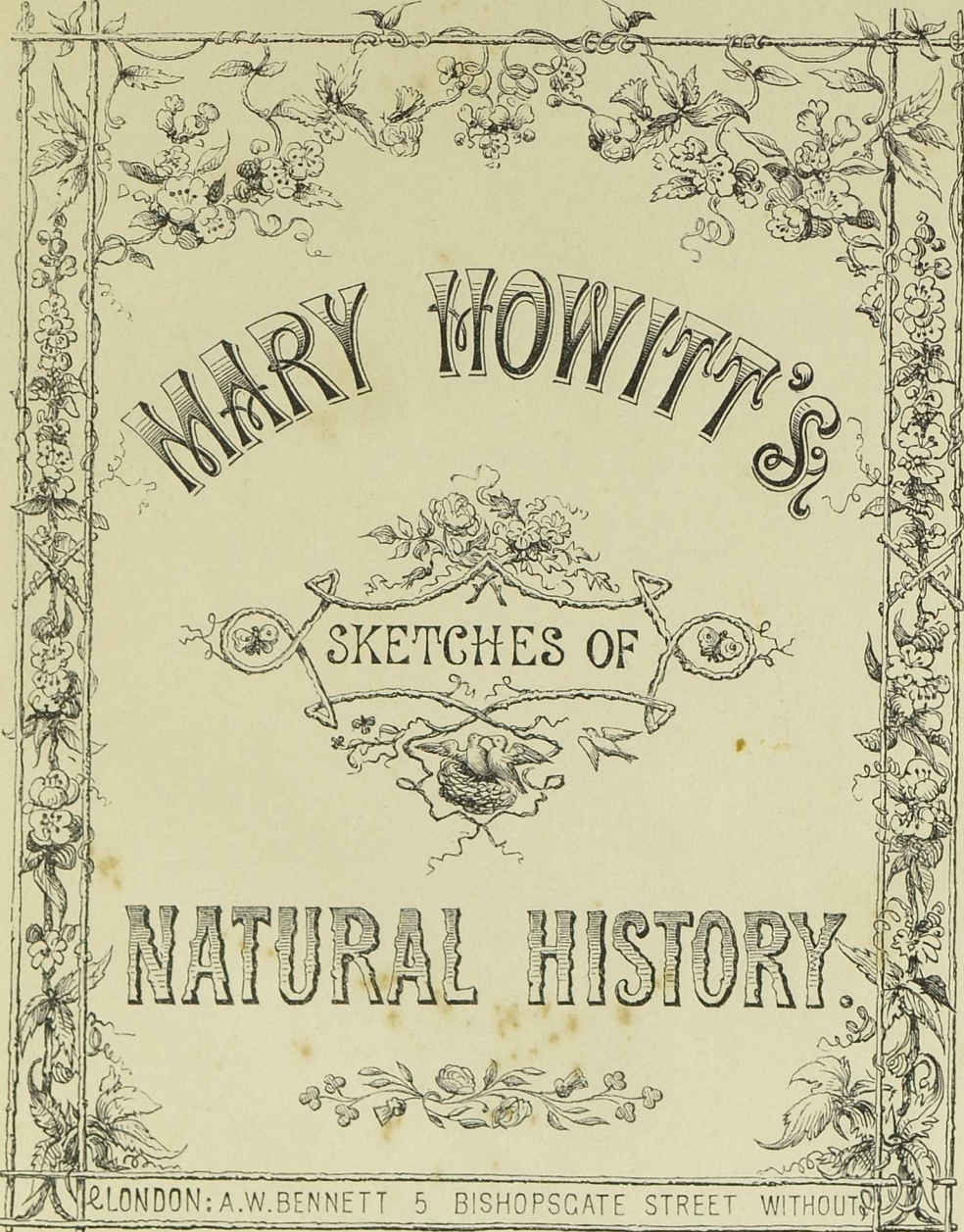
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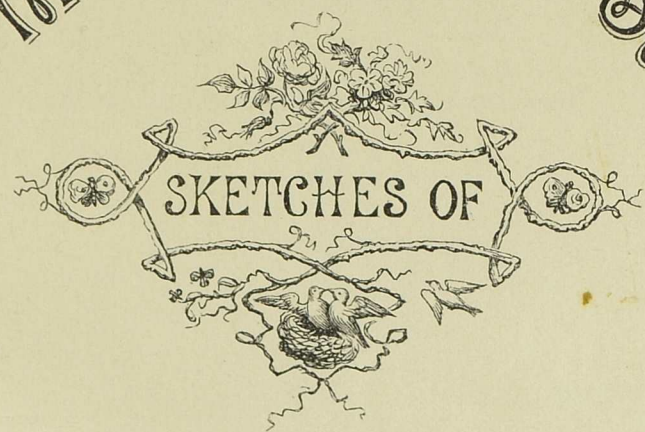
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THE DOG.



MARY HOWITT'S



SKETCHES OF

NATURAL HISTORY.

LONDON: A.W. BENNETT 5 BISHOPSGATE STREET WITHOUT.

TO
ANNA-MARY AND ALFRED-WILLIAM HOWITT

THESE SKETCHES,

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN FOR THEIR AMUSEMENT,

ARE

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

THEIR MOTHER.

THESE simple and unpretending Sketches require no introduction; and yet, when title-page, contents, and dedication have been made out, an introduction so naturally follows, that it might be supposed a book could not be put together without one,—though the writer, as in my case, has little either to say of herself or her volume.

5
All, therefore, that I shall now remark is, that these Sketches were written for my own children; and many of them at their suggestion; and that in seeing the pleasure they have derived from them, I have hoped their young cotemporaries may find them equally agreeable.

NOTTINGHAM: *May* 1834.

Six large editions of this little work have already been printed. The children for whom it was originally written are now grown into men and women ; but others have followed, like flowers of each successive season, and it is my high gratification to find them still eagerly read what was written for their predecessors. The book therefore, belongs properly to all children. I desire nothing more, for children are, and ever have been, dear to my heart.

LONDON: *March* 1851.

THIS little work, after another period of years and several editions, is once more thoroughly revised and issued with some additional poems, in a uniform edition of our juvenile works.

LONDON: *May* 1864.

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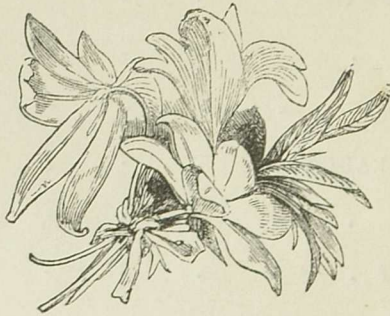
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THE COOT.

[P. 1.]

THE COOT.



H coot! oh bold, adventurous coot,
I pray thee tell to me
The perils of that stormy time
That bore thee to the sea!

I saw thee on the river fair,
Within thy sedgy screen;
Around thee grew the bulrush
tall,

And reeds so strong and green.

The kingfisher came back again,
To view thy fairy place;
The stately swan sailed statelier by,
As if thy home to grace.

But soon the mountain flood came down,
And bowed the bulrush strong;
And far above those tall green reeds,
The waters poured along.

‘And where is she, the water-coot,’
I cried, ‘that creature good?’
But then I saw thee in thine ark,
Regardless of the flood.

Amid the foaming waves thou sat’st,
And steer’dst thy little boat,
Thy nest of rush and water-reed
So bravely set afloat.

And on it went and safely on
That wild and stormy tide;
And there thou sat’st, a mother-bird,
Thy young ones at thy side.

Oh coot! oh bold, adventurous coot,

I pray thee tell to me

The perils of that stormy voyage

That bore thee to the sea!

Hadst thou no fear, as night came down

Upon thy watery way,

Of cruel foes, and dangers dire

That round about thee lay?

Didst thou not see the falcon grim

Swoop down as thou passed by?

And 'mongst the waving water-flags

The lurking otter lie?

The eagle's scream came wildly near,

Yet caused it no alarm?

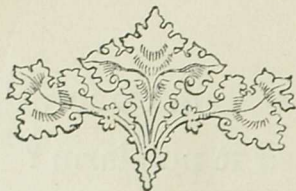
Nor man, who seeing thee, weak thing,

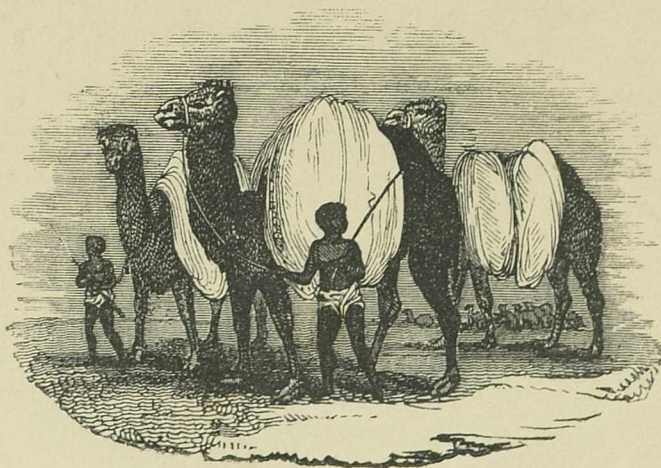
Did strive to do thee harm?

And down the foaming waterfall,
As thou wast borne along,
Hadst thou no dread? Oh daring bird,
Thou hadst a spirit strong!

Yes, thou hadst fear! But He who sees
The sparrows when they fall;
He saw thee, bird, and gave thee strength
To brave thy perils all.

He kept thy little ark afloat;
He watched o'er thine and thee;
And safely through the foaming flood
Hath brought thee to the sea!





THE CAMEL,

[P. 5,

THE CAMEL.



CAMEL, thou art good and mild,
Might'st be guided by a child;
Thou wast made for usefulness,
Man to comfort and to bless;
Thou dost clothe him; thou dost feed;
Thou dost lend to him thy speed.
And through wilds of trackless sand,
In the hot Arabian land,
Where no rock its shadow throws;
Where no pleasant water flows;
Where the hot air is not stirred
By the wing of singing bird,

There thou go'st, untired and meek,
Day by day, and week by week,
Bearing freight of precious things,
Silks for merchants, gold for kings;
Pearls of Ormuz, riches rare,
Damascene and Indian ware;
Bale on bale, and heap on heap,
Freighted like a costly ship !

When the red simoom comes near,
Camel, dost thou know no fear ?
When the desert sands uprise,
Flaming crimson to the skies,
And like pillared giants strong,
Stalk the dreary waste along,
Bringing Death unto his prey,
Does not thy good heart give way ?
Camel, no ! thou dost for man
All thy generous nature can :

Thou dost lend to him thy speed
In that awful time of need;
And when the simoom goes by,
Teachest him to close his eye,
And bow down before the blast,
Till the purple death has passed !

And when week by week is gone,
And the traveller journeys on
Feebly; when his strength is fled,
And his hope and heart seem dead,
Camel, thou dost turn thine eye
On him kindly, soothingly,
As if cheeringly to say,
'Journey on for this one day !
Do not let thy heart despond;
There is water yet beyond !
I can scent it in the air;—
Do not let thy heart despair !'
And thou guid'st the traveller there.



CEDAR TREES.

CEDAR TREES.



HE Power that formed the violet,
 The all-creating One;
 He made the stately cedar trees
 That crowned Mount Lebanon.

And all within the garden
 That angels came to see,
 He set in groves and on the hills
 The goodly cedar tree.

There played the gladsome creatures,
 Beneath its shadow dim;
 And from its spreading leafy boughs
 Went up the wild bird's hymn.

And Eve in her young innocence
 Delayed her footsteps there;
And Adam's heart grew warm with praise
 To see a tree so fair.

And though the world was darkened
 With the shade of human ill,
And man was cast from paradise,
 Yet wast thou goodly still.

And when an ancient poet
 Some lofty theme would sing,
He made the cedar symbol forth
 Each great and gracious thing.

And royal was the cedar
 Above all other trees!
They chose of old its scented wood
 For kingly palaces.

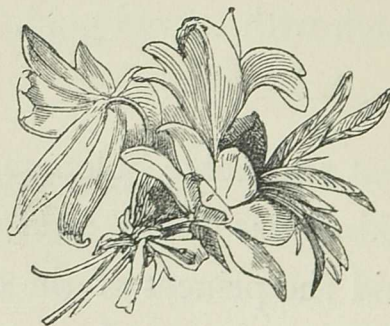
And in the halls of princes,
And on the Phœnix-pyre,
'Twas only noble cedar-wood
Could feed the odorous fire.

In the temple of Jerusalem,
That glorious temple old,
They only found the cedar-wood
To match with carvèd gold.

Thou great and noble Solomon,
What king was e'er like thee?
Thou, 'mid the princes of the earth
Wast like a cedar tree!

But the glory of the cedar tree
Is as an old renown,
And few and dwindled grow they now
Upon Mount Lebanon.

But dear they are to poet's heart ;
And dear to painter's eye :
And the beauty of the cedar tree
On earth will never die !



THE MONKEY.



MONKEY, little merry fellow,
 Thou art Nature's punchinello!
 Full of fun as Puck could be;
 Harlequin might learn of thee!

Look now at his odd grimaces!
 Saw you e'er such comic faces?
 Now like learned judge, sedate;
 Now with nonsense in his pate!

Nature, in a sunny wood,
 Must have been in merry mood,
 And with laughter fit to burst,
 Monkey, when she made you first.

How you leaped and frisked about,
When your life you first found out;
How you threw, in roguish mirth,
Cocoa-nuts on mother earth;

How you sate and made a din
Louder than had ever been,
Till the parrots, all a-riot,
Chattered too to keep you quiet;

Little, merry monkey, tell—
Was there kept no chronicle?
And have you no legends old,
Wherein this, and more is told?

How the world's first children ran
Laughing from the monkey-man,
Little Abel and his brother,
Laughing, shouting, to their mother?

And could you keep down your mirth,
When the floods were on the earth;
When from all your drowning kin,
Good old Noah took you in?

In the very ark, no doubt,
You went rollicking about;
Never keeping in your mind,
Drownèd monkeys left behind!

No, we cannot hear of this;
Gone are all the witnesses:
But I'm very sure that you
Made both mirth and mischief too!

Have you no traditions,—none,
Of the court of Solomon?
No memorial how he went
With Prince Hiram's armament?

Were you given or were you sold
With the peacocks and the gold ?
Is it all forgotten quite,
'Cause you neither read nor write ?

Look now at him ! Slyly peep :
He pretends to be asleep ;—
Fast asleep upon his bed,
With his arm beneath his head.

Now that posture is not right,
And he is not settled quite—
There ! that's better than before,
And the knave pretends to snore !

Ha ! he is not half asleep !
See, he slyly takes a peep !
Monkey, though your eyes were shut
You could see this little nut.

You shall have it, pigmy brother !
What, another ? and another ?
Nay, your cheeks are like a sack,—
Sit down, and begin to crack.

There, the little ancient man
Cracks as fast as crack he can !
Now good-bye, you merry fellow,
Nature's primest punchinello !



WILD FLOWERS.



O, Florence, gather wild flowers,
 My little merry Florence, do!
 Run all about;—see here and there,
 Far off, a-nigh, and everywhere
 They spring up, white and blue.

White and blue and red and yellow,
 Round about our path they
 shine;—

Everywhere beneath our feet
 Spring up wild flowers fresh and sweet,
 To gladden hearts like thine:

But lately and the earth was cold,—
 Brown and bare as it could be,—

Not an orchis to be seen ;
Not a hooded arum green ;
Not a ficary !

Lately even the primroses,
Each one like a gentle star,
King-cups like to flowers of gold,
Daisies white, a thousand-fold,
Were not — now they are !

Could the wealth of London town
Have been given three months ago,
To call these several wild flowers forth,
And o'er the bosom of the earth
To cast this glorious show ;

The wealth of London had been vain, —
Look round about and see them now !
In wood and waste, on hill and plain,
On the green banks of every lane ;
On every hanging bough !

The wind-flower waveth in the grass ;
The blue-bell noddeth 'neath the trees ;
The ancient leafy sycamore,—
The older oak is covered o'er
With pale green racimes ;

Look round !—a brown and huskèd seed
A berry or a kernelled stone—
A small and worthless thing to see,
Contains a flower, enfolds a tree ;—
And hence all these have grown.

Look round ! the sunshine and the air,
The water-brooks that smoothly glide ;
The mother-earth that keeps and warms ;
Soft, falling dews, careering storms,—
Have nourishment supplied.

O gracious handiworks of God !
And thus is clothed the barren wild

With flowers, so many and so fair,
That spring, innumerable, everywhere,
To please a little child !

Go, Florence, gather wild flowers,
Go, gather of the flowers thy fill !
The blue-bell and the orchis red,
The boughs of wilding overhead,
The cistus from the hill.

Go, bring me sprays of yellow broom,—
Its flowers are wondrous fair to see ;—
Go, bring the budding grass and reed ;
The opening flower of every weed
Shall be a joy to thee.

For, looking on a little flower,
A holy truth shall reach thy heart—
A glimpse of that divinest plan—
That bond of love 'twixt God and man,
In which even thou hast part !

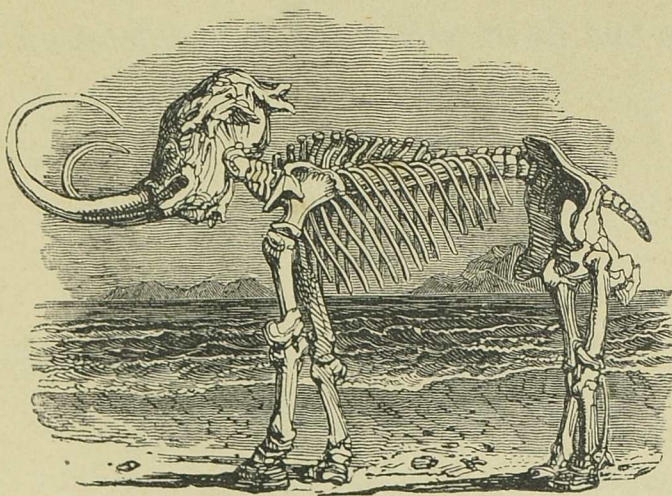
THE FOSSIL ELEPHANT.



HE earth is old! And ages vast
Are gone since I had birth,
In the forests of the olden time,
And the solitudes of earth.

We were a race of mighty things;
The world was all our own.
I dwelt with the mammoth large
and strong,
And the giant mastodon.

