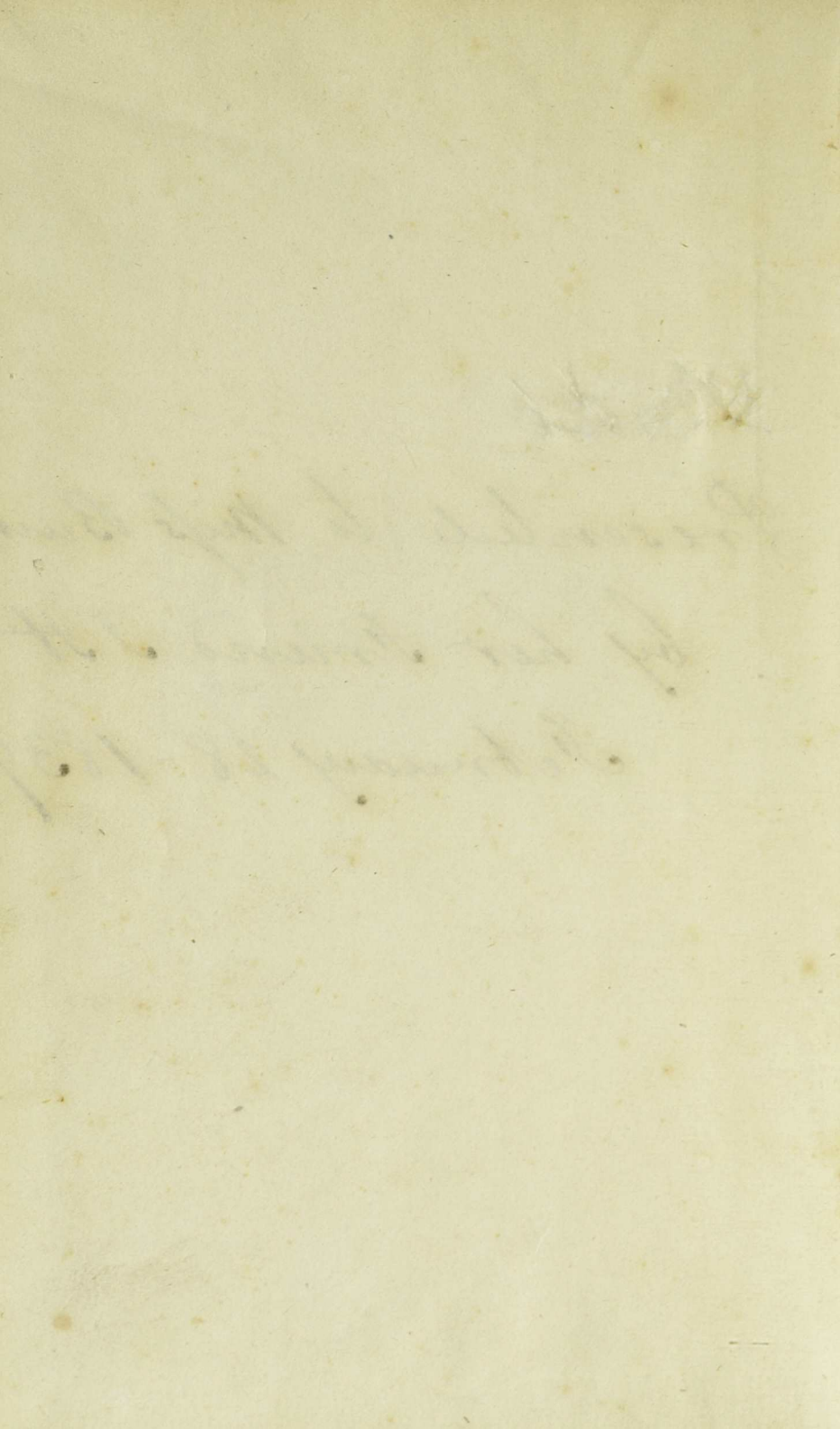
  
Presented to Miss Burk  
by her Friend J H  
February 28 - 1839



# THE CHRISTMAS LIBRARY.

VOL. I.

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BIRDS AND FLOWERS

AND

OTHER COUNTRY THINGS.