No ship went over the waters then,
No ship with oar or sail;
But the wastes of the sea were habited
By the dragon and the whale.



THE ELEPHANT.

[P. 22.]

And the hydra down in the ocean caves
 Abode, a creature grim;
And the scaly serpents huge and strong
 Coiled in the waters dim.

The wastes of the world were all our own;
 A proud, imperial lot!
Man had not then dominion given,
 Or else we knew it not.

There was no city on the plain,
 No fortress on the hill;
No mighty men of strength, who came
 With armies up, to kill.

There was no iron then—no brass—
 No silver and no gold;
The wealth of the world was in its woods,
 And its granite mountains old.

And we were the kings of all the world;
We knew its breadth and length;
We dwelt in the glory of solitude,
And the majesty of strength.

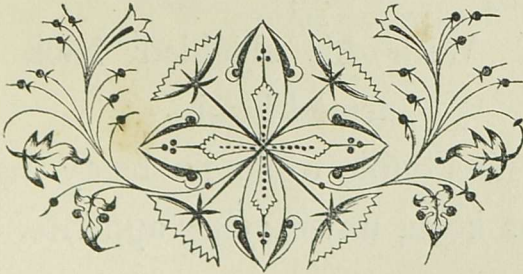
But suddenly came an awful change!
Wherefore, ask not of me;
That it was, my desolate being shews,—
Let that suffice for thee.

The mammoth huge and the mastodon
Were buried beneath the earth;
And the hydra and the serpents strong,
In the caves where they had birth!

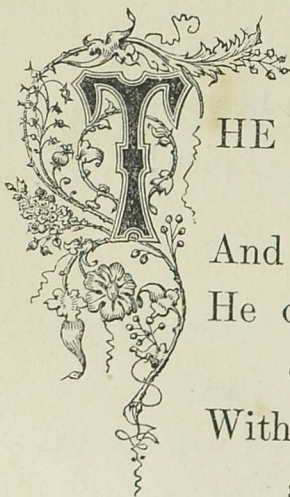
There is now no place of silence deep,
Whether on land or sea;
And the dragons lie in the mountain-rock,
As if for eternity!

And far in the realms of thawless ice,
Beyond each island shore,
My brethren lie in the darkness stern,
To awake to life no more!

And not till the last conflicting crash
When the world consumes in fire,
Will their frozen sepulchres be loosed,
And their dreadful doom expire!

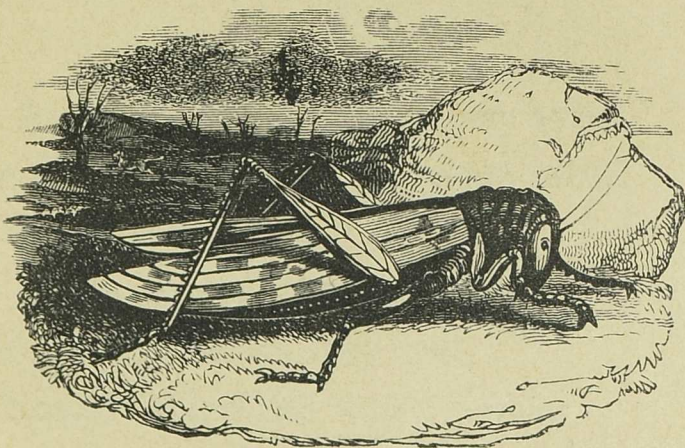


THE LOCUST.



HE Locust is fierce, and strong,
 and grim,
 And a mailèd man is afraid of him :
 He comes like a wingèd shape of
 dread,
 With his shielded back and his
 armèd head,
 And his double wings for hasty flight.
 And a keen, unwearying appetite.

He comes with famine and fear along,
 An army a million million strong ;



THE LOCUST.

The Goth and the Vandal, and dwarfish Hun,
With their swarming people wild and dun,
Brought not the dread that the locust brings,
When is heard the rush of their myriad wings.

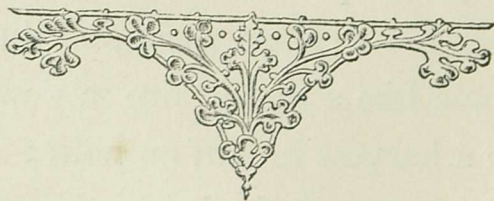
From the deserts of burning sand they speed,
Where the lions roam and the serpents breed,
Far over the sea away, away!

And they darken the sun at noon of day.
Like Eden the land before they find,
But they leave it a desolate waste behind.

The peasant grows pale when he sees them come,
And standeth before them weak and dumb ;
For they come like a raging fire in power,
And eat up a harvest in half an hour ;
The trees are bare and the land is brown,
As if trampled and trod by an army down.

There is terror in every monarch's eye,
When he hears that this terrible foe is nigh;
For he knows that the might of an armèd host
Cannot drive the spoiler from out his coast,
And that terror and famine his land await;
That from north to south 't will be desolate.

Thus the ravening locust is strong and grim;
And what is the sword and the shield to him?
Fire turneth him not, nor sea prevents,
He is stronger by far than the elements!
The broad green earth is his prostrate prey,
And he darkens the sun at the noon of day!



THE BROOM-FLOWER.



THE broom, the yellow broom,
The ancient poet sung it;
And sweet it is on summer days
To lie at rest among it.

I know the realms where people
say
The flowers have not their
fellow;

I know where they shine out like suns,
The crimson and the yellow.

I know where ladies live enchained
In luxury's silken fetters,
And flowers, as bright as glittering gems,
Are used for written letters.

But ne'er was flower so fair as this
In modern days or olden ;
It groweth on its nodding stem
Like to a garland golden.

And all about my mother's door
Shine out its glittering bushes,
And down the glen, where clear as light
The mountain-water gushes.

Take all the rest,—but leave me this,
And the bird that nestles in it ;
I love it, for it loves the broom,
The green and yellow linnet.

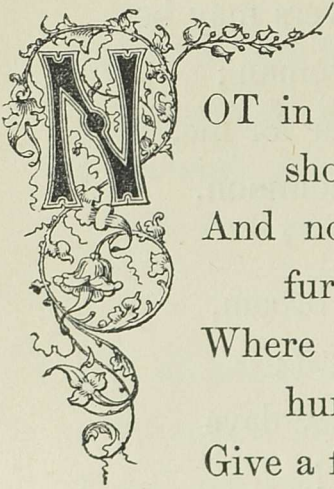
Well, call the rose the queen of flowers,
And boast of that of Sharon,
Of lilies like to marble cups,
And the golden rod of Aaron :

I care not how these flowers may be
Beloved of man and woman ;
The broom it is the flower for me,
That groweth on the common.

O the broom, the yellow broom,
The ancient poet sung it ;
And sweet it is on summer days
To lie at rest among it !



THE EAGLE.



NOT in the meadow, and not on the
 shore;
 And not on the wide heath with
 furze covered o'er,
 Where the cry of the plover, the
 hum of the bee,
 Give a feeling of joyful security:
 And not in the woods, where the
 nightingale's song,
 From the chesnut and orange pours all the day
 long;
 And not where the martin has built in the eaves,
 And the red-breast once covered the children
 with leaves,

Shall ye find the proud eagle ! O no, come away ;
I will shew you his dwelling, and point out his
prey !

Away ! let us go where the mountains are high,
With tall splintered peaks towering into the sky ;
Where old ruined castles are dreary and lone,
And seem as if built for a world that is gone ;
There, up on the topmost tower, black as the
night,

Sits the old monarch Eagle in full blaze of light :
He is king of these mountains : save him and his
mate,

No eagle dwells here ; he is lonely and great !
Look, look how he sits ! with his keen glancing
eye,

And his proud head thrown back, looking into
the sky ;

And hark to the rush of his out-spreading wings,
Like the coming of tempest, as upward he springs ;
And now how the echoing mountains are stirred,
For that was the cry of the eagle you heard !

And see how he soars ! like a speck in the height
Of the blue vaulted sky, and now lost in the light !
Now downward he wheels as a shaft from a bow
By a strong archer sent, to the valleys below !
And that is the bleat of a lamb of the flock ;—
One moment, and he re-ascends to the rock ;—
Yes, see how the conqueror is winging his way,
• And his terrible talons are holding their prey !

Great bird of the wilderness ! lonely and proud,
With a spirit unbroken, a neck never bowed ;
With an eye of defiance, august and severe,
Who scorn'st an inferior and hatest a peer,
What is it that giveth thee beauty and worth ?
Thou wast made for the desolate places of earth ;
To mate with the tempest ; to match with the sea ;
And God shewed His power in the lion and thee !



THE NETTLE KING.

[P. 35.]

THE NETTLE-KING.



HERE was a nettle both great and
strong ;

And the threads of his poison flowers
were long ;

He rose up in strength and height
also,

And said, 'I'll be king of the plants
below !'

It was in a wood both drear and dank,
Where grew the nettle so broad and rank ;
And an owl sate up in an old ash tree
That was wasting away so silently ;

And a raven was perched above his head,
And both of them heard what the Nettle-king
said ;

And there was a toad that sate below,
Chewing his venom sedate and slow,
And he heard the words of the nettle also.

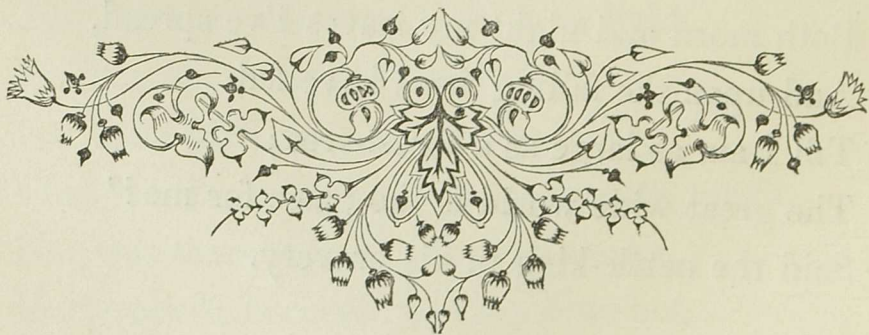
The nettle he throve, and the nettle he grew,
And the strength of the earth around him drew :
There was a pale stellaria meek,
But as he grew strong, so she grew weak ;
There was a campion, crimson-eyed,
But as he grew up, the campion died ;
And the blue veronica, shut from light,
Faded away in a sickly white ;
For upon his leaves a dew was hung,
That fell like a blight from a serpent's tongue,
Nor was there a flower about the spot,
Herb-robert, harebell, or forget-me-not.
Yet up grew the nettle like water-sedge,
Higher and higher above the hedge ;

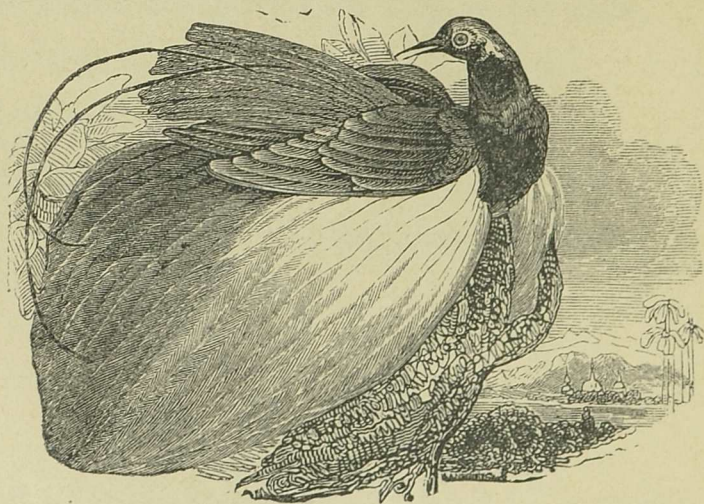
The stuff of his leaves was strong and stout,
And the points of his stinging-flowers stood out ;
And the child that went in the wood to play,
From the great King-nettle would shrink away !

‘ Now,’ says the nettle, ‘ there’s none like me ;
I am as great as a plant can be !
I have crushed each weak and tender root,
With the mighty force of my kingly foot ;
I have spread out my arms so strong and wide,
And opened my way on every side ;
I have drawn from the earth its virtues fine,
To strengthen for me each poison-spine :
Both morn and night my leaves I’ve spread,
And upon the falling dews have fed,
Till I am as large as a forest-tree ;
The great wide world is the place for me !’
Said the nettle-king in his bravery.

Just then came up a woodman stout,
In the thick of the wood he was peering about ;

The nettle looked up, the nettle looked down,
And graciously smiled on the simple clown :
'Thou knowest me well, Sir Clown,' said he,
And 'tis meet that thou reverence one like me !'
Nothing at all the man replied,
But he lifted a scythe that was at his side,
And he cut the nettle up by the root,
And trampled it under his heavy foot ;
He saw where the toad in its shadow lay,
But he said not a word, and went his way.





THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

THE BIRD OF PARADISE.



LOVELY bird of paradise,
 I'll go where thou dost go!
 Rise higher yet, and higher yet,
 For a stormy wind doth blow.

Now up above the tempest
 We are sailing in the calm,
 Amidst the golden sunshine,
 And where the air is balm.

See, far below us rolling
 The storm-cloud black and wide ;
 The fury of its raging
 Is as an angry tide !

O gentle bird of paradise,
Thy happy lot I'll share;
And go where'er thou goest
On, through the sunny air !

Whate'er the food thou eatest
Bird, I will eat it too ;
And ere it reach the stormy earth,
Will drink with thee the dew !

My father and my mother,
I'll leave them for thy sake ;
And where thy nest is builded,
My pleasant home will make !

Is it woven of the sunshine,
And the fragrance of the spice ;
And cradled round with happiness?
Sweet bird of paradise !

O take me, take me to it,
Wherever it may be,
For far into the sunshine
I'll fly away with thee!

Thus sung an eastern poet,
A many years ago;
Now of the bird of paradise
A truer tale we know.

We know the nest it buildeth
Within the forest green;
And many and many a traveller
Its very eggs hath seen.

Yet, lovely bird of paradise,
They take no charm from thee.
Thou art a creature of the earth,
And not a mystery!

THE REINDEER.



REINDEER, not in fields like ours
Full of grass and bright with
flowers;

Not in pasture-dales where glide
Never-frozen rivers wide;
Not on hills where verdure bright
Clothes them to the topmost height,
Is thy dwelling; nor dost thou
Feed beneath the orange-bough;

Nor doth olive, nor doth vine
Bud or bloom in land of thine;
Thou wast made to fend and fare
In a region bleak and bare;



THE REINDEER.

[P. 42.]

In a dreary land of snow
Where green weeds can scarcely grow !
Where the skies are grey and drear ;
Where 'tis night for half the year ;
Reindeer, where, unless for thee,
Human dweller could not be.

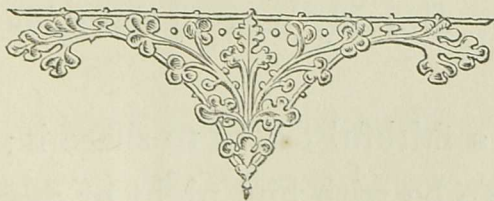
When thou wast at first designed
By the great Creative Mind—
With thy patience and thy speed ;
With thy aid for human need ;
With thy gentleness ; thy might ;
With thy simple appetite ;
With thy foot so framed to go
Over frozen wastes of snow,
Thou wast made for sterner skies
Than horizoned paradise,
Thou for frozen lands wast meant,
Ere the winter's frost was sent ;
And in love God sped thee forth
To thy home, the barren north,

Where He bade the rocks produce
Bitter lichens for thy use.

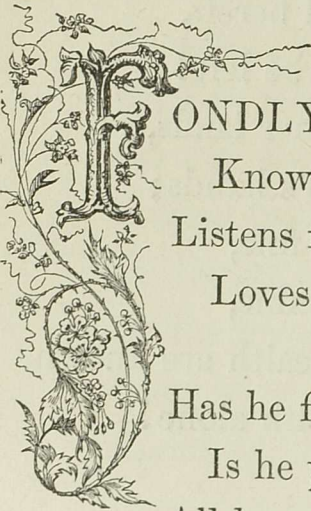
What the camel is, thou art,
Strong of frame, and strong in heart !
Peaceful ; steadfast to fulfil ;
Serving man with right goodwill ;
Serving long, and serving hard ;
Asking but a scant reward ;
Of the snow a short repast,
Or the mosses cropped in haste :
Then away ! with all thy strength,
Speeding him the country's length,
Speeding onward, like the wind,
With the sliding sledge behind.
What the camel is, thou art—
Doing well thy needful part ;
O'er the burning sand he goes,
Thou upon the arctic snows ;

Gifted each alike, yet meant
For lands and labours different !

More than gold mines is thy worth,
Treasure of the desert north,
Which, of thy good aid bereft,
Ten times desert must be left !
Flocks and herds in other lands,
And the labour of men's hands ;
Coinèd gold and silver fine,
And the riches of the mine,
These, elsewhere, as wealth are known,
Here, 'tis thou art wealth alone !



THE DOG.



ONLY loves the dog his master;
 Knows no friend as him so dear,
 Listens for his coming footsteps,
 Loves his welcome voice to hear.

Has he faults? he never sees them;
 Is he poor? it matters not;
 All he asks is to be near him,
 Humbly near to share his lot.

As a faithful friend to share it;
 To be with him night or day,
 Ever ready when he calleth,
 When he biddeth to obey.

To obey with will instinctive
Which can neither fail nor swerve;
Asking for his faithful duty
Only love and leave to serve.

Only crumbs below his table;
Little only from his much;
Words or looks of kind approval,
Or the hand's electric touch.

Of the dog in ancient story
Many a pleasant tale is told;
As when young Tobias journeyed
To Ecbatane of old,

By the angel Raphael guided;
Went the faithful dog and good,
Bounding through the Tigris meadows
Whilst they fished within the flood;

Ate the crumbs which at the wedding
Fell upon Raguel's floor;
Barked for joy to see the cattle
Driven up for the bridal store;

Barked for joy when young Tobias
With his bride and all her train,
And the money bags from Media,
Left for Nineveh again.

And when Anna in the doorway
Stood to watch and wait for him,
Anxious mother! waiting, watching
Till her eyes with tears were dim,—

Saw she not the two men coming,
Young Tobias and his guide,
Hurrying on with their good tidings,
And the dog was at their side!

They were coming dowered with blessings,
Like the Tigris' boundless flood,
And the dog with joyous barking,
Told the same as best he could.

And again in Homer's story,
When the waves Ulysses bore,
After Troy-town's siege and sorrow,
To green Ithaca once more.

Unto all he was a stranger,
None the king of old could know,
Worn with travel-toil and agèd
By his twice-ten years of woe.

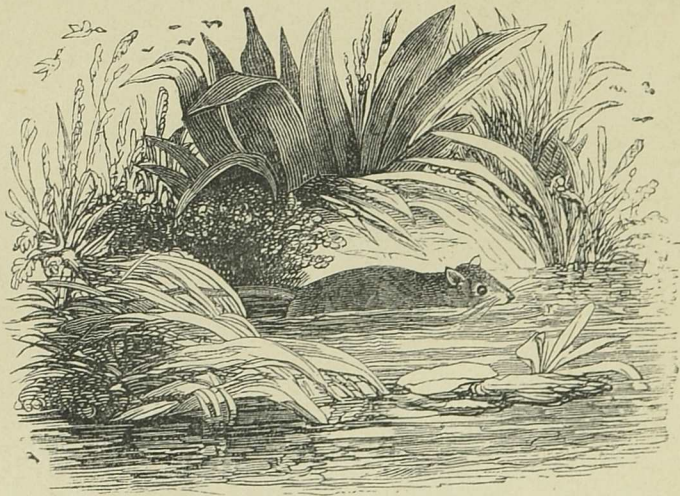
In those twenty years of absence
He an alien had grown,
Unto all who loved or served him,
Save to one poor heart alone.

To his dog who having lost him,
Never owned his loss supplied,
And who now, o'erjoyed to find him,
Lay down at his feet and died.

And the dog is still the faithful,
Still the loving friend of man,
Ever ready at his bidding,
Doing for him all he can.

Let us take from him a lesson,
As the wisest of us may—
Learn a willingness in duty,
And be ready to obey.

Let us to *our* loving Master
Give our will, our hearts, our all,
And be ever, ever watchful
To attend His slightest call!



THE WATER RAT.

[P. 51.]

THE WATER-RAT.



COME into the meadows this bright
summer day;

The people are merrily making the
hay:

There's a blithe sound of pastoral
life everywhere;

And the gay lark is carolling up in
the air.

I know in the wood where the columbine grows,
And the climbing clematis and pink apple-rose;
I know where the buglos grows blue as the
sky,

And the deep crimson vetch like a wild vine
runs high.

But I'll show you a sight you love better than
these,

A little field-stream overshadowed with trees,
Where the water is clear as a free mountain-rill,
And now it runs rippling, and now it is still;
Where the crownèd butomus is gracefully growing,
Where the long purple spikes of the loose-strife
are blowing,

And the rich, plummy crests of the meadow-sweet
seem

Like foam which the current has left on the
stream;

There I'll show you the brown Water-Rat at his
play—

You will see nothing blither this blithe summer
day;

And the snowy-flowered arrow-head thick grow-
ing here:

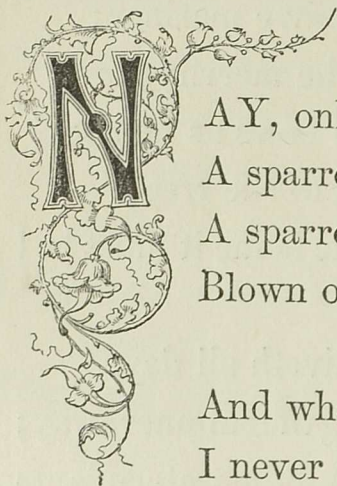
Ah, pity it is man has taught him to fear!

But look at him now, how he sitteth afloat
On the broad water-lily leaf, as in a boat.

See the antics he plays! how he dives in the stream,
To and fro—now he chases that dancing sunbeam!
Now he stands for a moment as if half perplexed,
In his frolicsome heart to know what to do next.
Ha! see now that dragon-fly sets him astir,
And he launches away like a brave mariner;
See there, up the stream how he merrily rows,
And the tall, fragrant calamus bows as he goes!
And now he is lost at the foot of the tree;
'T is his home, and a snug little home it must be!

T'is thus that the Water-Rat liveth all day,
In these small pleasures wearing the summer away;
And when cold winter comes, and the water-plants
die,
And his little brook yields him no longer supply,
Down into his burrow he cosily creeps,
And quietly through the long winter-time sleeps.
Thus in summer his table by Nature is spread,
And old mother Earth makes in winter his bed.

THE SPARROW'S NEST.



AY, only look what I have found !
A sparrow's nest upon the ground ;
A sparrow's nest, as you may see,
Blown out of yonder old elm tree.

And what a medley thing it is !
I never saw a nest like this,—
Not neatly wove with tender care,
Of silvery moss and shining hair ;

But put together, odds and ends,
Picked up from enemies and friends ;
See, bits of thread, and bits of rag,
Just like a little rubbish-bag !

Here is a scrap of red and brown,
Like the old washer-woman's gown;
And here is muslin, pink and green,
And bits of calico between.

Oh, never thinks the lady fair,
As she goes by with dainty air,
How the pert sparrow overhead,
Has robbed her gown to make its bed!

See, hair of dog and fur of cat,
And rovings of a worsted mat,
And shreds of silk, and many a feather,
Compacted cunningly together.

Well, here has hoarding been and hiving,
And not a little good contriving,
Before a home of peace and ease
Was fashioned out of things like these!

Think, had these odds and ends been brought
To some wise men renowned for thought,
Some man, of men a very gem,
Pray, what could he have done with them?

If we had said, 'Here, sir, we bring
You many a worthless little thing,
Just bits and scraps, so very small,
That they have scarcely size at all;

'And out of these, you must contrive
A dwelling large enough for five;
Neat, warm, and snug; with comfort stored;
Where five small things may lodge and board.'

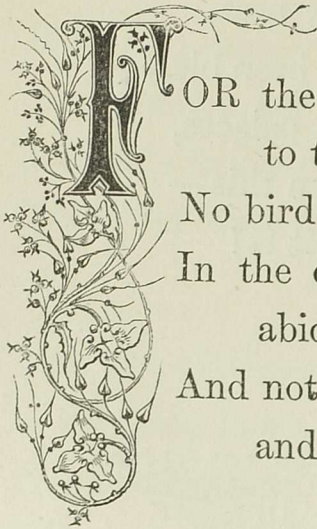
How would the man of learning vast,
Have been astonished and aghast;
And vowed that such a thing had been
Ne'er heard of, thought of, much less seen!

Ah ! man of learning, you are wrong ;
Instinct is, more than wisdom, strong ;
And He who made the sparrow, taught
This skill beyond your reach of thought.

And here, in this uncostly nest,
Five little creatures have been blest ;
Nor have kings known in palaces,
Half their contentedness in this—
Poor, simple dwelling as it is !



THE KINGFISHER.



OR the handsome Kingfisher go not
 to the tree,
 No bird of the field or the forest is he;
 In the dry riven rock he did never
 abide,
 And not on the brown heath all barren
 and wide.

He lives where the fresh, sparkling waters are
 flowing,
 Where the tall, heavy typha and loose-strife are
 growing;
 By the bright little streams that all joyfully run
 Awhile in the shadow, and then in the sun.

He lives in a hole that is quite to his mind,
With the green, mossy hazel roots firmly entwined;
Where the dark alder-bough waves gracefully o'er,
And the sword-flag and arrow-head grow at his
door.

There busily, busily, all the day long,
He seeks for small fishes the shallows among;
For he builds his nest of the pearly fish-bone,
Deep, deep in the bank far retired and alone.

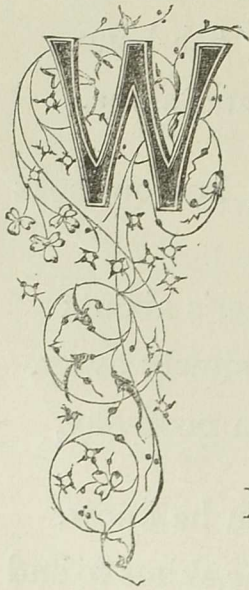
Then the brown water-rat from his burrow looks
out;

To see what his neighbour kingfisher's about;
And the green dragon-fly, flitting slowly away,
Just pauses one moment to bid him good-day,

Oh happy kingfisher! what care can he know,
By the clear, pleasant streams, as he skims to and
fro,

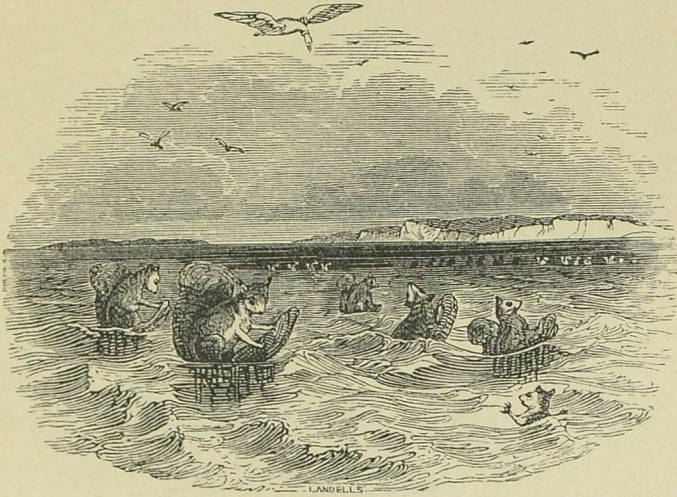
Now lost in the shadow, now bright in the sheen
Of the hot summer sun, glancing scarlet and green!

THE MIGRATION OF THE GREY SQUIRRELS.



WHEN in my youth I travelled
Through each north countrie,
Many a strange thing did I
hear,
And many a strange thing see.

I sate with small men in their
huts,
Built of the drifted snow;
No fire had we but the seal-oil lamp,
Nor other light did know.



GREY SQUIRRELS.

[P. 60.]

For far and wide the plains were lost
For months in the winter dark ;
And we heard the growl of the hungry bear,
And the blue fox's bark.

But when the sun rose redly up
To shine for half a year,
Round and round through the skies to sail,
Nor once to disappear ;

Then on I went, with curious eyes,
And saw where, like to man,
The beaver built his palaces ;
And where the ermine ran.

And came where sailed the lonely swans
Wild on their native flood ;
And the shy elk grazed up the mossy hills,
And the wolf was in the wood.

And the frosty plains like diamonds shone,
And the icy rocks also,
Like emeralds and like beryls clear,
Till the soft south wind did blow.

And then upsprang the grass and flowers
Sudden, and sweet, and bright ;
And the wild birds filled the solitude
With a fervour of delight.

But nothing was there that pleased me more
Than when, in autumn brown,
I came in the depths of the pathless woods,
To the Grey Squirrel's town.

There were hundreds that in the hollow boles
Of the old, old trees did dwell,
And laid up store hard by their door
Of the sweet mast as it fell.

But soon the hungry wild swine came,
And with thievish snouts dug up
Their buried treasure, and left them not
So much as an acorn cup!

Then did they chatter in angry mood,
And one and all decree,
Into the forests of rich stone-pine
Over hill and dale to flee.

Over hill and dale, over hill and dale,
For many a league they went;
Like a troop of undaunted travellers
Governed by one consent.

But the hawk and eagle, and peering owl,
Did dreadfully pursue ;
And the farther the Grey Squirrels went,
The more their perils grew.
When lo! to cut off their pilgrimage,
A broad stream lay in view.

But then did each wondrous creature show
His cunning and bravery;
With a piece of the pine-bark in his mouth,
Unto the stream came he;

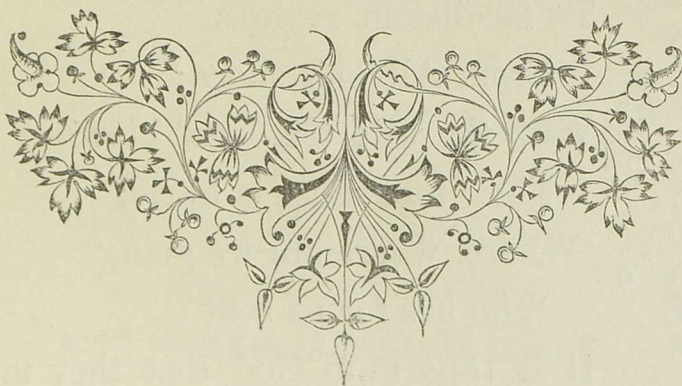
And boldly his little bark he launched,
Without the least delay;
His bushy tail was his upright sail,
And he merrily steered away.

Never was there a lovelier sight
Than that Grey Squirrels' fleet;
And with anxious eyes I watched to see
What fortune it would meet.

Soon had they reached the rough midstream,
And ever and anon,
I grieved to behold some small bark wrecked,
And its little steersman gone.

But the main fleet stoutly held across ;
I saw them leap to shore ;
They entered the woods with a cry of joy,
For their perilous march was o'er.

W. H.



BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

FROM THE SWEDISH.



BEHOLD the bird-legions
 As sadly they soar
 To far-distant regions
 From Albion's shore;
 With the wild tempests' blowing
 Their mourning is blent;
 'Where, where are we going,
 Who has for us sent?'
 It is thus unto God that they make
 their lament.

'We leave them with sadness,
 These rocks by the main;
 There dwelt we in gladness;
 There never knew pain.

'Midst the blossoming trees there
We builded our nest;
By the wing of the breeze there
Were rocked into rest;
Now, now we must follow an unknown behest!

'The leafy wood bowered o'er
The home of the dove;
The dew-drops were showered o'er
The moss-rose for love.
Now green leaves are sere,
Now roses have blown,
And soft winds' careering
To tempest hath grown,
And with white hoar-frost flowers the meadows
are strewn.

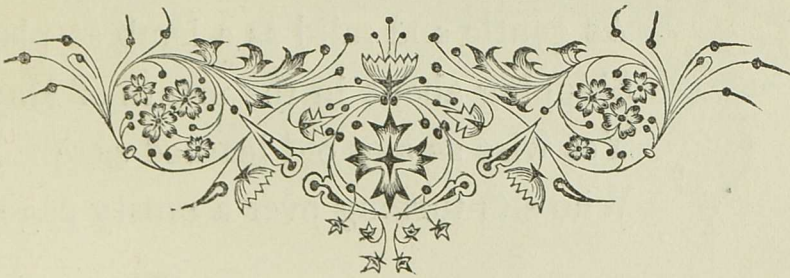
'Why tarry we longer
Now summer is done,
Now cold groweth stronger,
And darkens the sun?

What boots it, our singing?
Here leave we a grave;
For far away winging,
God wings to us gave;
So hail to thee, hail to thee, wild ocean-wave !'

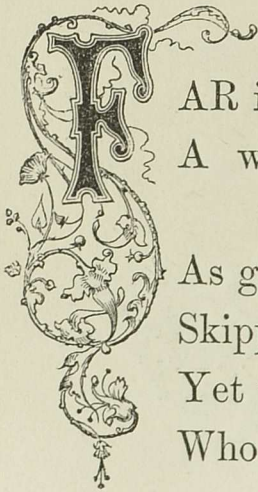
Thus sang the bird-legions,
As onward they fled;
And soon brighter regions
Around them are spread;
Where vine-tendrils vagrant
The elm-trees have crowned,
And 'midst myrtles fragrant
The bright waters bound;
And with songs of rejoicing the woodlands
resound.

When life's hope shall fail thee,
And dark billows roll;
When tempests assail thee,
Mourn not, oh my soul !

The bird finds green meadows
Beyond the sea's roar ;
And passing death's shadows
For thee is a shore
Illumined by a sun that will set never more !



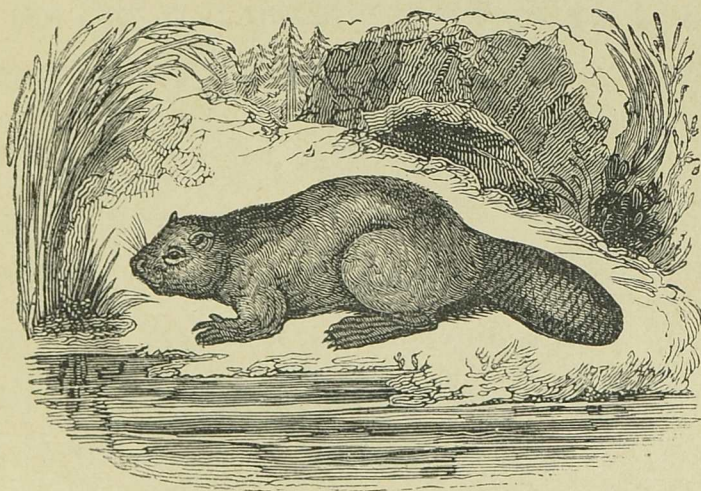
THE BEAVER.



AR in the north if thou sail with me,
A wonderful creature I'll shew to
thee,

As gentle and mild as a lamb at play,
Skipping about in the month of May;
Yet wise as any old learned sage
Who sits turning over a musty page!

Come down to this lonely river's bank,
See, driven-in stake and riven plank;
A mighty work before thee stands
That would do no shame to human hands.
A well-built dam to stem the tide
Of this northern river so strong and wide;



THE BEAVER.

[P. 70.]

Look ! the woven bough of many a tree,
And a wall of fairest masonry ;
The waters cannot o'erpass this bound,
For a hundred keen eyes watch it round ;
And the skill that raised can keep it good
Against the peril of storm and flood.

And yonder, the peaceable creatures dwell
Secure in their watery citadel !
They know no sorrow, have done no sin ;
Happy they live 'mongst kith and kin—
As happy as living things can be,
Each in the midst of his family !
Ay, there they live, and the hunter wild,
Seeing their social natures mild,
Seeing how they are kind and good,
Hath felt his stubborn soul subdued ;
And the very sight of the young at play
Hath put his hunter's heart away ;
And a mood of pity hath o'er him crept,
As he thought of his own dear babes and wept.*

* A fact.

I know ye are but the beavers small,
Living at peace in your own mud-wall;
I know that ye have no books to teach
The lore that lies within your reach.
But what? Five thousand years ago
Ye knew as much as now ye know;
And on the banks of streams that sprung
Forth when the earth itself was young,
Your wondrous works were formed as true;
For the All-Wise instructed you!
But man! how hath he pondered on,
Through the long term of ages gone;
And many a cunning book hath writ,
Of learning deep and subtle wit;
Hath compassed sea, hath compassed land,
Hath built up towers and temples grand,
Hath travelled far for hidden lore,
And learned what was not known of yore,
Yet after all, though wise he be,
He hath no better skill than ye!