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BY

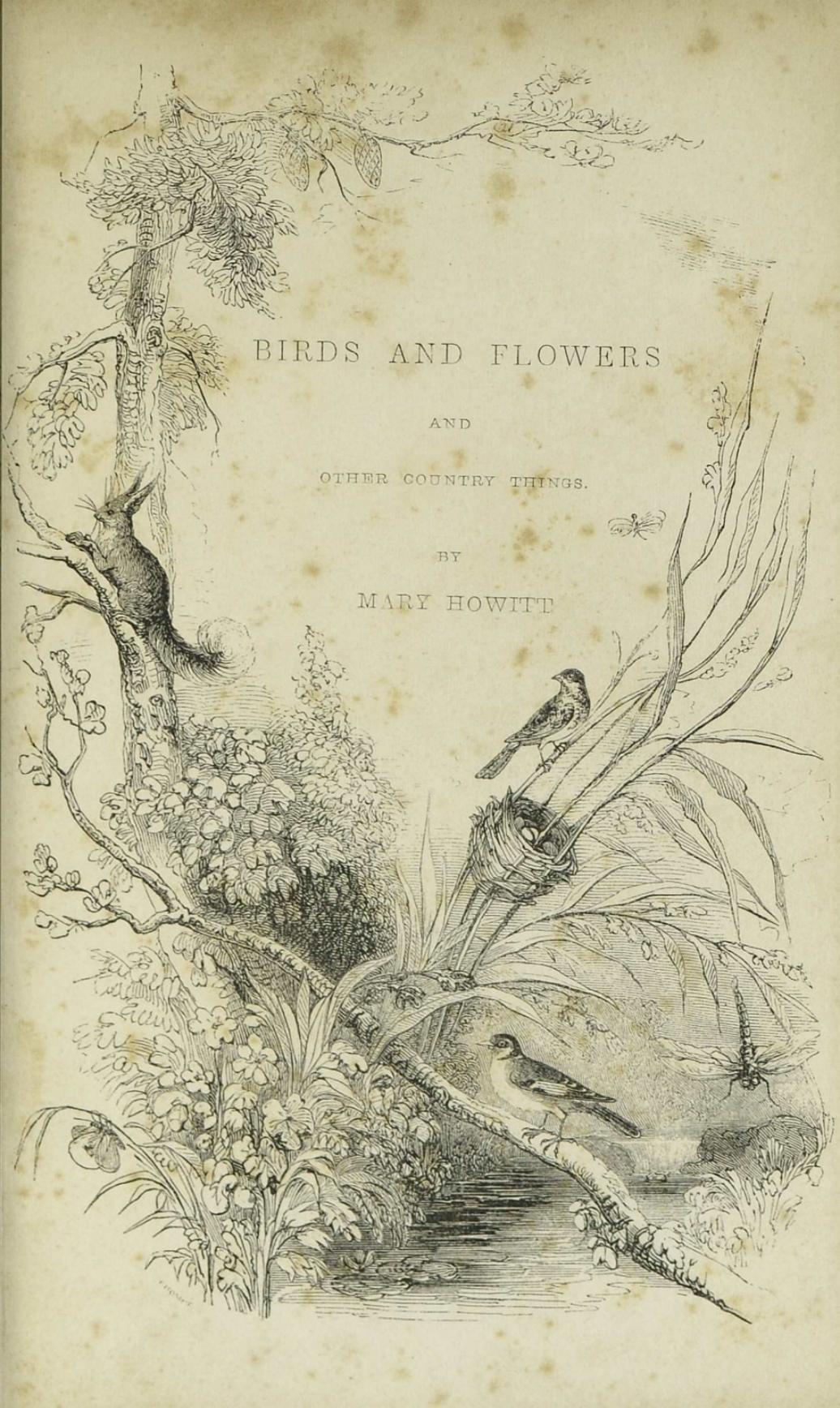
MARY HOWITT.

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LONDON:  
DARTON AND CLARK.  
1838.







BIRDS AND FLOWERS

AND

OTHER COUNTRY THINGS.

BY

MARY HOWITT



TO

JOHN HENRY AND WILLIAM GODFREY HOWITT,

THESE POEMS,

SOME OF WHICH THEY WERE THE FIRST TO READ AND

APPROVE,

ARE INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR AFFECTIONATE AUNT.

A



## PREFACE.

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IT being the intention of the Publishers of this little work, to bring out, at the close of each year, a volume for the young, to be entitled **THE CHRISTMAS LIBRARY**, I have been engaged by them to furnish the material for the volumes.

If it be asked why the plan of the *Annals* has been abandoned so far as to employ but one writer instead of many—the answer is simply this,—it was imagined that the unity of the book could be more equally maintained through the work of one mind than of many.

This volume has been written literally among *Birds and Flowers*; and has been my pleasant occupation through the last summer months; and now it is completed,

my earnest wish is, that it may convey to many a young heart a relish for the enjoyment of quiet, country pleasures; a love for every living creature, and that strong sympathy which must grow in every pure heart for the great human family.

A word or two must be permitted on the getting up of the work. No expence or pains have been spared either in printing or embellishments; and I think the public will acknowledge that the artists have been extremely successful in the designing and execution of the wood-cuts.

The three poems marked with asterisks in the table of contents, have appeared elsewhere.

WEST-END COTTAGE, ESHER,  
*September 28th 1837.*

\*.\* The second volume of this series will be published on the 1st of October 1838, and will be entitled "Hymns and Fireside Verses."