THE
TRUE STORY OF WEB-SPINNER.



WEB-SPINNER was a miser old,
Who came of low degree;
His body was large, his legs were
thin,
And he kept bad company;
His visage had the evil look
Of a black felon grim;
To all the country he was known,
But none spoke well of him.

His house was seven stories high,
In a corner of the street,
And always had a dirty look,
Whilst other homes were neat;

Up in his garret dark he lived,
And from the windows high
Looked out in the dusky evening
Upon the passers-by.
Most people thought he lived alone,
And many have averred,
That dismal cries from out his house
Were often loudly heard ;
And that none living left his gate,
Although a few went in,
For he seized the very beggar old,
And stripped him to the skin ;
And though he prayed for mercy,
Yet mercy ne'er was shown—
The miser cut his body up,
And picked him bone from bone.
Thus people said, and all believed
The dismal story true ;
As it was told to me, in truth,
I tell it so to you.

There was an ancient widow—
One Madgy de la Moth,
A stranger to the man, or she
Had ne'er gone there, in troth ;
But she was poor, and wandered out
At nightfall in the street,
To beg from rich men's tables
Dry scraps of broken meat.
So she knocked at old Web-Spinner's door,
With a modest tap, and low,
And down stairs came he speedily,
Like an arrow from a bow.
'Walk in, walk in, mother!' said he,
And shut the door behind—
She thought for such a gentleman,
That he was wondrous kind ;
But ere the midnight clock had tolled,
Like a tiger of the wood,
He had eaten the flesh from off her bones,
And drank of her heart's blood !

Now after this fell deed was done,
A little season's space,
The burly Baron of Bluebottle
Was riding from the chase;
The sport was dull, the day was hot,
The sun was sinking down,
When wearily the Baron rode
Into the dusty town.
Says he, 'I'll ask a lodging
At the first house I come to ;'
With that the gate of Web-Spinner
Came suddenly in view :
Loud was the knock the Baron gave—
Down came the churl with glee,
Says Bluebottle, 'Good sir, to-night
I ask your courtesy ;
I'm wearied with a long day's chase,
My friends are far behind.'
'You may need them all,' said Web-Spinner.
It runneth in my mind.'

‘A Baron, am I,’ said Bluebottle ;
‘From a foreign land I come.’
‘I thought as much,’ said Web-Spinner,
‘For wise men stay at home !’
Says the Baron, ‘Churl, what meaneth this ?
I defy you, villain base !’
And he wished the while with all his heart
He were safely from the place.
Web-Spinner ran and locked the door,
And a loud laugh laughèd he ;
With that each one on the other sprang,
And they wrestled furiously.
The Baron was a man of might,
A swordsman of renown ;
But the miser had the stronger arm,
And kept the Baron down :
Then out he took a little cord,
From a pocket at his side,
And with many a crafty, cruel knot
His hands and feet he tied ;

And bound him down unto the floor,
And said in savage jest,
'There's heavy work in store for you;
So, Baron, take your rest!'
Then up and down his house he went,
Arranging dish and platter,
With a dull and heavy countenance,
As if nothing were the matter.
At length he seized on Bluebottle,
That strong and burly man,
And with many and many a desperate tug,
To hoist him up began:
And step by step, and step by step,
He went with heavy tread;
But ere he reached the garret door,
Poor Bluebottle was dead!

Now all this while, a magistrate,
Who lived in the house hard by,
Had watched Web-Spinner's evil deeds
Through a window privily:

So in he bursts, through bolts and bars,
With a loud and thundering sound,
And vows to burn the house with fire,
And level it with the ground ;
But the wicked churl, who all his life
Had looked for such a day,
Passed through a trap-door in the wall,
And took himself away :
But where he went no man could tell ;
'Twas said that underground,
He died a miserable death,
But his body ne'er was found.
They pulled his house down stick and stone—
'For a caitiff vile as he,'
Said they, 'within our quiet town
Shall not a dweller be !'

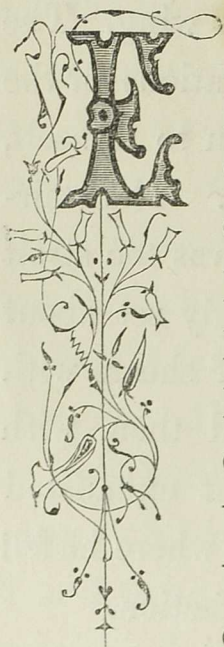
THE actions of the Spider above described were told me by a very intelligent gentleman, who permitted the web to remain for a considerable time

in his counting-house window, that he might have the means of closely observing its occupier's way of life. It was, as described above, under the semblance of a dwelling-house, seven stories high, and in each story was a small circular hole by which the spider ascended and descended at pleasure; serving, in fact, all the purposes of a staircase. His usual abode was in his seventh, or garret story, where he sat in a sullen sort of patience waiting for his prey. The small downy-winged moth was soon taken. She was weak, and made but little resistance, and was always eaten on the spot. His behaviour towards a heavy and noisy blue bottle-fly was exactly as related. The fly seemed bold and insolent; and hurled himself, as if in defiance, against the abode of his enemy. The spider descended in great haste, and stood before him, when an angry parley seemed to take place. The bluebottle appeared highly affronted, and plunged about like a wild horse; but his

efforts were generally unsuccessful; the spider, watching an unguarded moment, darted behind him, and falling upon him with all his force, drew a fine thread from his side, with which he so completely entangled his prostrate victim, that it was impossible he could move leg or wing. The spider then set about making preparations for the feast, which, for reasons best known to himself, he chose to enjoy in his upper story. The staircase, which would admit *his* body, was too strait for that of his victim; he accordingly set about enlarging it, with a delicate pair of shears with which his head was furnished, and then, with great adroitness, hoisted the almost exhausted bluebottle to the top of his dwelling, where he fell upon him with every token of satisfaction.



THE ELEPHANT.



LEPHANT, thou sure must be
 Of the Titan progeny,
 One of that old race that sleep,
 In the fossil mountains deep !
 Elephant, thou must be one !—
 Kindred to the mastodon,—
 One that didst in friendship mix
 With the huge megalonix ;
 With the mammoth hadst command
 O'er the old-world forest-land.

Thou those giant ferns didst see,
 Taller than the tallest tree ;
 And with upturned trunk didst browse,
 On the reed-palm's lowest boughs ;

And didst see, upcurled from light,
The ever-sleeping ammonite;
And those dragon-worms at play
In the waters old and grey!

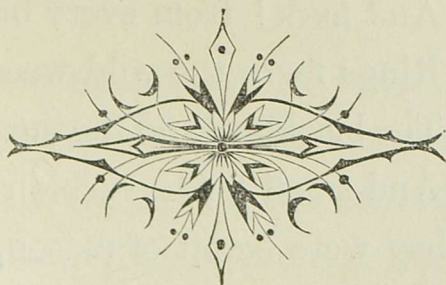
Tell me, creature, in what place
Thou, the Noah of thy race,
Wast preserved when death was sent
Like a raging element,
Like a whirlwind passing by,—
In the twinkling of an eye,
Leaving mother earth forlorn
Of her mighty eldest born;—
Turning all her life to stone
With one universal groan!
In what cavern drear and dark,
Elephant, hadst thou thine ark?
Dost thou in thy memory hold
Record of that tale untold?
If thou dost, I pray thee tell,
It were worth the knowing well.

Elephant, so old and vast,
Thou a kindly nature hast ;
Grave thou art, and strangely wise,
With observant, serious eyes,
Somewhat in thy brain must be
Of an old sagacity.

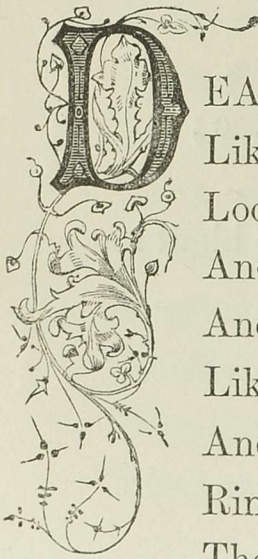
Thou art solemn, wise, and good ;
Livest not on streaming blood ;
Thou, and all thine ancient clan
Walked the world ere grief began ;
Preying not on one another ;
Nourished by the general mother,
Who gave forests thick and tall,
Food and shelter for you all.

Elephant, if thou hadst been
Like the tiger fierce and keen,
Like the lion of the brake,
Or the deadly rattle-snake,
Ravenous as thou art strong,
Terror would to thee belong ;

And before thy mates and thee,
All the earth would desert be !
But, instead, thou yield'st thy will,
Tractable, and peaceful still ;
Full of good intent, and mild
As a humble little child ;
Serving with obedience true,
Aiding, loving, mourning too ;
For each noble sentiment
In thy good, great heart is blent !



SPRING.



DEAR children all, rejoice and sing,
 Like the glad birds, for this is Spring !
 Look up—the skies above are bright,
 And darkly blue as deep midnight ;
 And piled-up, silvery clouds lie there,
 Like radiant slumberers of the air :
 And hark ! from every bush and tree
 Rings forth the wild-wood melody.
 The blackbird and the thrush sing out ;
 And small birds warble round about,
 As if they were bereft of reason,
 In the great gladness of the season ;
 And though the hedge be leafless yet,
 Still many a little nest is set

'Mongst twisted boughs so cunningly,
Where early eggs lie, two or three.
And hark! those Rooks the trees among,
Feeding their never silent young;
A pleasant din it is, that calls
The fancy to ancestral halls.
But hush! from out that warm wood-side,
I hear a voice that ringeth wide—
Oh, joyful Spring's sweet minstrel, hail!
It is indeed the nightingale,
Loud singing in the morning clear,
As poets ever love to hear!

Look now abroad.—All creatures see,
How they are filled with life and glee:
This little bee among the flowers
Hath laboured since the morning hours,
Making the pleasant air astir,
And with its murmuring, pleasanter.

See there! the wavering butterfly,
With starting motion fluttering by,
From leaf to leaf, from spray to spray,
A thing whose life is holiday;
The little rabbits too, are out,
And leverets skipping all about;
And squirrels, peeping from their trees,
A-start at every vagrant breeze;
For life, in the glad days of spring,
Doth gladden each created thing.

Now green is every bank, and full
Of flowers and leaves for all to pull.
The ficary, in each sunny place,
Doth shine out like a merry face;
The strong green mercury, and the dear
Fresh violets of the early year,
Peering their broad green leaves all through,
In odorous thousands, white and blue;

And the broad dandelion's blaze,
Bright as the sun of summer days;
And in the woods beneath the green
Of budding trees are brightly seen,
The nodding blue-bell's graceful flowers—
The hyacinth of this land of ours—
As fair as any flower that blows;
And here the white stellaria grows,
Like Una with her gentle grace,
Shining out in a shady place;
And here, on open slopes we see
The lightly-set anemone;
Here too the spotted arum green,
A hooded mystery, is seen;
And in the turfy meadows shine,
White saxifrage and cardamine;
And acres of the crocus make
A lustre like a purple lake.
And overhead how nobly towers
The chestnut, with its waxen flowers,

And broad green leaves, which wide expand,
Like to a giant's open hand.
Beside you blooms the hawthorn free ;
And yonder the wild cherry tree,
The fairy-lady of the wood ;
And there the sycamore's bursting bud,
The spanish-chestnut and the lime,
Those trees of flowery summer time.
Look up, the leaves are fresh and green,
And every branching vein is seen
Through their almost transparent sheen !
Spirit of Beauty, thou dost fling
Such grace o'er each created thing,
That even a little leaf may stir
The heart to be a worshipper ;
And joy which in the soul has birth,
From these bright creatures of the earth,—
Good is it thou should'st have thy way,
Thou art as much of God as they !

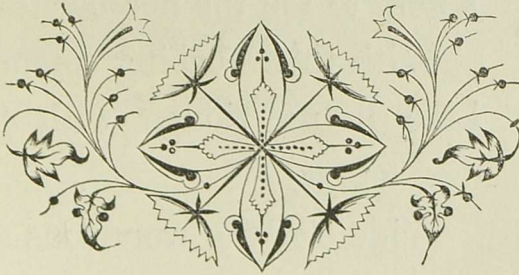
Now let us to the garden go,
And dig and delve, and plant and sow ;
The fresh dark mould is rich and sweet,
And each flower-plot is trim and neat ;
And daffodil and primrose see,
And many-hued anemone,
As full of flower as they can be ;
And here the hyacinth sweetly pale,
Recalling some old Grecian tale ;
And here the mild narcissus too ;
And every flower of every hue
Which the glad season sends, is here ;
The almond, whilst its branch is sere,
With myriad blossoms beautified,
As pink as the sea-shell's inside ;
And, under the warm cottage-eaves,
Amongst its clustered, budding leaves,
Shines out the pear-tree's flowers of snow,
As white as any flowers that grow :
And budding is the southern vine,
And apricot and nectarine ;

And plum-trees in the garden warm,
And damsons round the cottage-farm,
Like snow-showers shed upon the trees,
And, like them, shaken by the breeze.

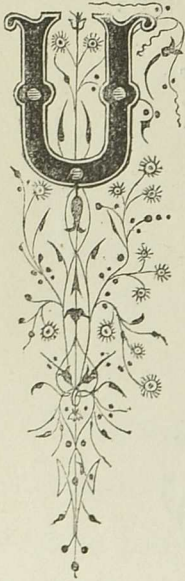
Dear ones! 'tis now the time, that ye
Sit down with zeal to botany;
And names which were so hard and tough,
Are easy now, and clear enough;
For from the morn to evening hours
Your bright instructors are sweet flowers.
Go out through pleasant field and lane,
And come back, glad of heart again.
Bringing with you life's best of wealth,
Knowledge, and joy of heart, and health.
Ere long each bank whereon ye look
Will be to you an open book,
And flowers, by the Creator writ,
The characters inscribed on it!

Come, let us forth unto the fields!
Unceasing joy the season yields—

Why should we tarry within door?
Behold! the children of the poor
Are out, all joy, and running races,
With buoyant limbs and laughing faces.
Thank Heaven! the sunshine and the air
Are free to these young sons of care!
Come, let us too, be glad as they,
For soon is gone the merry May!



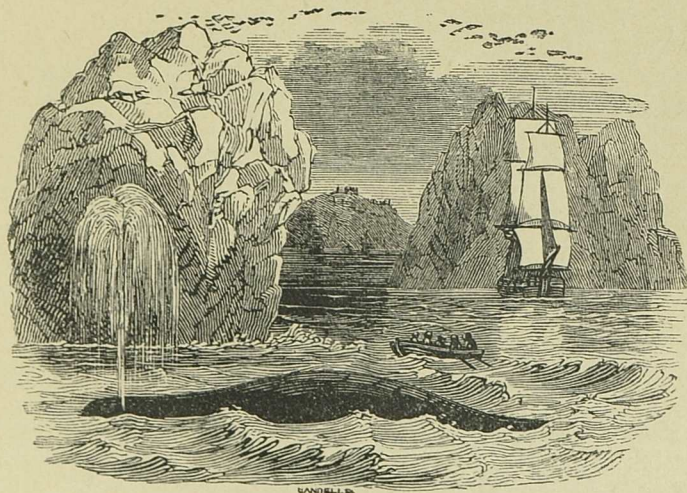
NORTHERN SEAS.



P! up! let us a voyage take;
 Why sit we here at ease?
 Find us a vessel tight and snug,
 Bound for the Northern Seas.

I long to see the northern-lights,
 With their rushing splendours fly;
 Like living things with flaming
 wings,
 Wide o'er the wondrous sky.

I long to see those icebergs vast,
 With heads all crowned with snow;
 Whose green roots sleep in the awful deep,
 Two hundred fathoms low.



THE NORTHERN SEAS.

[P. 94.]

I long to hear the thundering crash
Of their terrific fall;
And the echoes from a thousand cliffs,
Like lonely voices call.

There shall we see the fierce white bear;
The sleepy seals aground,
And the spouting whales that to and fro
Sail with a dreary sound.

There may we tread on depths of ice,
That the hairy mammoth hide;
Perfect, as when in times of old,
The mighty creature died.

And whilst the unsetting sun shines on
Through the still heaven's deep blue,
We'll traverse the azure waves, the herds
Of the dread sea-horse to view.

We'll pass the shores of solemn pine,
Where wolves and black bears prowl;
And away to the rocky isles of mist,
To rouse the northern fowl.

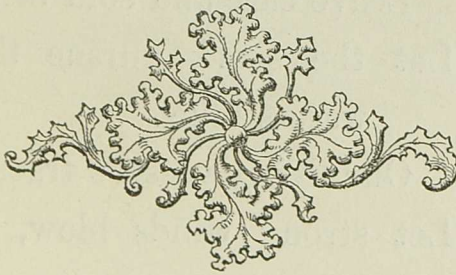
Up there shall start ten thousand wings
With a rushing, whistling din;
Up shall the auk and fulmar start,—
All but the fat penguin.

And there in the wastes of the silent sky,
With the silent earth below,
We shall see far off to his lonely rock,
The lonely eagle go.

Then softly, softly will we tread
By inland streams to see,
Where the pelican of the silent north,
Sits there all silently.

But if thou love the Southern Seas,
And pleasant summer weather,
Come, let us mount this gallant ship,
And sail away together.

W. H.



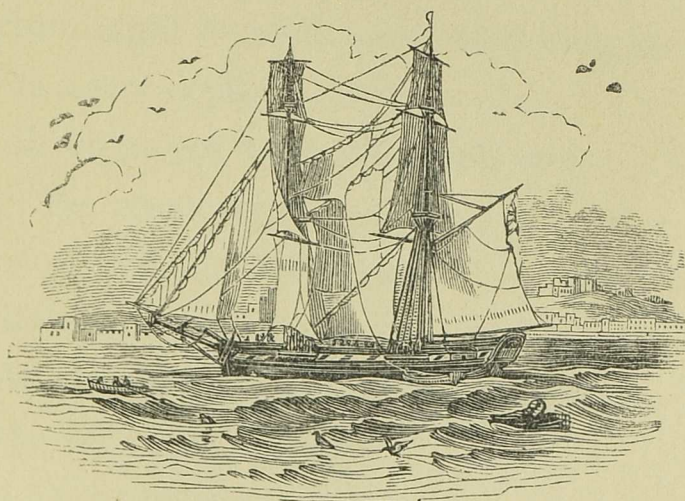
SOUTHERN SEAS.



YES! let us mount this gallant ship;
 Spread canvass to the wind—
 Up! we will seek the glowing South—
 Leave care and cold behind,
 Let the shark pursue through the
 waters blue
 Our flying vessel's track;
 Let strong winds blow, and rocks
 below

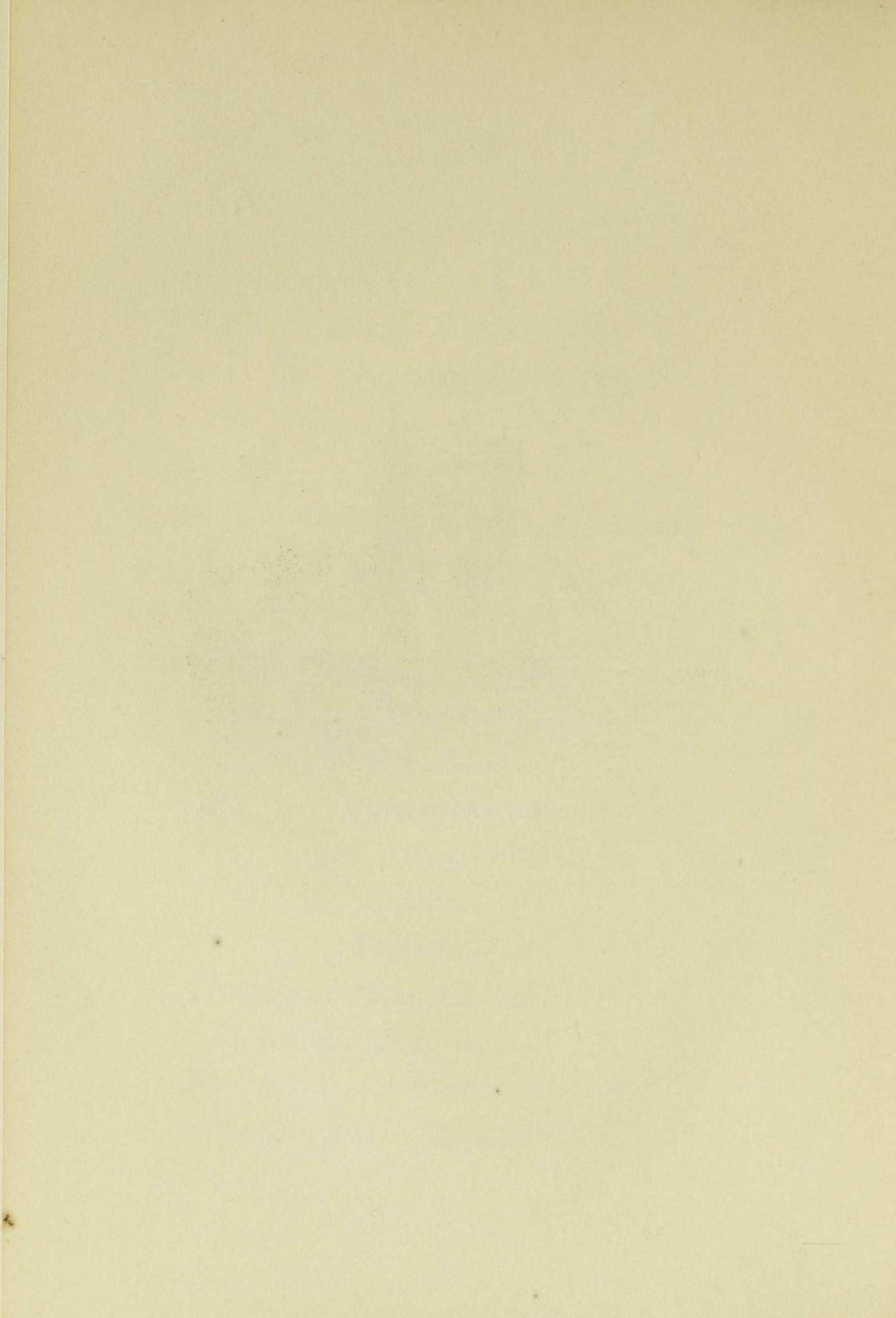
Threaten,—we turn not back.

Trusting in Him who holds the sea
 In his Almighty hand,
 We pass the awful waters wide—
 Tread many a far-off strand.



THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

[P. 98.]



Right onward as our course we hold,
From day to day, the sky
Above our head its arch shall spread
More glowing, bright, and high,
And from night to night—oh, what delight!
In its azure depths to mark
Stars all unknown come glittering out
Over the ocean dark.
The moon uprising like a sun,
So stately, large, and sheen,
And the very stars, like clustered moons,
In the crystal ether keen.
Whilst all about the ship below,
Strange fiery billows play,—
The ceaseless keel through liquid fire
Cuts wondrously its way.
But O, the south! the balmy south!
How warm the breezes float!
How warm the amber waters stream
From off our basking boat.

Come down, come down from the tall ship's side,
What a marvellous sight is here!
Look—purple rocks and crimson trees,
Down in the deep so clear.
See! where those shoals of dolphins go,
A glad and glorious band,
Sporting amongst the day-bright woods
Of a coral fairy-land.
See! on the violet sands beneath
How the gorgeous shells do glide!
O Sea! old Sea, who yet knows half
Of thy wonders and thy pride?
Look how the sea-plants trembling float
All like a mermaid's locks,
Waving in thread of ruby red
Over those nether rocks,
Heaving and sinking, soft and fair,
Here hyacinth—there green—
With many a stem of golden growth,
And starry flowers between.

But away! away! to upper day—
For monstrous shapes are here,—
Monsters of dark and wallowing bulk,
And horny eyeballs drear:
The tuskéd mouth, and the spiny fin,
Speckled and warted back,
The glittering swift, and the flabby slow,
Ramp through this deep sea track.
Away! away! to upper day,
To glance o'er the breezy brine,
And see the nautilus gladly sail,
The flying-fish leap and shine.
But what is that? 'Tis land!—'tis land!—
'Tis land!' the sailors cry.
Nay!—'tis a long and narrow cloud,
Betwixt the sea and sky.
'Tis land! 'tis land!' they cry once more—
And now comes breathing on
An odour of the living earth,
Such as the sea hath none.

But now I mark the rising shores !—
The purple hills !—the trees !
Ah ! what a glorious land is here,
What happy scenes are these !
See, how the tall palms lift their locks
From mountain clefts,—what vales,
Basking beneath the noon-tide sun,
That high and hotly sails.
Yet all about the breezy shore,
Unheedful of the glow,
Look how the children of the south
Are passing to and fro.
What noble forms ! what fairy place !
Cast anchor in this cove,
Push out the boat, for in this land
A little we must rove !
We'll wander on through wood and field,
We'll sit beneath the vine ;
We'll drink the limpid cocoa milk,
And pluck the native pine.

The bread-fruit and cassada-root,
And many a glowing berry,
Shall be our feast, for here, at least,
Why should we not be merry?
For 'tis a southern paradise,
All gladsome,—plain and shore—
A land so far, that here we are,
But shall be here no more.

We 've seen the splendid southern clime,
Its seas, and isles, and men,
So now!—back to a dearer land—
To England back again!

W. H.



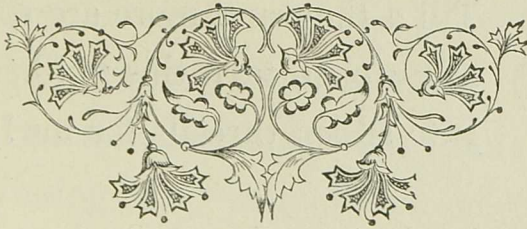
THE LAMB AND THE CHILD.



LITTLE lamb and little child,
 Inexperienced, meek and mild;
 Full of gambols, gay and wild;
 Innocent and undefiled,
 God, the Saviour, when on earth,
 Lamb in nature, child by birth
 Gave to you immortal worth!

Little lamb, without a stain,
 Thou, the Pascal, sufferedst pain,
 For the ancient Hebrew slain,
 As a type of man's great gain
 When the Lamb, the Lamb of God,
 Scourged and mocked at, and unshod,
 To the height of Calvary trod!

Little child, before whose sight
Sport the denizens of light,
And whose angel, clothed in white,
Sees the Father infinite,
Thou to us a type art given
Of the spirit cleansed and shriven,
Love-indwelling, fit for heaven !



THE SILK-WORM.



SILK-WORM on the mulberry-tree,
Spin a silken robe for me;
Draw the threads out fine and strong,
Longer yet—and very long;
Longer yet—'twill not be done
Till a thousand more are spun.
Silk-worm, turn this mulberry tree
Into silken threads for me!

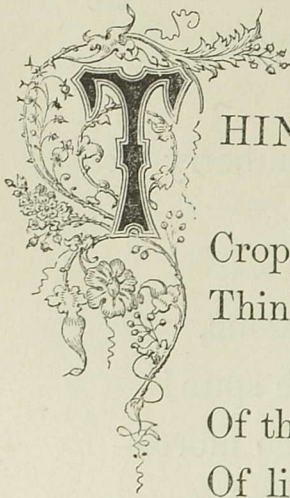
All day long, and many a day,
Busy silk-worms spin away;
Some are ending, some beginning;
Nothing thinking of but spinning!
Well for them! Like silver light
All the threads are smooth and bright;

Pure as day the silk must be,
Woven from the mulberry tree!

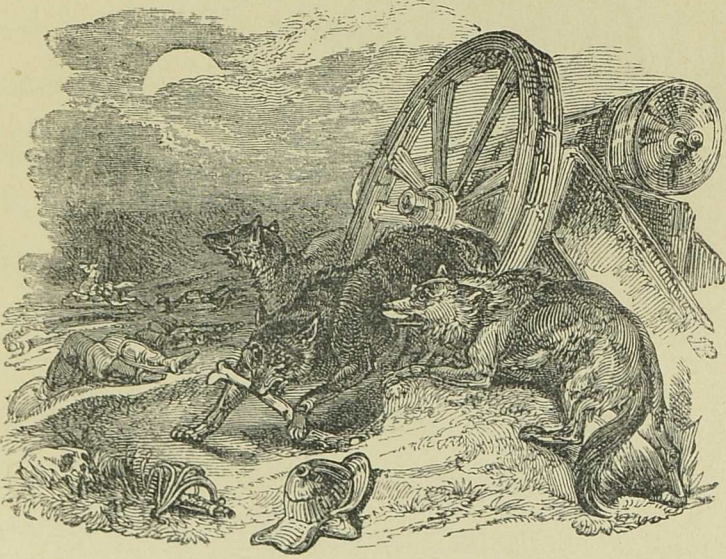
Ye are spinning well and fast;
'Twill be finished all at last,
Twenty thousand threads are drawn,
Finer than the finest lawn!
And as long, this silken twine,
As the equinoctial line!
What a change! The mulberry-tree
Turneth into silk for me!

Spinning ever! now 't is done,
Silken threads enough are spun!
Spinning, they will spin no more—
All their little lives are o'er!
Pile them up—a costly heap!—
Each in his coffin gone to sleep!
Silk-worm on the mulberry tree,
Thou hast spun and died for me!

THE WOLF.



THINK of the lamb in the fields of
 May,
 Cropping the dewy flowers for play ;
 Think of the sunshine, warm and
 clear ;
 Of the bending corn in golden ear ;
 Of little children singing low
 Through flowery meadows as they go ;
 Of cooing doves, and the hum of bees
 In the lime-trees' yellow racemes ;
 Of the pebbly waters gliding by,
 Of the woodbirds peaceful sylvan cry,



THE WOLF.

[P. 108.]

Then turn thy thought to a land of snow
Where the cutting icy wind doth blow—
A dreary land of mountains cold,
With ice-crags splintered, hoar, and old,
Jagged with woods of storm-beat pines,
Where a cold moon gleams, a cold sun shines!
And all through this dismal land we'll go
In a dog-drawn sledge o'er frozen snow,
On either hand the ice-rocks froze,
And a waste of trackless snow before!

Where are the men to guide us on?
Men! in these deserts there are none.
Men come not here unless to track
The ermine white or marten black.
Here we must speed alone.—But hark!
What sound was that? The wild wolf's bark!
The terrible wolf!—Is he anigh,
With his gaunt, lean frame and blood-shot eye?
Yes!—across the snow I saw the track
Where they have sped on, a hungry pack;

And see how the eager dogs rush on,
For they scent the track where the wolf has gone.
And beast and men are alike afraid
Of that cruellest creature that e'er was made!

Oh, the horrible wolves! methinks I hear
The sound of their barking drawing near;
Down from their dismal caves they drive,
And leave behind them nought alive;
Down from their caves they come by day,
Savage as mad dogs for their prey;
Down on the tracks where the hunters roam,
Down to the peasant's hut they come.
The peasant is waked from his pine-branch bed
By the direst, fiercest sound of dread,
A snuffing scent, a scratching sound,
Like a dog that rendeth up the ground;
Up from his bed he springs in fear,
For he knows that the cruel wolf is near.
A moment's pause—a moment more—
And he hears them snuffing 'neath his door.

Beneath his door he hears them mining,
Snuffing, snarling, scratching, whining !
Horrible sight ! no more he sees,
With terror his very senses freeze ;—
Horrible sounds ! he hears no more,
The wild wolves bound across his floor,
And the next moment lap his gore !
And ere the day comes o'er the hill,
The wolves are gone, the place is still,
And to none that dreadful death is known,
Save to some ermine hunter lone,
Who in that death foresees his own !

Or think thee now of a battle field,
Where lie the wounded with the killed ;
Hundreds of mangled men they lie ;
A horrible mass of agony !
The night comes down,—and in they bound,
The ravening wolves from the mountains round,
All day long have they come from far,
Snuffing that bloody field of war ;

But the rolling drum and the trumpet's bray,
And the strife of men through the livelong day,
For awhile kept the prowling wolves away.
But now when the roaring tumults cease,
In that dreadful hush, which is not peace,
The wolves rush in to have their will,
And to lap of living blood their fill.
Stark and stiff the dead men lie,
But the living—Oh, woe, to hear their cry,
When they feel the teeth of these cruel foes,
And hear them lap up the blood that flows!
Oh, shame, that ever it hath been said,
That bloody war is a glorious trade,
And that soldiers die upon honour's bed!
Let us hence, let us hence, for horrible war
Than the merciless wolf is more merciless far!



THE GARDEN.



HAD a garden when a child ;
 I kept it all in order !
 'T was full of flowers as it could be,
 And London-pride was its border.

And soon as came the pleasant spring,
 The singing birds built in it ;
 The blackbird and the throstle-cock,
 The woodlark and the linnet.

And all within my garden ran
 A labyrinth-walk so mazy ;
 In the middle there grew a yellow rose ;
 At each end a Michaelmas-daisy.

I had a bush of southern-wood,
And two of bright mezereon;
A peony root, a snow-white phlox,
And a plant of red valerian;

A lilac tree, and a guelder-rose;
A broom, and a tiger-lily;
And I walked a dozen miles to find
The true wild daffodilly.

I had columbines, both pink and blue,
And thalictrum like a feather;
And the bright goat's-beard, that shuts its leaves
Before a change of weather.

I had marigolds, and gilliflowers,
And pinks all pinks exceeding;
I'd a noble root of love-in-a-mist,
And plenty of love-lies-bleeding.

I had Jacob's ladder, Aaron's rod,
And the peacock-gentianella;
I had asters, more than I can tell,
And lupins blue and yellow.

I set a grain of Indian corn,
One day in an idle humour,
And the grain sprung up six feet or more,
My glory for a summer.

I found far off in the pleasant fields,
More flowers than I can mention;
I found the English asphodel,
And the spring and autumn gentian.

I found the orchis, fly and bee,
And the cistus of the mountain;
The money-wort, and the green hart's-tongue,
Beside an old wood fountain,

I found within another wood,
The rare pyrola blowing :
For wherever there was a curious flower,
I was sure to find it growing.

I set them in my garden beds,
Those beds I loved so dearly,
Where I laboured after set of sun,
And in summer mornings early.

Oh my pleasant garden-plot!—
A shrubbery was beside it,
And an old and mossy apple-tree,
With a woodbine wreathed to hide it.

There was a bower in my garden-plot,
A spiræa grew before it;
Behind it was a laburnum tree
And a wild hop clambered o'er it.

Ofttimes I sat within my bower,
Like a king in all his glory;
Ofttimes I read, and read for hours,
Some pleasant, wondrous story.

I read of gardens in old times,
Old, stately gardens, kingly,
Where people walked in gorgeous crowds,
Or for silent musing, singly.

I raised up visions in my brain,
The noblest and the fairest;
But still I loved my garden best,
And thought it far the rarest.

And all amongst my flowers I walked,
Like a miser 'midst his treasure:
For that pleasant plot of garden ground
Was a world of endless pleasure.

THE HEDGEHOG.



THOU poor little English porcu-
pine,

What a harassed and weary life
is thine !

And thou art a creature meek and
mild,

That wouldst not harm a sleeping
child.

Thou scarce can'st stir from thy tree-root,
But thy foes are up in hot pursuit;
Thou might'st be an asp, or hornèd snake,
Thou poor little martyr of the brake !

Thou scarce can'st put out that nose of thine;
Thou can'st not show a single spine,
But the urchin-rabble are in a rout,
With terrier curs to hunt thee out.

Poor old beast! one would think he knew
His foes so many, his friends so few,
For when he comes out, he's in a fright,
And hurries again to be out of sight.

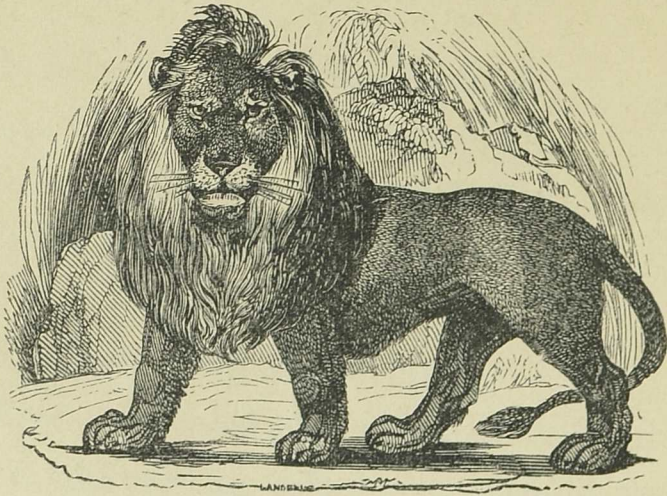
How unkind the world must seem to him,
Living under the thicket dusk and dim,
And finding his food of dry hedge-fruits
And insects small, amongst the roots.