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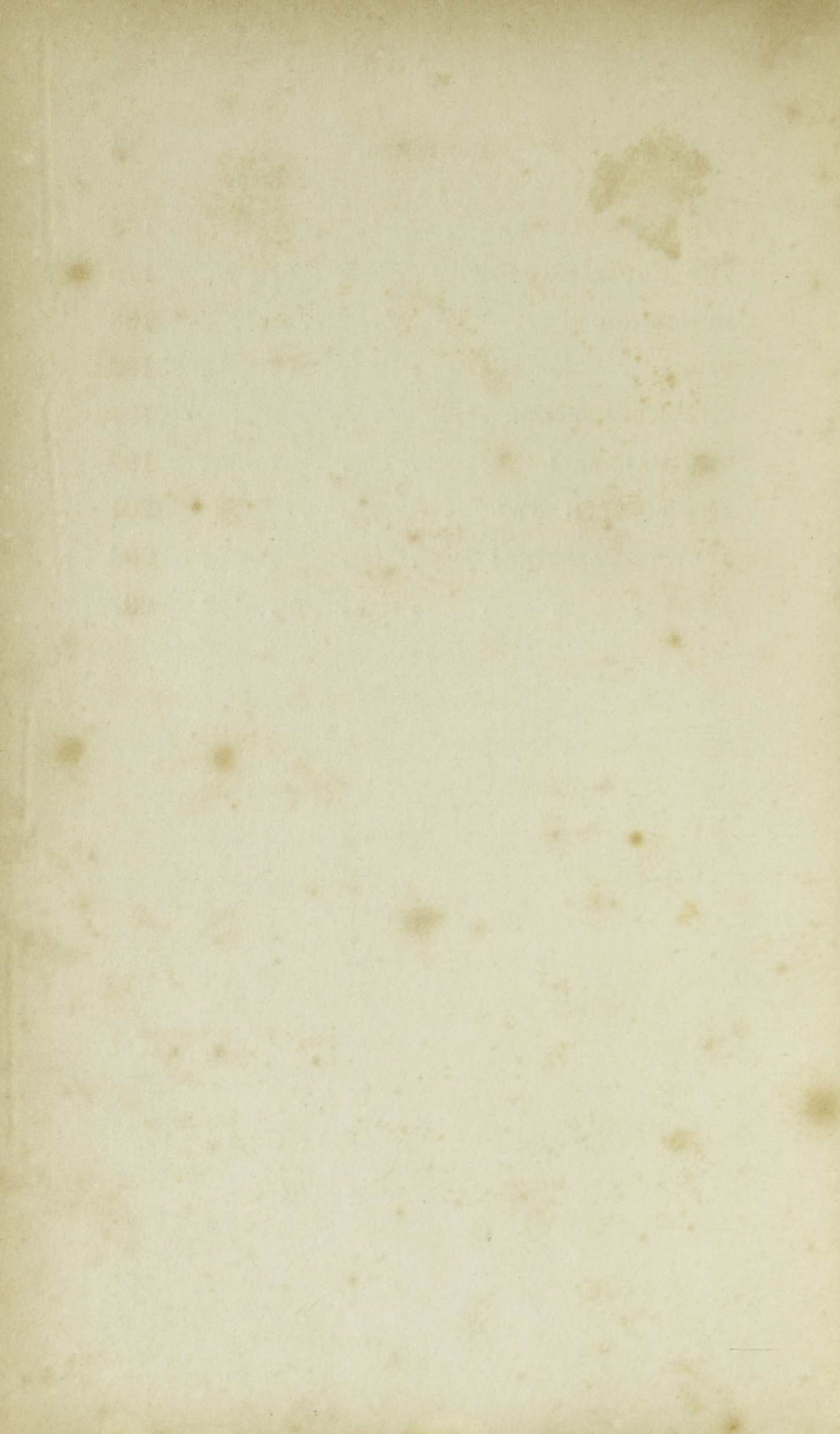
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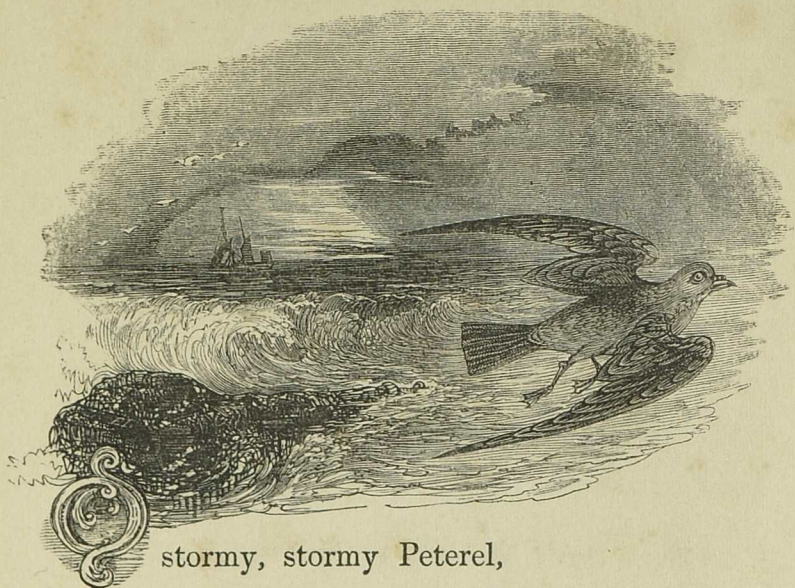
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stormy, stormy Peterel,  
Come rest thee, bird, awhile;  
There is no storm, believe me,  
Anigh this summer isle.

Come, rest thy waving pinions ;  
Alight thee down by me ;  
And tell me somewhat of the lore  
Thou learnest on the sea !

Dost hear beneath the ocean  
The gathering tempest form ?  
See'st thou afar the little cloud  
That grows into the storm ?

How is it in the billowy depths —  
Doth sea-weed heave and swell?  
And is a sound of coming woe  
Rung from each caverned shell?

Dost watch the stormy sunset  
In tempests of the west;  
And see the old moon riding slow  
With the new moon on her breast?

Dost mark the billows heaving  
Before the coming gale;  
And scream for joy of every sound  
That turns the seaman pale?

Are gusty tempests mirth to thee?  
Lov'st thou the lightning's flash;  
The booming of the mountain waves—  
The thunder's deafening crash?

O stormy, stormy Peterel,  
Thou art a bird of woe!  
Yet would I thou couldst tell me half  
Of the misery thou dost know!

There was a ship went down last night,—  
    A good ship and a fair;  
A costly freight within her lay,  
    And many a soul was there!

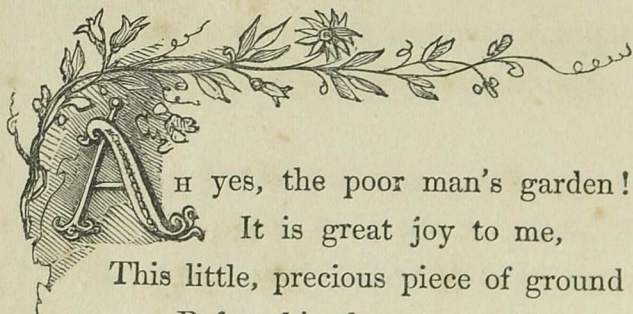
The night-black storm was over her,  
    And 'neath, the caverned wave:  
In all her strength she perished,  
    Nor skill of man could save.

The cry of her great agony  
    Went upward to the sky;  
She perished in her strength and pride,  
    Nor human aid was nigh.

But thou, O stormy Peterel,  
    Went'st screaming o'er the foam;—  
Are there no tidings from that ship  
    Which thou canst carry home?

Yes! He who raised the tempest up,  
    Sustained each drooping one;  
And God was present in the storm,  
    Though human aid was none!

THE POOR MAN'S GARDEN.



Yes, the poor man's garden!  
It is great joy to me,  
This little, precious piece of ground  
Before his door to see!

The rich man has his gardeners,—  
His gardeners young and old;  
He never takes a spade in hand,  
Nor worketh in the mould.

It is not with the poor man so,—  
Wealth, servants, he has none;  
And all the work that's done for him  
Must by himself be done.

All day upon some weary task  
He toileth with good will;  
And back he comes, at set of sun,  
His garden-plot to till.

The rich man in his garden walks,  
And 'neath his garden trees;  
Wrapped in a dream of other things,  
He seems to take his ease.

One moment he beholds his flowers,  
The next they are forgot:  
He eateth of his rarest fruits  
As though he ate them not.

It is not with the poor man so;—  
He knows each inch of ground,  
And every single plant and flower  
That grows within its bound.

He knows where grow his wall-flowers,  
And when they will be out;  
His moss-rose, and convolvulus  
That twines his pales about.

He knows his red sweet-williams;  
And the stocks that cost him dear,—  
That well-set row of crimson stocks,  
For he bought the seed last year.

And though unto the rich man  
The cost of flowers is nought,  
A sixpence to a poor man  
Is toil, and care, and thought.

And here is his potatoe-bed,  
All well-grown, strong, and green;  
How could a rich man's heart leap up  
At anything so mean!

But he, the poor man, sees his crop,  
And a thankful man is he,  
For he thinks all through the winter  
How rich his board will be!

And how his merry little ones  
Beside the fire will stand,  
Each with a large potatoe  
In a round and rosy hand.

The rich man has his wall-fruits,  
And his delicious vines;  
His fruit for every season;  
His melons and his pines.

The poor man has his gooseberries;  
His currants white and red;  
His apple and his damson tree,  
And a little strawberry-bed.

A happy man he thinks himself,  
A man that's passing well,—  
To have some fruit for the children,  
And some besides to sell.

Around the rich man's trellised bower  
Gay, costly creepers run;  
The poor man has his scarlet-beans  
To screen him from the sun.

And there before the little bench,  
O'ershadowed by the bower,  
Grow southern-wood and lemon-thyme,  
Sweet-pea and gilliflower;

And pinks and clove-carnations,  
Rich-scented, side by side;  
And at each end a holly-hock,  
With an edge of London-pride.

And here comes the old grandmother,  
When her day's work is done;  
And here they bring the sickly babe  
To cheer it in the sun.

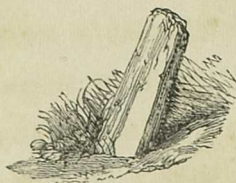
And here, on Sabbath-mornings,  
The good man comes to get  
His Sunday nosegay, moss-rose bud,  
White pink, and mignonette.

And here on Sabbath-evenings,  
Until the stars are out,  
With a little one in either hand,  
He walketh all about.

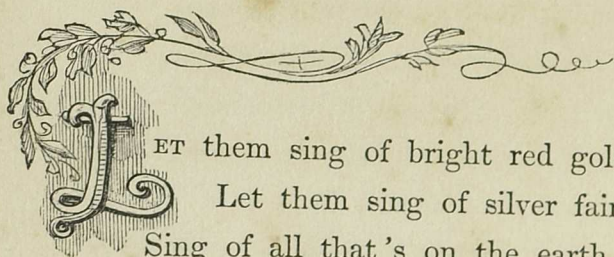
For though his garden-plot is small,  
Him doth it satisfy;  
For there's no inch of all his ground  
That does not fill his eye.

It is not with the rich man thus;  
For though his grounds are wide,  
He looks beyond, and yet beyond,  
With soul unsatisfied.

Yes! in the poor man's garden grow  
Far more than herbs and flowers;—  
Kind thoughts, contentment, peace of mind,  
And joy for weary hours.



THE APPLE-TREE.