How hard it must be to be kicked about,
If by chance his prickly back peeps out;
To be all his days misunderstood,
When he *could* not harm us if he *would*!

He's an innocent thing living under the blame
That he merits not, of an evil name;
He is weak and small,—and all he needs
Lies under the hedge amongst the weeds.

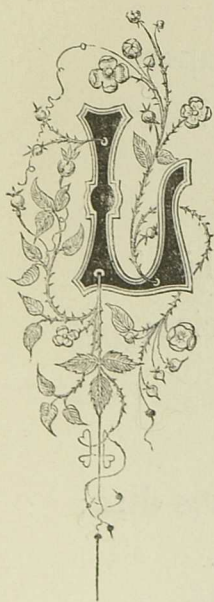
He robs not man of rest or food,
And all that he asks is quietude;
To be left by him, as a worthless stone,
Under the dry hedge-bank alone!

Poor little English porcupine,
What a troubled and weary life is thine!
I would that my pity thy foes could quell,
For thou art ill-used and meanest well!



THE LION.

THE LION.



LION, thou art girt with might !
 King by uncontested right ;
 Strength, and majesty, and pride
 Are in thee personified !
 Slavish doubt or timid fear
 Never came thy spirit near ;
 What it is to fly, or bow
 To a mightier than thou,
 Never has been known to thee,
 Creature terrible and free !

Power the Mightiest, gave the lion
 Sinews like to bands of iron ;

Gave him force which never failed;
Gave a heart that never quailed.
Triple-mailed coat of steel,
Plates of brass from head to heel,
Less defensive were in wearing
Than the lion's heart of daring;
Nor could towers of strength impart
Trust like that which keeps his heart.

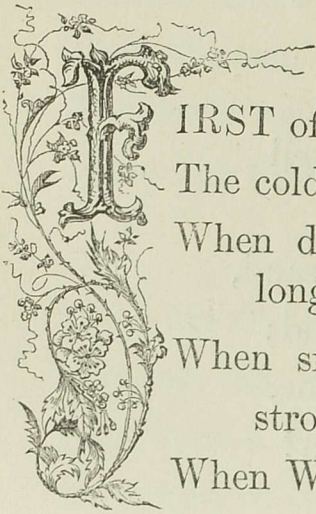
What are things to match with him?
Serpents old, and strong, and grim;
Seas upon a desert-shore;
Mountain-wildernesses hoar;
Night and storm, and earthquakes dire;
Thawless frost and raging fire—
All that's strong, and stern and dark,
All that doth not miss its mark,
All that makes man's nature tremble,
Doth the desert-king resemble!

When he sends his roaring forth,
Silence falls upon the earth;
For the creatures great and small,
Know his terror-breathing call,
And as if by death pursued,
Leave to him a solitude.

Lion, thou art made to dwell
In hot lands intractable,
And thyself, the sun, the sand,
Are a tyrannous triple band;
Lion-king and desert throne,
All the region is your own!



THE MONTHS.



FIRST of the months comes Janivier,
 The coldest month of all the year;
 When days are short and nights are
 long;
 When snows fall deep and frost is
 strong;
 When Wealth by fires doth count his
 gold,
 And Want stands shivering all a-cold.

Wet February next comes by,
 With chill damp earth, and dripping sky;
 But heart cheer up; the days speed on,—
 Winds blow; suns shine, and thaws are gone;

And in the garden may be seen
Upspringing flowers and buddings green.

March! ha, he comes like March of old,
A blustering, cordial friend and bold!
He calls the peasant to his toil,
And trims with him the wholesome soil.
Flocks multiply—the seed is sown—
Its increase is of heaven alone!

Next April comes with shine and showers,
Green mantling leaves and opening flowers,
Loud singing birds, low humming bees,
And the white blossomed orchard trees;
And that which busy March did sow,
Begins in April's warmth to grow.

The winter now is gone and past,
And flowery May advances fast;
Birds sing; rains fall; and sunshine glows,
Till the rich earth with joy o'erflows!

O Lord, who hast so crowned the spring,
We bless Thee for each gracious thing!

Come on, come on! 't is summer time,
The golden year is in its prime!
June speeds along 'midst flowers and dews,
Rainbows, clear skies, and sunset hues:
And hark the cuckoo! and the blithe
Low ringing of the early scythe!

The year is full! 't is bright July,
And God in thunder passeth by!
Far in the fields till close of day
The peasant people make the hay;
And darker grows the forest bough,
And singing birds are silent now.

Next, August comes: now look around,
The harvest-fields are golden-crowned;
And sturdy reapers bending, go
With scythe or sickle, all a-row;

And gleaners with their burdens boon
Come home beneath the harvest moon.

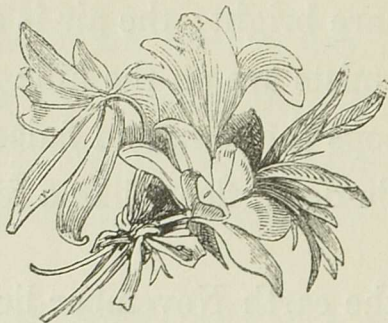
September, rich in corn and wine,
Of the twelve months completeth nine.
Now apples rosy grow; and seed
Ripens in tree and flower and weed ;
Now the green acorn groweth brown,
And ruddy nuts come showering down.

The summer time is ended now,
And autumn tinteth every bough :
The days are bright; the air is still,
October's mists are on the hill :
Down droops the fern, and fades the heather,
And thistle-down floats like a feather.

Dark on the earth November lies;
Cloud, fog, and storm o'ergloom the skies :
The matted leaves lie 'neath our tread;
And hollow winds wail overhead :

Pile up the hearth—its heartsome blaze
Cheers, like a sun, the darkest days!

The year it groweth old apace;
Eleven months have run their race,
And dull December brings to earth
That time which gave our Saviour birth.
The year is done!—Let all revere
The great, good Father of the year!



THE FOX.



N the rugged copse, in the ferny
brake,

The cunning red fox his den doth
make;

In the ancient turf of the baron's
land,

Where the gnarlèd oaks of the forest
stand;

In the widow's garden lone and bare;

On the hills which the poor man tills with care:

There ages ago he made his den,

And there he abideth in spite of men,

'T is a dismal place, for all the floor

With the bones of his prey is covered o'er;

'Tis darksome and lone, you can hardly trace
The farthest nook of the dreary place;
And there he skulks like a creature of ill,
And comes out when midnight is dark and still;
When the dismal owl, with his staring eye,
Sends forth from the ruin his screeching cry,
And the bat on his black leathern wings goes by;
Then out comes the fox with his thievish mind,
Looking this way and that way, before and
behind;

Then running along, thinking but of the theft
Of the one little hen the poor widow has left;
And he boldly and carelessly passes her shed,
For he knows very well she is sleeping in bed,
And that she has no dog to give notice of foes,
So he seizes his prey and home leisurely goes.

At times he steals down to the depth of the
wood,
And seizes the partridge in midst of her brood;

And the little grey rabbit, and young timid hare;
And the tall, stately pheasant, so gentle and fair;
And he buries them deep in some secret spot,
Where he knows man or hound can discover
 them not.

But vengeance comes down on the thief at
 length,

For they hunt him out of his place of strength,
And man and the fox are at desperate strife,
And the creature runs, and runs for his life:
And following close is the snuffing hound,
And hills and hollows they compass round;
Till at length he is seized, a caitiff stout,
And the wild dogs bark, and the hunters shout;
Then they cut off his tail and wave it on high,
Saying, 'Here fell the fox so thievish and sly!'
Thus may all oppressors of poor men die!
Then again mounts each hunter, and all ride
 away,
And have a good dinner to end the day;

And they drink the red wine and merrily sing,
'Death to the fox, and long life to the King!'

Yet blame not the fox! He but followeth still
The instinct God gave him, the instinct to kill.
And who knows but the evil in him may be
meant

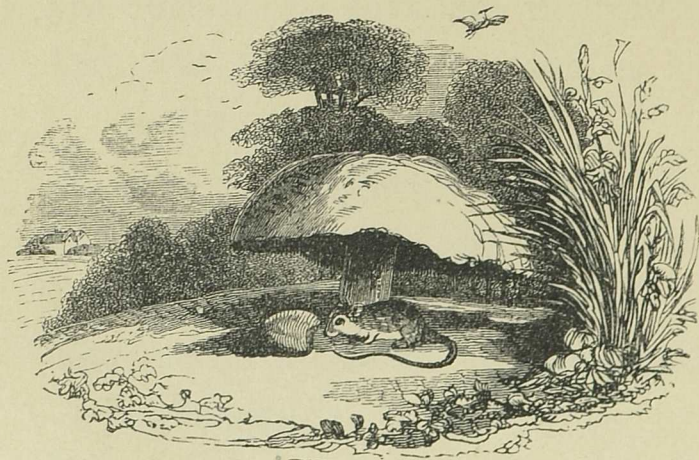
The same in ourselves, to ourselves to present?
And that when we desire not that which is
another's,

When we think less of our own pleasure than of
our brother's;

When we give good for evil, and all do our part
To bless and to comfort, with hand and with
heart,

Who knows but the fox may change also, and
stand

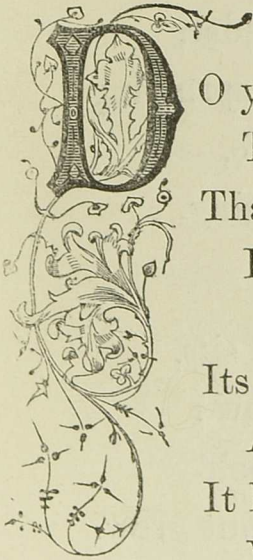
As the type of good service, of true heart and
hand?



THE WOOD-MOUSE.

[P. 133.]

THE WOOD-MOUSE.



O ye know the little wood-mouse,
That pretty little thing,
That sits amongst the forest leaves,
Beside the forest spring?

Its fur is red as the chestnut,
And it is small and slim,
It leads a life most innocent
Within the forest dim.

'T is a timid, gentle creature,
And seldom comes in sight;
It has a long and wiry tail,
And eyes both black and bright.

It makes its nest of soft, dry moss,
In a hole so deep and strong;
And there it sleeps secure and warm,
The dreary winter long.

And though it keeps no calendar,
It knows when flowers are springing;
And waketh to its summer life,
When nightingales are singing.

Upon the boughs the squirrel sits,
The wood-mouse plays below;
And plenty of food it finds itself
Where the beech and chestnut grow.

In the hedge-sparrow's nest it sits,
When the summer brood is fled,
And picks the berries from the bough
Of the hawthorn over-head.

I saw a little wood-mouse once,
Like Oberon in his hall,
With the green, green moss beneath his feet,
Sit under a mushroom tall.

I saw him sit and his dinner eat,
All under the forest tree;
His dinner of chestnut ripe and red,
And he ate it heartily.

I wish you could have seen him there;
It did my spirit good,
To see the small thing God had made
Thus eating in the wood.

I saw that He regardeth them—
Those creatures weak and small;
Their table in the wild is spread
By Him who cares for all!

REST-HARROW.



N the broomy hills,
 Where the wild thyme bloweth,
 There the red rest-harrow
 In its beauty groweth;

Where the slender hare-bell
 Is the blue-sky's fellow,
 And the little hawkweeds
 Spread their stars of yellow;

Where the sky-lark builds
 Its nest amongst the yarrow,
 Shooting through the sunny air
 Like a wingèd arrow;

Where the shepherd lads
Tend their flocks in summer,
And the piping ortolan
Is a July comer;

There the red rest-harrow
Groweth in its beauty,
Clinging to its mother earth
With obedient duty.

Man doth never tend it
As a careful warden,
Nor collect its podded seed
To adorn his garden.

But by Nature's hand
In the wilds 't is planted,
Like a thousand common things,
Given where it's wanted.

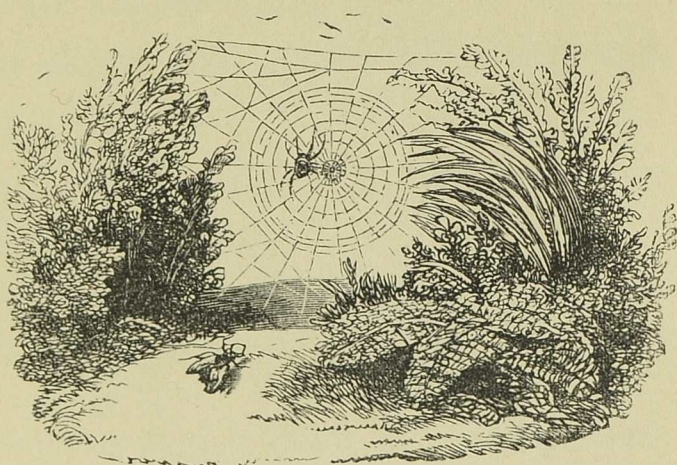
THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

AN APOLOGUE.

A NEW VERSION OF AN OLD STORY.



'WILL you walk into my parlour?'
 said the spider to the fly,
 'Tis the prettiest little parlour
 that ever you did spy;
 The way into my parlour is up
 a winding stair,
 And I have many curious things
 to shew when you are there.'
 'Oh no, no,' said the little fly,
 'to ask me is in vain,
 For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er
 come down again.'



THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

[P. 138.

‘I’m sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring
up so high;

Will you rest upon my little bed?’ said the
spider to the fly.

‘There are pretty curtains drawn around; the
sheets are fine and thin,

And if you like to rest awhile, I’ll snugly tuck
you in!’

‘Oh no, no,’ said the little fly, ‘for I’ve often
heard it said,

They never, never wake again, who sleep upon
your bed!’

Said the cunning spider to the fly, ‘Dear friend,
what can I do,

To prove the warm affection I’ve always felt for
you?

I have within my pantry good store of all that’s
nice;

I’m sure you’re very welcome—will you please to
take a slice?’

‘Oh no, no,’ said the little fly, ‘kind sir, that
cannot be,
I’ve heard what’s in your pantry, and I do not
wish to see!’

‘Sweet creature!’ said the spider, ‘you’re witty
and you’re wise,
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how bril-
liant are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you’ll step in one moment, dear, you shall
behold yourself.’
‘I thank you, gentle sir,’ she said, ‘for what
you’re pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I’ll call
another day.’
The spider turned him round about, and went
into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly would soon come
back again:

So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner
sly,
And set his table ready, to dine upon the fly.

Then he came out to his door again, and merrily
did sing,

‘Come hither, hither, pretty fly, with the pearl
and silver wing;

Your robes are green and purple—there’s a crest
upon your head;

Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine
are dull as lead!’

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little fly,

Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly
flitting by;

With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near
and nearer drew,

Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and
purple hue—

Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish
thing! At last,
Up jumped the cunning spider, and fiercely held
her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dis-
mal den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out
again!

And now, dear little children, who may this story
read,
To idle, silly flattering words, I pray you ne'er
give heed:
Unto an evil counsellor, close heart and ear and
eye,
And take a lesson from this tale, of the spider and
the fly.

THE
LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE NEST.



N books of travels I have heard
About the clever tailor-bird ;
A bird of wondrous skill, that sews,
Upon the bough whereon it grows,
A leaf unto a nest so fair
That with it nothing can compare ;
A light and lovely, airy thing
That vibrates with the breeze's wing.

Ah well ! it is with cunning power
That little artist makes her bower ;
But come into an English wood,
And I'll show you a work as good,

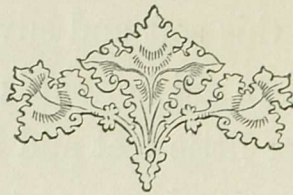
A work the tailor-bird's excelling,
A more elaborate, snugger dwelling;
More beautiful, upon my word,
Wrought by a little English bird.

There, where those boughs of black-thorn
 cross,
Behold that oval ball of moss;
Look all the forest round and round,
No fairer nest can e'er be found;
Observe it near, all knit together,
Moss, willow-down, and many a feather,
And filled within, as you may see,
As full of feathers as can be;
Whence it is called by country folk,
A fitting name, the Feather-poke;
But learned people, I have heard,
Parus caudatus call the bird,
And others, not the learned clan,
Call it Wood-pot, and Jug, and Can.

Ay, here's a nest! a nest indeed,
That doth all other nests exceed,
Propped with the black-thorn twigs beneath,
And festooned with a woodbine wreath!
Look at it near, all knit together,
Moss, willow-down, and many a feather;
So soft, so light, so wrought with grace,
So suited to this green-wood place,
And spangled o'er, as with the intent
Of giving fitting ornament,
With silvery flakes of lichen bright,
That shine like opals, dazzling white!

Think only of the creature small,
That wrought this soft and silvery ball,
Without a tool to aid her skill;
Nought but her little feet and bill—
Without a pattern whence to trace
This little roofed-in dwelling-place,
And does not in your bosoms spring
Love for this skilful little thing?

See, there's a window in the wall;
Peep in ; the house is not so small
But, snug and cosy, you shall see
A very numerous family!
Now count them—one, two, three, four, five—
Nay, *sixteen* merry things alive—
Sixteen young chirping things, all set
Where you your small hand could not get!
I'm glad you've seen it, for you never
Saw aught before so soft and clever!

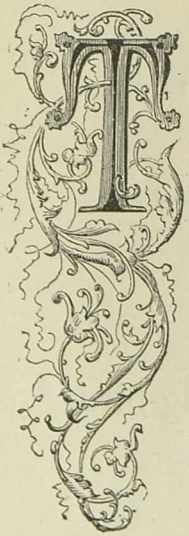




THE HUMMING BIRD.

[P. 147.]

THE HUMMING-BIRD.



THE humming-bird! the humming-
bird,

So fairy-like and bright;

It lives amongst the sunny flowers,
A creature of delight!

In the radiant islands of the East,
Where fragrant spices grow,
A thousand thousand humming-birds
Go glancing to and fro.

Like living fires they flit about,
Scarce larger than a bee,
Amongst the broad palmetto leaves,
And through the fan-palm tree.

And in those wild and verdant woods
Where stately moras tower,
Where hangs from branching tree to tree
The scarlet passion-flower ;

Where on the mighty river banks,
La Plate or Amazon,
The cayman, like an old tree trunk,
Lies basking in the sun ;

There builds her nest the humming-bird
Within the ancient wood,
Her nest of silky cotton down,
And rears her tiny brood.