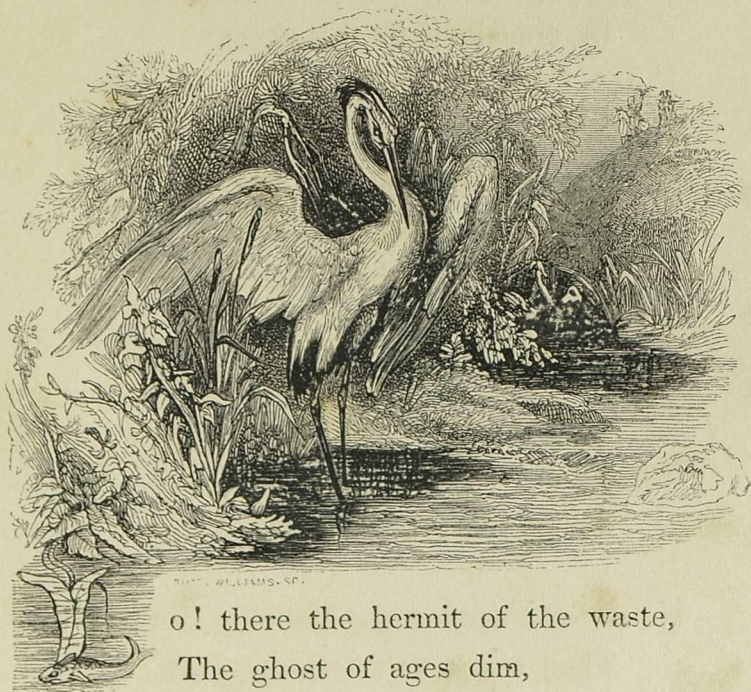


LET them sing of bright red gold;  
Let them sing of silver fair;  
Sing of all that's on the earth,  
All that's in the air;  
All that's in the sunny air,  
All that's in the sea;  
And I'll sing a song as rare  
Of the apple-tree!  
The red-bloomed apple-tree;  
The red-cheeked apple-tree;  
That's the tree for you and me,  
The ripe, rosy apple-tree!

Learned men have learned books,  
Which they ponder day and night;  
Easier leaves than theirs I read,—  
Blossoms pink and white;  
Blossom-leaves all pink and white,  
Wherein I can see  
Charactered, as clear as light,  
The old apple-tree;  
The gold-cheeked apple-tree;  
The red-streaked apple-tree;  
All the fruit that groweth on  
The ripe, rosy apple-tree!

Autumn comes, and our good-man,  
Soon as harvest-toil is o'er,  
Speculates on apple-crops—  
Be they less or more;  
I could tell him; less or more  
Is well-known to me;  
I have eyes that see the core  
Of the apple-tree;  
The old, mossy apple-tree;  
The young, glossy apple-tree;  
Scathed or sound, the country round,  
I know every apple-tree!

Winter comes, as winter will,  
    Bringing dark days, frost, and rime ;  
But the apple is in vogue  
    At the Christmas-time ;  
At the merry Christmas-time  
    Folks are full of glee ;  
Then they bring out apples prime,  
    Of the primest tree ;  
Then you the roast-apple see,  
While they toast the apple-tree,  
Singing, with a jolly chime,  
    Of the brave old apple-tree !



o! there the hermit of the waste,  
The ghost of ages dim,  
The fisher of the solitudes,  
Stands by the river's brim!

Old Heron, in the feudal times,  
Beside the forest stream,  
And by the moorland waters,  
Thus didst thou love to dream.

And over towers and castles high,  
And o'er the armed men,  
Skirmishing on the border-lands,  
Or crouching in the glen;

Thy heavy wings were seen to flit,  
Thy azure shape was known  
To pilgrim and to anchorite,  
In deserts scorched and lone.

Old Heron, in those feudal times  
Thou wast in dangerous grace,  
Secured by mandates and by laws  
All for the royal chase.

No meaner head might plot thy death  
Than one which wore a crown;  
No meaner hand might loose the shaft,  
From the skies to strike thee down.

And out came trooping courtly dames,  
And men of high degree,  
On steeds caparisoned in gold,  
With bridles ringing free.

Came king and queen; came warrior stout;  
    Came lord and lady fair,  
All gallant, beautiful, and bold,  
    Into the autumn air.

The abbot and the bishop grave,  
    The monk with crown new-shorn,  
Who sore did rew their ravaged stew \*  
    In the last Lent forlorn.

The keepers with their dogs in leash;  
    The falconers before,  
Who proudly on their sturdy wrists  
    The hooded tercel bore.

And in thy solitary haunts  
    By stream or sedgy mere,  
The laugh, the shout, the cries of dogs  
    And men, came to thine ear.

And starting from thy reverie,  
    And springing from the bent,

\* Fish-pond.

Into the air, from joyous hearts,  
Another shout was sent.

Up, up, into the azure skies  
On circling pinions strong,  
Fair eyes pursued thy mounting course  
While the falcon sped along.

Up, up, into the azure skies  
Thy strenuous pinions go,  
While shouts and cries, and wondering eyes,  
Still reach thee from below ;  
But higher and higher, like a spirit of fire,  
Still o'er thee hangs thy foe ;

Thy cruel foe, still seeking  
With one down-plunging aim,  
To strike thy precious life  
For ever from thy frame !

But doomed perhaps, as down he darts  
Swift as the rushing wind,  
Impaled upon thy up-turned beak,  
To leave his own behind.

Old Heron, all those times are past,  
Those jocund troops are fled ;  
The king, the queen, the keepers green,  
The dogs, the hawks are dead !

In many a minster's solemn gloom,  
In shattered abbeys lone,  
Lie all thy crowned enemies,  
In midnight vaults of stone !

The towers are torn, the gates outworn,  
Portcullis, moat, and mound  
Are vanished all, or faintly mark  
Some rarely-trodden ground.

O'er all those abbeys, convents, all  
Those chantries and crosses,  
Where thou didst glide past in thy pride,  
Grow tawny ferns and mosses.

Where banners waved, the ivy grows ;—  
Baronial times are o'er !  
The forests now are cornfields green,  
Green is the lakelet's shore.

Where grew the furze, now runs the fence ;  
Where waved the wild-rush free,  
And whistled moorland-grasses sere,  
Fat cattle roam the lea.

The bow is gone, the hawk is thrown  
For ever from the hand ;  
And now we live a bookish race,  
All in a cultured land.

Yet here and there some remnant  
Of those old woodland times ;  
Some waste lies brown ; some forest spreads ;  
Some rocky streamlet chimes.

And there, beside the waters,  
On moorland and on wold,  
I find thee watching still,  
Thou fisherman of old.

Oh fair, fair is the forest,  
When summer is in prime !  
And I love to lie by mountain lake,  
On its slopes of heath and thyme !

In the thyme so richly fragrant,  
In the heath that blooms so fair,  
And list the quaint bird-voices  
From the moorland and the air.

All those that lead their sweetest lives  
Far from the haunt of men,  
Are sending forth their gladness  
In many a wild cry then.

The curlew and the plover,  
The gor-cock on the brae,  
Send, with the singing of the lark,  
Their voices far away !

The coot and moor-hen from the reeds,  
Or where the waters run  
Crystal and warm and glittering,  
O'er the pebbles in the sun.

And from the air, in circling flight,  
Comes suddenly the crowd  
Of all the wild-duck army,  
With pinions rustling loud ;

And, dashing down into the lake,  
The splashing waters bound  
In drops and showers of silver,  
And in snow-flakes all around.

Such is the joy that wakens,  
That clamours, and that lives,  
In all the winged creatures,  
Where nature still survives ;

Where nature still survives  
In her regions wild and free ;  
So lives in all her creatures,  
Old fisherman, but thee !

Whene'er I meet thee, Heron,  
By river broad and deep,  
Where mountain-torrents run and moan,  
Or ponded waters sleep ;

By tarns upon the naked hills ;  
In stony regions grey,  
Or wading in the sounding sea  
Amid the hissing spray :

Whene'er I see thee, Heron,  
Thy cheer is silent still ;  
Solemnly watching by the wave,  
Or o'er the dusky hill,

Waving thy shadowy wings  
In motion grave and slow,  
Like a spirit of the solemn past  
That museth on its woe !

Like one that in all present joy  
Finds no congenial tone,  
For his heart is in the perished past,  
And seeketh that alone !

Then hail to thee, old Heron,  
Flit on from dream to dream ;  
Be yet the watcher on the shore,  
The spirit of the stream ;

For still at sight of thee come back  
The storied times of old ;  
The jovial hawking-train, the chase,  
The sturdy bowmen bold.

Still wandering over cultured fields,  
Or 'mid the human throng,  
Come back the feudal castle,  
The harper and his song.

And it is pleasant thus to dream  
In this kingdom of the free,  
Now laws are strong and roads are good,  
Of outlaw 'neath his tree.

Now knowledge falls like sunshine,  
And peace walks in our towns—  
Oh pleasant are the feudal days  
And the bloody strife of crowns !

Then hail to thee, old Heron !  
Flit on to lakes and streams ;  
And by their waters dreaming,  
Still prompt these pleasant dreams !



**A**n there's the lily, marble pale,  
The bonny broom, the cistus frail,  
The rich sweet-pea, the iris blue,  
The larkspur with its peacock hue ;—  
Each one is fair, yet hold I will  
That the rose of May is fairer still.

'Tis grand 'neath palace-walls to grow ;  
To blaze where lords and ladies go ;  
To hang o'er marble founts, and shine  
In modern gardens trim and fine ;—  
But the rose of May is only seen  
Where the great of other days have been.

The house is mouldering stone by stone ;  
The garden-walks are overgrown ;  
The flowers are low, the weeds are high ;  
The fountain-stream is choked and dry ;  
The dial-stone with moss is green,  
Where'er the rose of May is seen.

The rose of May its pride display'd  
Along the old stone balustrade ;  
And ancient ladies, quaintly dight,  
In its pink blossoms took delight,  
And on the steps would make a stand,  
To scent its sweetness, fan in hand.

Long have been dead those ladies gay ;  
Their very heirs have passed away ;  
And their old portraits, prim and tall,  
Are mouldering in the mouldering hall ;  
The terrace and the balustrade  
Lie broken, weedy, and decayed.

But, lithe and tall, the rose of May  
Shoots upward through the ruin grey,  
With scented flower, and leaf pale-green,  
Such rose as it hath ever been ;  
Left, like a noble deed, to grace  
The memory of an ancient race !