She hangs it to a slender twig,
Where waves it light and free,
As the campanero tolls his song,
And rocks the mighty tree.

All crimson is her shining breast,
Like to the red, red rose;
Her wing is the changeful green and blue
That the neck of the peacock shews.

Thou happy, happy humming-bird,
No winter round thee lowers;
Thou never saw'st a leafless tree,
Nor land without sweet flowers:

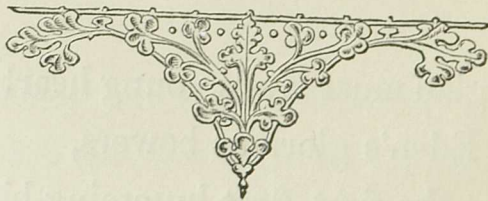
A reign of summer joyfulness
To thee for life is given;
Thy food the honey from the flower,
Thy drink the dew from heaven!

How glad must Eve's young heart have been,
In Eden's glorious bowers,
To see the first, first humming-bird
Amongst the first spring-flowers.

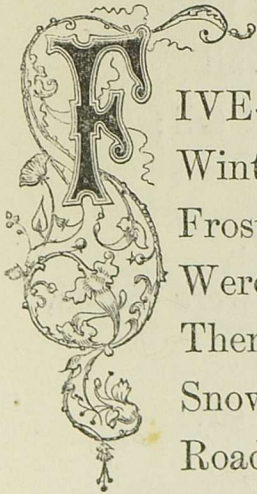
Amongst the rainbow butterflies,
Before the rainbow shone;
One moment glancing in her sight,
Another moment gone!

Thou little shining creature,
God saved thee from the Flood,
With the eagle of the mountain land,
And the tiger of the wood!

Who cared to save the elephant,
He also cared for thee;
And gave those broad lands for thy home
Where grows the cedar-tree!



OLD-FASHIONED WINTER.



FIVE-AND-TWENTY years ago,
 Winter was a time of snow ;
 Frost and snow I well remember
 Were the emblems of December.
 Then, in one night's time there fell
 Snow which made impassable
 Roads and streets, until the spade
 To every house a path had made.

Then the drifted snows were seen,
 Fit palace for a fairy-queen,
 With vaulted roof and porticoes
 Spangled o'er with diamond snows.

Then we heard of travellers weary,
On the commons wide and dreary,
Knowing not which way to go,
Dying in the pathless snow.

Then the boys at snow-ball played,
And snow-men and monsters made,
Or a piled-up, strong snow-wall
Pierced with arches wide and tall;
Or in orchards, all a-row,
Scooped-out cottages of snow.
Then the ponds and streams were frozen,
And the sliding-places chosen,
And no word the boys could say
But of sliding all the day.

Then on pavements you might see
Sawdust scattered carefully,
And good people, staff in hand,
Shod with strips of woollen band,

Creeping o'er the icy stones,
Having dread of broken bones.

Then the cows were in their shed;
And the sheep with hay were fed;
And the servants of the farm
Housed up every creature warm,
And, up-muffled, cheek and chin,
Brought the logs for evening in;
And the fire, so well supplied,
Crackled up the chimney wide;
And slumbrous was the hot fire-side.

Then the spinning-wheel went round,
With a dreamy, buzzing sound,
For the sheets and table-linen
Were of the good housewife's spinning,
And the village-weaver made
At his loom sufficient trade.

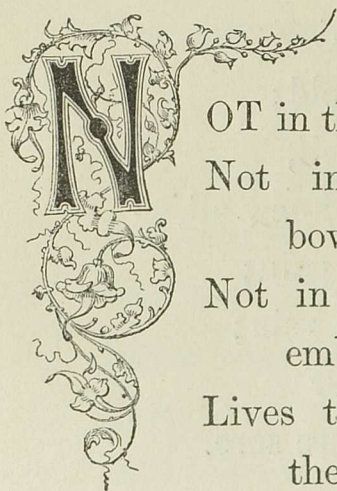
Then the icicles hung low
From the heavy roofs of snow,
Like a line of daggers strong,—
Some were short and some were long;—
Melting when the days were bright,
Freezing o'er again at night.

Then the chamber-windows bore
Fan-like leaves and branchings hoar ;
And the water in a trice,
In the ewer was solid ice.
Then hands were chapped and noses red ;
And folks were even cold in bed,
Till their teeth chattered in their head.
Then the famished birds were tame,
And hopping to the window came,
Begging little crumbs of bread ;
Begging to be housed and fed ;
And the finches in their need
Picked the pyracantha seed.

And the kindly heart was stirred,
Finding many a frozen bird!

Then, when sitting by the hearth,
Holy, Christian thoughts had birth;
Pity for the poor and old
Perishing in want and cold;
Pity for the children small,
Who, 'mid many wants, knew all,—
Hunger, nakedness, and pain;
Seeking kindness, but in vain;
Sorrow ever bubbling o'er
Till their little hearts were sore.
Then our gratitude arose
To Him who gave us more than those;
And human love sprung forth to bless
The lowly children of distress;
And the soul glowed with thankfulness.

THE OSTRICH.



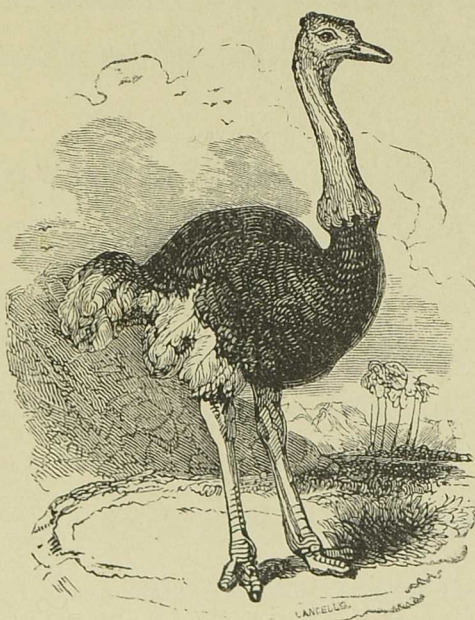
NOT in the land of a thousand flowers,
 Not in the glorious spice-wood
 bowers;

Not in fair islands by bright seas
 embraced,

Lives the wild ostrich, the bird of
 the waste.

Come on to the desert, his dwelling
 is there,

Where the breath of the simoom is hot in the air;
 To the desert, where never a green blade grew,
 Where never its shadow a broad tree threw,
 Where sands rise up, and in columns are wheeled
 By the winds of the desert, like hosts in the field;



THE OSTRICH.

[P. 156.]

Where the wild ass sends forth a lone, dissonant
bray,

And the herds of the wild horse speed on through
the day—

The creatures unbroken, with manes flying free,
Like the steeds of the whirlwind, if such there
may be.

Yes, there in the desert, like armies for war,
The flocks of the ostrich are seen from afar,
Speeding on, speeding on, o'er the desolate plain,
Whilst the fleet mounted Arab pursueth in vain!
But 'tis joy to the traveller who toils through
that land,

The egg of the ostrich to find in the sand;
For the egg of an ostrich sustaineth him wholly,
When weary with travel he journeyeth slowly
To the well of the desert, and finds it at last,
Seven days' journey from that he hath passed.

Or go to the Caffre-land,—what if you meet
A print in the sand, of the strong lion's feet!

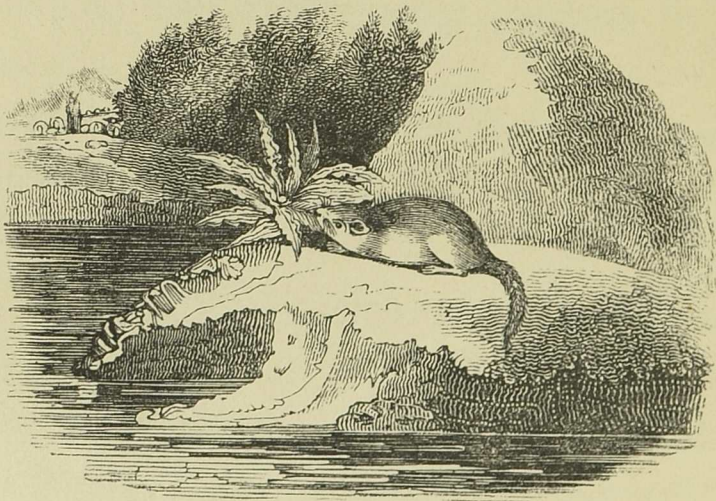
He is down in the thicket, asleep in his lair ;
Come on to the desert, the ostrich is there—
There, there ! where the zebras are flying in haste,
The herd of the ostrich comes down o'er the
waste—

Half running, half flying—what progress they
make !

Twang the bow ! not the arrow their flight can
o'ertake !

Strong bird of the wild, thou art gone like the
wind,

And thou leavest the cloud of thy speeding behind ;
Fare thee well ! in thy desolate region, farewell,
With the giraffe and lion, we leave thee to dwell !



THE DORMOUSE.

| P. 159.

THE DORMOUSE.



HE little dormouse is tawny red;
He makes against winter a nice snug
bed,

He makes his bed in a mossy bank,
Where the plants in the summer grow
tall and rank.

Away from the daylight, far under-
ground,

His sleep through the winter is quiet
and sound,

And when all above him it freezes and snows,
What is it to him, for he nought of it knows?
And till the cold time of the winter is gone,
The little dormouse keeps sleeping on.

But at last, in the fresh breezy days of the spring,
When the green leaves bud, and the merry birds
sing,

And the dread of the winter is over and past,
The little dormouse peeps out at last.

Out of his snug quiet burrow he wends,
And looks all about for his neighbours and
friends;

Then he says, as he sits at the foot of a larch,
'T is a beautiful day, for the first day of March!
The violet is blowing, the blue sky is clear;
The lark is upspringing, his carol I hear;
And in the green fields are the lamb and the
foal;

I am glad I'm not sleeping now down in my
hole!'

Then away he runs, in his merry mood,
Over the fields and into the wood,
To find any grain there may chance to be,
Or any small berry that hangs on the tree,

So, from early morning, till late at night,
Has the poor little creature his own delight,
Looking down to the earth and up to the sky,
Thinking, 'O! what a happy dormouse am I!'



THE WILD FRITILLARY.

FAMILIARLY CALLED THE WEEPING WIDOW, OR THE MOURNING
BRIDE.



LIKE a drooping thing of sorrow,
Sad to-day, more sad to-morrow;
Like a widow dark weeds wearing,
Anguish in her bosom bearing;
Like a nun in raiment sable,
Sorrow-bowed, inconsolable;
Like a melancholy fairy,
Art thou, Meadow-Fritillary!

Like the head of snake enchanted,
Where whilom the life hath panted,

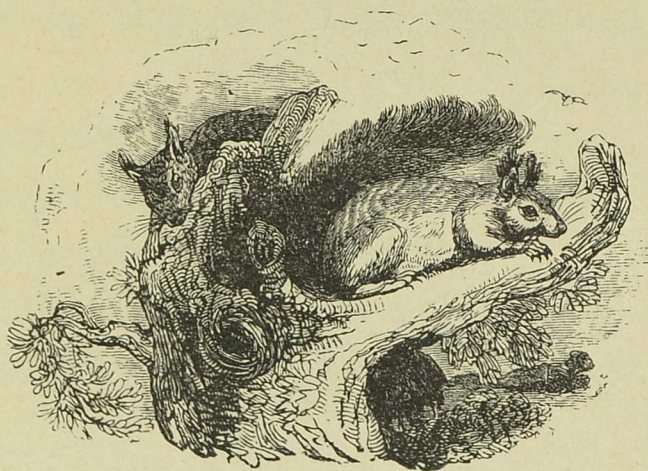
All its purple chequering scaly
Growing cold and dim and paly;
Like a dragon's head well moulded,
Scaly jaws together folded,
Is the bud so dusk and airy,
Of the wild Field-Fritillary!

Like a joy my memory knoweth—
In my native fields it groweth;
Like the voice of one long parted,
Calling to the faithful hearted;
Like an unexpected pleasure
That hath neither stint nor measure;
Like a bountiful good fairy,
Do I hail thee, Fritillary!

THE SQUIRREL.



HE pretty, red squirrel lives up in a
tree,
A little blithe creature as ever can
be;
He dwells in the boughs where the
stock-dove broods,
Far in the shades of the green sum-
mer woods;
His food is the young juicy cones of
the pine,
And the milky beech-nut is his bread and his
wine.



THE SQUIRREL.

[P. 164.]

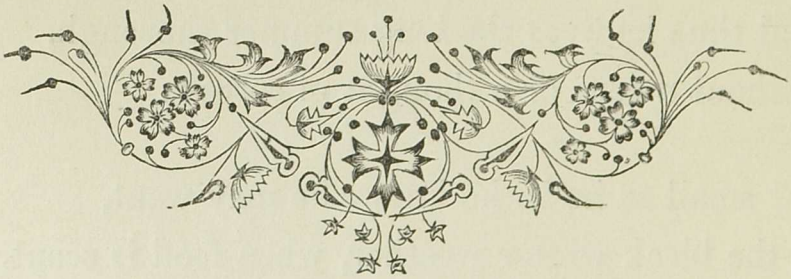
In the joy of his nature he frisks with a bound
To the topmost twigs, and then down to the
ground;

Then up again like a wingèd thing
And from tree to tree with a vaulting spring;
Then he sits up aloft, and looks waggish and
queer,

As if he would say, 'Ay, follow me here!'
And then he grows pettish, and stamps his foot;
And then independently cracks his nut;
And thus he lives the long summer thorough,
Without a care or a thought of sorrow.

But small as he is, he knows he may want,
In the bleak winter weather, when food is scant,
So he finds a hole in an old tree's core,
And there makes his nest, and lays up his store;
Then when cold winter comes, and the trees are
bare,
When the white snow is falling, and keen is the
air,

He heeds it not, as he sits by himself,
In his warm little nest, with his nuts on his shelf,
O wise, little squirrel! no wonder that he,
In the green summer woods is as blithe as can
be!



THE GIRL AND THE DOVE.



Y father is served by an old
henchman;

My mother by the stately Mistress
Ann;

My brother by a little foot-page so
free,

But this true dove it serveth me!

The old henchman is rude and rough,
His foot it is heavy, his speech is gruff;
Whilst Mistress Ann cannot smile if she would,
With her pursed-up mouth, and pinched-up
hood.

The little foot-page, he is bold and vain,
And he needs, as much as a horse, the rein,
But my true dove, it is meek and wise,
And I read its heart in its gentle eyes.

My father's squire, the henchman old,
He serveth him not for love, but gold;
And away this day from his hall would flee,
Could he win but a nobler serving-fee.

And the mistress Ann she would not stay
To wait on my mother one single day,
Although she has served her for many a year,
Were it not for the winning her silken gear.

And that light foot-page with his swinging
feather,
I know what keeps master and man together;—
The master has gold in a purse so fair,
And he knows how to spend far better than
spare.

But the dove that was ta'en from the chestnut
tree,

For nothing but love it serveth me;
I bade it begone on a morn in May,
But it looked in my eyes, and begged to stay.

I showed it the woods so green and fair;
I bade it list to the breezy air,
To the coo of the doves, so wild and low,
But it clung to my hand and would not go.

Ay, then, let the little foot-page so gay,
Mimic his master as best he may;
Let the mistress Ann be as grave as an owl;
And the henchman put on his darkest scowl

I love far better than all the three,
The true little dove that serveth me;
That is always merry and kind and good,
And hath left for me its own green-wood.

THE NAUTILUS.



LIKE an ocean-breeze afloat,
 In a little pearly boat—
 Pearl within and round about,
 And a silken streamer out,
 Over the sea, over the sea,
 Merrily, merrily saileth he !

Not for battle, not for pelf,
 But to pleasure his own self,
 Sails he on for many a league,
 Nor knoweth hunger nor fatigue;
 Past many a rock, past many a shore,
 Nor shifts a sail, nor lifts an oar:
 O the joy of sailing thus,
 Like a brave old Nautilus !

Much doth know the northern whaler,
More the great Pacific sailor ;
And Phœnicians, old and grey,
In old times knew more than they ;
But, oh ! daring voyager small,
More thou knowest than they all !
Thou didst laugh at sun and breeze,
On the new created seas :
Thou wast with the dragon broods
In the old sea-solitudes,
Sailing in the new-made light
With the stony ammonite !
Didst survive the awful shock
That turned the ocean-bed to rock ;
And changed its myriad living swarms
To the marble's veined forms—
Fossil-scrolls that tell of change
Sudden, terrible, and strange !

Thou wast there !—thy little boat,
Airy voyager, kept afloat

O'er the waters wild and dismal,
O'er the yawning gulfs abysmal;
Amid wreck and overturning,
Rock-imbedding, heaving, burning—
Mid the tumult and the stir,
Thou, most ancient mariner,
In that pearly boat of thine,
Sat'st upon the troubled brine!

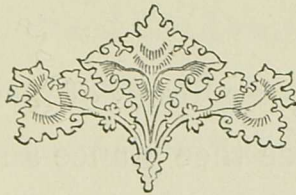
Then thou saw'st the settling ocean,
Calming from its wild commotion,
And, less mighty than the first,
Forth a new creation burst!
Saw'st each crested billow rife
With ten thousand forms of life;
Saw'st the budding sea-weed grow
In the tranquil deeps below,
And within the ocean mines
Hourly-branching corallines.

Thou didst know the sea, ere man
His first voyage had began—

All the world hadst sailed about
Ere America was found out;
Ere Ulysses and his men
Sailed for Ithaca again;
Ere among the isles of Greece
Went Jason for the golden Fleece.

Thou wast sailing o'er the sea,
Brave old voyager, merrily,
Whilst within the forest grew
The tree which made the first canoe.

Daring circumnavigator,
Would thou wast thine own narrator!



THE DRAGON-FLY.



WITH wings like crystal air,
 Dyed with the rainbow's dye;
 Fluttering here and there,
 Pr'ythee tell me, Dragon-fly,
 Whence thou comest,
 Where thou roamest,
 Art thou of the earth or sky?