What exact species of rose this is I do not know ; it appears not to be approved of in modern gardens,—at least if it be, it is so much altered by cultivation as to have lost much of its primitive character. I saw it in three different situations in Nottinghamshire. In the small remains of gardens and old labyrinthine shrubbery at Awthorpe Hall,—which, when we were there, had just been taken down,—the residence of the good Colonel John Hutchinson and his sweet wife Lucy ;—in the very gardens which, as she relates in his life, he laid out and took so much pleasure in. It was growing also, with tall shoots and abundance of flowers, in the most forlorn of gardens, at an old place

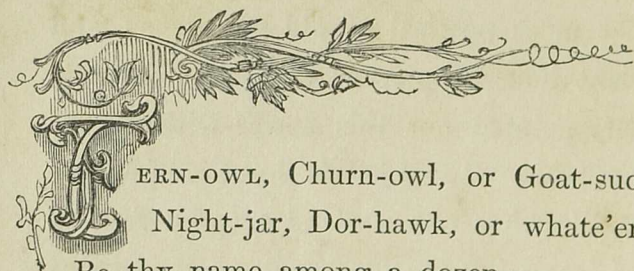
called Burton Grange, a house so desolate and deserted as to have gained from a poetical friend of ours the appropriate name of *The Dead House*. It was a dreary and most lonesome place; the very bricks of which it was built were bleached by long exposure to wind and weather; there seemed no life within or about it. Every trace of furniture and wainscot was gone from its interior, and its principal rooms were the repositories of old ploughs and disused ladders; yet still its roof, floors, and windows were in decent repair. It had once upon a time been a well-conditioned house; had been moated, and its garden-wall had been terminated by stately stone pillars surmounted by well-cut urns, one of which, at the time we were there, lay overgrown with grass in the ground beneath; the other, after a similar fall, had been replaced, but with the wrong end uppermost. To add still more to its lonesomeness, thick, wild woods encompassed it on three sides, whence of an evening, and often too in the course of the day, came the voices of owls and other gloomy wood-creatures.

“There’s not a flower in the garden,” said

a woman who, with her husband and child, we found, to our astonishment, inhabiting what had once been the scullery,—“not a flower but feverfew and the rose of May, and you’ll not think it worth getting.” She was mistaken; I was delighted to find this sweet and favourite rose in so ruinous a situation.

Again, we found it in the gardens of Annesley Hall, that most poetical of old mansions; and the ancient housekeeper, at that time its sole inhabitant, pointed out this flower with a particular emphasis. “And here’s the rose of May,” said she, drawing out a slender spray from a tangle of jessamine that hung about the stonework of the terrace; “a main pretty thing, though there’s little store set by it now-a-days!”

THE DOR-HAWK.



ERN-OWL, Churn-owl, or Goat-sucker,  
Night-jar, Dor-hawk, or whate'er  
Be thy name among a dozen,—  
Whip-poor-Will's and Who-are-you's cousin,  
Chuck-Will's-widow's near relation,  
Thou art at thy night vocation,  
Thrilling the still evening air!

In the dark brown wood beyond us,  
Where the night lies dusk and deep;  
Where the fox his furrow maketh,  
Where the tawny owl awaketh  
Nightly from his day-long sleep;

There Dor-hawk is thy abiding,  
Meadow green is not for thee ;  
While the aspen branches shiver,  
'Mid the roaring of the river,  
Comes thy chirring voice to me.

Bird, thy form I never looked on,  
And to see it do not care ;  
Thou hast been, and thou art only  
As a voice of forests lonely,  
Heard and dwelling only there.

Bringing thoughts of dusk and shadow ;  
Trees huge-branched in ceaseless change ;  
Pallid night-moths, spectre-seeming ;  
All a silent land of dreaming,  
Indistinct and large and strange.

Be thou thus, and thus I prize thee  
More than knowing thee face to face,  
Head and beak and leg and feather,  
Kept from harm of touch and weather,  
Underneath a fine glass-case.

I can read of thee, and find out  
    How thou fliest, fast or slow;  
Of thee in the north and south too,  
Of thy great moustachioed mouth too,  
    And thy Latin name also.

But, Dor-hawk, I love thee better  
    While thy voice unto me seems  
Coming o'er the evening meadows,  
From a dark brown land of shadows,  
    Like a pleasant voice of dreams!

This singular bird which is found in every part of the old world, as well in the cold regions of Siberia, as in the hot jungles of India, and the lion-haunted forests of Africa, has, as we have said, a large class of relations also in America: the Whip-poor-Will, the Willy-come-go, the Work-away, and the Who-are-you? being all of the same family. In Africa and among the American Indians these birds are looked upon with reverence or fear; for, by some they are supposed to be haunted by the dead, and by

others to be obedient to gloomy or evil spirits. The Dor-Hawk of our own country has been subject to slander, as his name of the *goat-sucker* shews. This name originated of course in districts where goats were used for milking, and furnished, no doubt an excuse for the false herd, who stole the milk and blamed the bird.

The Dor-Hawk, like the owl, is not seen in the day ; and like it also, is an inhabitant of wild and gloomy scenes ; heathy tracks abounding in fern ; moors, and old woods. It is so regular in the time of beginning its nightly cry, that good old Gilbert White declares, it appeared to him to strike up exactly when the report of the Portsmouth evening gun was heard. He says, also, that its voice, which resembles the loud purring of a cat, occasions a singular vibration even in solid buildings ; for that, as he and some of his neighbours sate in a hermitage on a steep hill-side, where they had been taking tea, a Dor-hawk alighted on the little cross at the top, and uttered his cry, making the walls of the building sensibly vibrate, to the wonder of all the company.