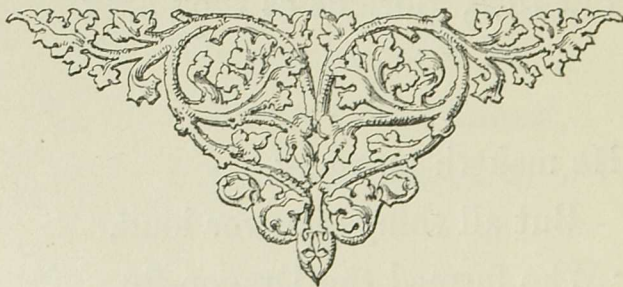
'Mongst plumes of meadow-sweet
 I see thee glance and play,
 Or light with airy feet
 Upon a nodding spray,

Or sailing slow,
I see thee go
In sunshine far away.

Tell me, pr'ythee, Dragon fly,
What and whence thou art?
Whether of the earth or sky,
Or of flowers a part?
And who together,
This fine weather,
Put thee, glorious as thou art?

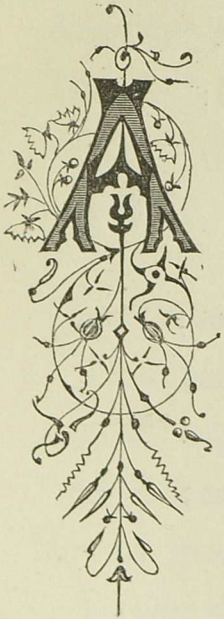
He maketh no reply,
But all things answer loud,
'Who formed the Dragon-fly,
Formed sun and sea and cloud;
Formed flower and tree;
Formed me and thee,
With nobler gifts endowed!'

Save for the Eternal Thought,
Bright shape thou hadst not been,
He from dull matter wrought
Thy purple and thy green;
And made thee take,
E'en for my sake,
Thy beauty and thy sheen!



THE WILD SPRING-CROCUS

IN NOTTINGHAM MEADOWS.



H, though it is an English flower,
 It only groweth here and there:
 Through merry England you might
 ride;
 Through all its length from side to
 side;
 Through fifty counties, nor have
 spied
 This flower so passing fair.

But in these meadows it is growing,
 And now it is the early spring;

And see from out the kindly earth
How thousand thousands issue forth,
As if it gloried to give birth
To such a lovely thing.

Like lilac-flame its colour glows,
Tender, and yet so clearly bright,
That all for miles and miles about,
The splendid meadow shineth out;
And far-off village children shout
To see the welcome sight.

I love the odorous hawthorn flower;
I love the wilding's bloom to see;
I love the light anemones,
That tremble to the faintest breeze;
And hyacinth-like orchises
Are very dear to me!

The star-wort is a fairy-flower;
The violet is a thing to prize;

The wild-pink on the craggy ledge ;
The waving sword-like water-sedge,
And e'en the Robin-run-i'-th'-hedge,
Are precious in mine eyes.

Yes, yes, I love them all, bright things !
But then, such glorious flowers as these
Are dearer still—I'll tell you why,
There's joy in many and many an eye
When first goes forth the welcome cry,
Of "lo, the Crocuses !"

Then little toiling children leave
Their care, and here by thousands throng,
And through the shining meadow run,
And gather them, not one by one,
But by grasped handfuls, where are none
To say that they do wrong.

They run, they leap, they shout for joy ;
They bring their infant brethren here ;

They fill each little pinafore ;
They bear their baskets brimming o'er ;
Within their very hearts they store
This first joy of the year.

Yes, joy in these abundant meadows
Pours out like to the earth's o'erflowing ;
And, less that they are beautiful
Than that they are so plentiful,
So free for every child to pull,
I love to see them growing.

And here, in our own fields they grow—
An English flower, but very rare ;
Through all the kingdom you may ride,
O'er marshy flat, on mountain side,
Nor ever see, outstretching wide,
Such flowery meadows fair !

THE SWALLOW.



WITTERING Swallow, fluttering
Swallow,

Art come back again?

Come from water-bed or hollow,

Where thou winter-long hast lain?

Nay, I'll not believe it, Swallow,

Not in England hast thou tarried;

Many a day,

Far away,

Has thy wing been wearied,

Over continent and isle,

Many and many and many a mile!

Tell me pr'ythee bird, the story,

Of thy six months' migratory!

If thou wert a human traveller,
We a quarto book should see;
Thou wouldst be the sage unraveller
Of some dark, old mystery ;
Thou wouldst tell the wise men, Swallow,
Of the rivers' hidden fountains ;
Plain and glen,
And savage men,
And Affghans of the mountains ;
Creatures, plants, and men unknown,
And cities in the deserts lone :
Thou wouldst be, thou far-land dweller,
Like an Arab story-teller !

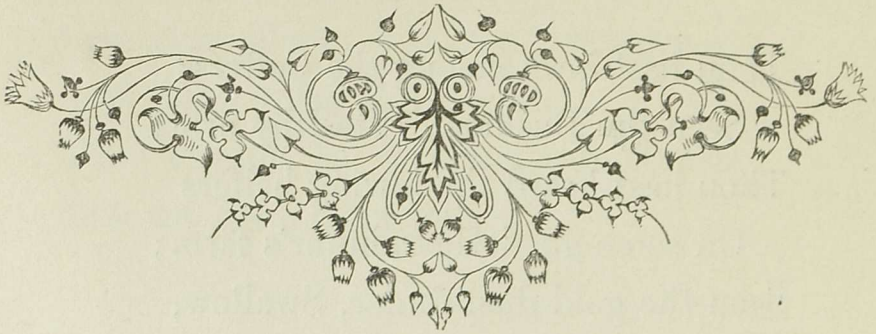
Was it in a temple, Swallow ;
In some Moorish minaret,
In some caverns' gloomy hollow,
Where the lion and serpent met,
That thy nest was builded, Swallow ?

Did the Negro people meet thee
With a word
Of welcome, bird,
Kind as that with which *we* greet thee?
Pr'ythee tell me how and where
Thou wast guided through the air;
Pr'ythee cease thy building-labour,
And tell o'er thy travels, neighbour!

Thou hast been among the Caffres;
Seen the Bushman's stealthy arm;
Thou hast heard the lowing heifers
On some good Herrnhuter's farm;
Seen the gold-dust-finder, Swallow,
Heard the lion-hunters' holla!

Peace and strife,
And much of life
Hast thou witnessed, wandering Swallow.
Tell but this, we'll leave the rest,
Which is wisest, which is best;

Tell, which happiest, if thou can,
Hottentot or Englishman?—
Nought for answer can we get,
Save twitter, twitter, twitter, twet!



MORNING THOUGHTS.



THE summer sun is shining
Upon a world so bright !
The dew upon each grassy blade ;
The golden light, the depth of
shade,
All seem as they were only made
To minister delight.

From giant trees, strong branchèd,
And all their veinèd leaves ;
From little birds that madly sing ;
From insects fluttering on the wing ;
Ay, from the very meanest thing,
My spirit joy receives.

I think of angel voices

When the birds' songs I hear;
Of that celestial city, bright
With jacinth, gold, and chrysolite,
When, with its blazing pomp of light,
The morning doth appear!

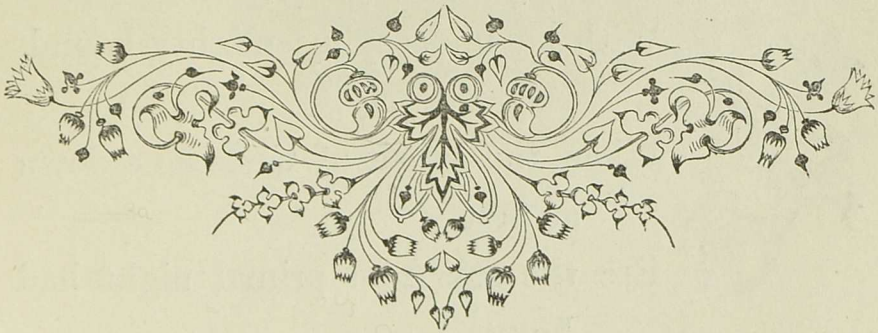
I think of that great River

That from the Throne flows free;
Of weary pilgrims on its brink,
Who, thirsting, have come down to drink;
Of that unfailing Stream I think,
When earthly streams I see.

I think of pain and dying,

As that which is but nought,
When glorious morning, warm and bright,
With all its voices of delight,
From the chill darkness of the night,
Like a new life, is brought.

I think of human sorrow
But as of clouds that brood
Upon the bosom of the day,
And the next moment pass away ;
And with a trusting heart I say,
Thank God, *all things are good !*



THE SEA.



HE sea it is deep, the sea it is wide;
And it girdeth the earth on every
side,

On every side it girds it round,
With an undecaying, mighty bound.

When the Spirit of God came down
at first,

Ere the day from primal night had
burst,

Before the mountains sprung to birth,
The dark, deep waters veiled the earth,
Like a youthful giant roused from sleep,
At creation's call uprose the Deep,



WANDERER
THE SEA.

[P. 188.]

And his crested waves tossed up their spray,
As the bonds of his ancient rest gave way;
And a voice went up in that stillness vast,
As if life through a mighty heart had passed.

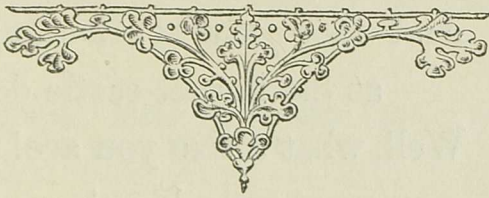
Oh ancient, wide, unfathomed Sea,
Ere the mountains were, God fashioned thee;
And gave in thine awful depths to dwell
Things like thyself untamable—
The dragons old, and the harpy brood,
Were the lords of thine early solitude!

But night came down on that ancient day,
And that mighty race was swept away;
And death thy fathomless depths passed through;
And thy waters were meted out anew;
And then on thy calmer breast were seen
The verdant crests of islands green;
And mountains in their strength came forth,
And trees and flowers arrayed the earth

Then the Dolphin first his gambols played,
In his rainbow-tinted scales arrayed ;
And down below all fretted and frore,
Was wrought the coral and madrepore ;
And amongst the sea-weeds green and red,
Like flocks of the valley the turtles fed ;
And the sea-flowers budded and opened wide
In the lustre of waters deepened and dyed ;
And the little nautilus, set afloat
On thy bounding tide his pearly boat ;
And the whale sprang forth in his vigorous play ;
And shoals of the flying-fish leaped into day ;
And the pearl-fish under thy world of waves
Laid up his store in the old sea-caves.

Then man came down, and with silent awe
The majesty of waters saw ;
And he felt like a humbled thing of fear,
As he stood in that Presence august, severe.
Till he saw how the innocent creatures played
In the billowy depths, and were not afraid ;

Till he saw how the nautilus spread his sail,
And caught as it blew the favouring gale ;
And great and small through the watery realm
Were steered as it were by a veering helm ;
Then his heart grew bold, and his will grew strong,
And he pondered in vigilant thought not long
Ere he fashioned a boat of a hollow tree,
And thus became lord of the mighty Sea.



THE HORNET.



O, there at last I've found you, my
famous old fellow!

Ay, and mighty grand besides, in
your suit of red and yellow!

I often have heard talk of you, but
ne'er saw you before,

And there you're standing sentinel
at the hornet-castle door!

Well, what a size you are! just like a
great wasp-king!

What a solemn buzz you make, now you're upon
the wing!

I'm sure I do not wonder that people fear your
sting!

So! so!—Don't be so angry! Why do you come
at me

With a swoop and with a hum,—is't a crime to
look at ye?

See where the testy fellow goes whiz into the
hole,

And brings out from the hollow tree his fellows
in a shoal.

Hark! what an awful, hollow boom! How fierce
they come! I'd rather

Just quietly step back, and stand from them a
little farther.

There, now, the hornet-host is retreating to its
den,

And so, good Mr. Sentinel—lo! here I am
again!

Well! how the little angry wretch doth stamp
and raise his head,

And flirt his wings, and seem to say, 'Come here
—I'll sting you dead!'

No, thank you, fierce Sir Hornet,—that's not at all inviting:

But what a pair of shears the fellow has for biting!

What a pair of monstrous shears to carry at his head!

If wasp or fly come in their gripe, that moment he is dead!

There! bite in two the whip-lash, as we poke it at your chin!

See, how he bites! but it is tough, and again he hurries in.

Ho! ho! we soon shall have the whole vindictive race,

With a hurry and a scurry, all flying in our face.
To potter in a Hornet's nest, is a proverb old and good,

So it's just as well to take the hint, and retreat into the wood.

Now here behind this hazel-bush we safely may look out,

And see what all the colony of hornets is about.
Why what a furious troop it is, how fierce they
 seem to be,
As they fly now in the sunshine, now in shadow
 of the tree !
And yet they're noble insects ! their bodies red
 and yellow,
And large almost as little birds, how richly toned
 and mellow.
And these old woods, so full of trees, all hollow
 and decayed,
Must be a perfect paradise, for the hornet legions
 made.
Secure from village lads, and from gardeners'
 watchful eyes,
They may build their paper-nests, and issue for
 supplies
To orchards or to gardens, for plum, and peach,
 and pear,—
With wasp, fly, ant, and earwig, they'll have a
 giant's share.


And you, stout Mr. Sentinel, there standing at
the door,
Though Homer said in his time, 'the hornet's
soul all o'er,'—
You're not so *very* spiritual, but soon some sunny
morning
I may find you in a green-gage, and give you
little warning,
Or feeding in a Windsor pear; or at the juicy
stalk
Of my negro-boy, grand dahlia,—too heavy much
to walk;
Ay, very much too heavy,—that juicy stem de-
ceives,—
'Makes faint with too much sweet such heavy-
wingèd thieves.'
Too heavy much to walk,—then, pray, how can
you fly?
No, there you'll drop upon the ground, and there
you're doomed to die!

The hornet is an insect that every one has heard of, because the fearful effects of its sting and its fierceness are proverbial ; but it is by no means common in many parts of the country. In the midland counties hornets are often talked of, but rarely seen. We have lived in several of the midland counties, and seen a good deal of them, but never saw a hornet there. When residing in Surrey, we found plenty of them. They came buzzing into the house, and were almost as common in the garden as wasps, devouring the fruits above-mentioned, and also as voracious of the green, tender bark of the dahlia, as ants are of the juice of the yucca. They peel the young branches with their nippers or shears, as a rabbit peels a young tree ; and wasps and the great blue-bottle and other flies follow in their train, and suck its juice greedily. In common, too, with the wasps, which by their side appear very diminutive insects, they gorge themselves so with the pulp of fruit, as to drop

heavily on the earth on being suddenly disturbed, and are then easily destroyed. They frequently make their nests in the thatch of cottages and out-buildings, where it is difficult to destroy them, as in such situations neither fire, sulphur, nor gunpowder can be used, and producing large swarms there, they are dangerous and devouring neighbours.

On Bookham Common, a pleasant wide tract, overgrown with trees, principally oaks, and resembling a forest with its fern and green turfy glades much more than a common, we found two nests within a few yards of each other, in two hollow trees, where the sentinel, and indeed the whole swarms, behaved themselves as above represented. Whether three of these insects are sufficient to kill a horse, as the old country saying avers, is doubtful; but, from their size, the irritability of their nature, and the appearance of their stings, they are very formidable creatures indeed.

THE FLOWER-LESSON.



COUSIN MARION, come and see
What these pretty flowers may be.
Yester-morn my brother John,
Ere the shining dewes were gone,
He and I set out to go
To the heights of Eder-low,
And these flowers grew by the way;
What their names, I pray thee say!

Thus, upon a summer noon,
In the flowery month of June,
Spoke a little country-maiden,
To her cousin, flower-laden;

‘ Here is bud and here is bell—
What their names, I pray thee tell?’

Down the merry maidens bent;
Each upon her task intent;
Happy-hearted child was each,
This to listen, that to teach,
‘ Here is bud and here is bell—
What their names, sweet Marion, tell?’

MARION.

This, the ladies’-mantle, see—
Silken, as it ought to be,
Folded, fan-like, with such care,
As for bright Queen Mab to wear.
That—in wayside woods it grows—
Is our English guelder-rose.

AMY.

In a little running brook,
Where came never fisher’s hook,

Where the birds build all unhurt,
Grew this flower.

MARION.

'Tis money-wort;
Well I love those shady nooks,
Love this flower, and love those brooks.
This,—the water-violet,—

AMY.

In a meadow-pool we met,
Where the stately water-lily
Lay so marble-like and stilly!

MARION.

This,—oh yes I know it well,—
Is the English asphodel:
In the turfy bogs you found it,
Brown osmunda growing round it.

AMY.

Where the shining lizard hideth,
Where the speckled viper slideth,—

MARION.

Where the spicy sweet-gale springs,
And afar its odour flings;
All amongst the mosses many,
On those wilds so brown and fenny,
'Mongst the wortle-berries crude,
In a trackless solitude,
Shining out, like sunshine yellow,
In a picture old and mellow,
Lay the beds of asphodel;—
Golden flowers! I love them well!
These—the columbines, dark blue—

AMY.

In the woods of Eder grew,
Nodding on their graceful stems
Like to sapphire diadems.

MARION.

This—the bearded way-side barley—
Groweth late and cometh early,
Dry and husky, crisp and hard,
Like this grass, the wiry nard.
Ah, and here's the wormwood hoary ;
And the yellow fumitory ;
And the trailing snap-dragon ;
These love ruins, every one :
In some ancient place they grew.

AMY.

Cousin Marion, that is true,—
On the abbey's ruined wall,
In the dry turf grew they all ;—
This sprang in the woods above—

MARION.

That strange plant is called true-love,
Four round leaves and one dull flower,
Fitted for enchanter's bower.

AMY.

Here's the sky-blue periwinkle.

MARION.

There the sundew's diamonds twinkle;
This—its name I scarce need tell—
Is the scarlet pimpernel,
'Mongst the budding corn it grew.

AMY.

Marion, look! this flower so blue,
On the rocky heights we found,
In the cairn-stones' mossy round,
Where the cool, fresh breezes blow
On the top of Eder-low.

MARION.

Yes, I know the breezy hill,
Solitary, stern, and still,—
Yes, with eager feet I've ran
For the blue valerian.

—Dear to me that old hill's crown,
With its turf so dry and brown,
And its ring of mossy stone!

AMY.

Would that we that place had known!

MARION.

Dear to me the raven's cry,
Sounding as it soareth by;—
Dear to me the grey-faced sheep,
Standing timidly to peep
But one moment, then are gone.

AMY.

Would that we these things had known!
But, sweet cousin Marion,
On the morrow let us go,
Thou with us, to Eder-low.

Brother John right glad will be—
We shall make a merry three,
Let us on the morrow go!

MARION.

Happy thought! to Eder-low!



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