I can give no anecdotes of the bird from my

own experience. I know him best by his voice, heard mostly from scenes of a wild and picturesque character, in the gloom and shadow of evening, or in the deep calm of summer moonlight. I heard him first in a black, solemn-looking wood, between Houghton Tower, and Pleasington Priory in Lancashire. Since then I have become familiar with his voice in the pleasant woods of Winter-down, and Claremont, in Surrey.





ING for the Oak-Tree,

The monarch of the wood ;

Sing for the Oak-Tree,

That groweth green and good :

That groweth broad and branching

Within the forest shade ;

That groweth now, and yet shall grow

When we are lowly laid !

The Oak-Tree was an acorn once,  
And fell upon the earth ;  
And sun and showers nourished it,  
And gave the Oak-Tree birth.  
The little sprouting Oak-Tree !  
Two leaves it had at first,  
Till sun and showers had nourished it,  
Then out the branches burst.

The little sapling Oak-Tree !  
Its root was like a thread,  
Till the kindly earth had nourished it,  
Then out it freely spread :  
On this side and on that side  
It grappled with the ground ;  
And in the ancient, rifted rock  
Its firmest footing found.

The winds came, and the rain fell ;  
The gusty tempests blew ;  
All, all were friends to the Oak-Tree,  
And stronger yet it grew.

The boy that saw the acorn fall,  
He feeble grew and grey ;  
But the Oak was still a thriving tree,  
And strengthened every day !

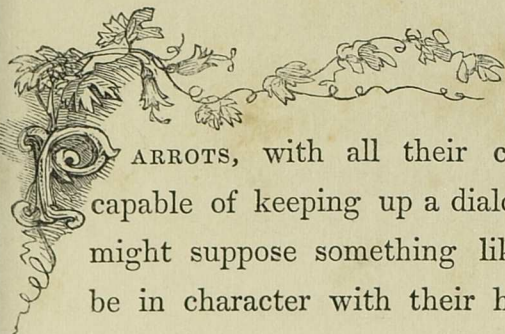
Four centuries grows the Oak-Tree,  
Nor doth its verdure fail ;  
Its heart is like the iron-wood,  
Its bark like plated mail.  
Now, cut us down the Oak-Tree,  
The monarch of the wood ;  
And of its timbers stout and strong  
We'll build a vessel good !

The Oak-Tree of the forest  
Both east and west shall fly ;  
And the blessings of a thousand lands  
Upon our ship shall lie !  
For she shall not be a man of war,  
Nor a pirate shall she be ;—  
But a noble, Christian merchant-ship,  
To sail upon the sea.

Then sing for the Oak-Tree,  
The monarch of the wood;  
Sing for the Oak-Tree,  
That groweth green and good;  
That groweth broad and branching  
Within the forest shade;  
That groweth now, and yet shall grow,  
When we are lowly laid!



THE CAROLINA PARROT.



PARROTS, with all their cleverness, are not capable of keeping up a dialogue ; otherwise we might suppose something like the following to be in character with their humour and experience.

POLL'S MISTRESS.

I've heard of imp, I've heard of sprite ;  
Of fays and fairies of the night ;  
Of that renowned fiend Hobgoblin,  
Running, racing, jumping, hobbling ;  
Of Puck, brimful of fun ; also  
Of roguish Robin Goodfellow,  
I've seen a hearth where, as is told,  
Came Hobthrush in the days of old,  
To make the butter, mend the linen,  
And keep the housewife's wheel a-spinning.

I've heard of pigmies, pixies, lares,  
Shoirim, gemedim, and fairies :—  
And, Parrot, on my honest word,  
I hardly think thou art a bird ;—  
Thou art some pixy, quaint and queer ;  
Thou art not canny, Poll, I fear !  
Look at that impish leer of thine ;  
List to thy scream, thy shout, thy whine,  
And none will doubt but thou must be  
A creature of the faëry.  
Or tell me Poll, art thou not kin  
To Jack o' lantern ? Come, begin !  
Answer me, Poll, was't 'mong the fairies  
Thou learnt thy many strange vagaries ?  
Speak, pretty Poll !

POLL.

Well, I don't care if I tell you all.  
You've got some company, I see ; a short gentleman and a tall ;  
Many ladies, too, altogether two or three dozens.  
I should not wonder if they are some of your  
uncles and cousins !

Pray am not I a very fine bird,  
Green, and yellow, and scarlet?—

Upon my word!

That man has a coat on like our Captain!

CAPTAIN.

Poll, how do you do my dear?

You look well; it's fine living here!

POLL.

Ha, Captain, how do *you* do?—Captain, your  
health, I say;

Captain, I'll have the pleasure of drinking your  
health to-day! ha! ha! ha!

I'm very glad to see you!—You remember,  
perhaps,

That wood in Carolina, the guns and all the  
traps;—

To be sure you do!—Ladies, I'm a Carolina  
bird,—

Some come from the East Indies, from the  
Cape, too, I have heard;

But I'm of Carolina—to the Big-bone lick I've  
been, —

Now in that country there *is* something to be  
seen!

Our Captain knows *that*! Ay, Captain, I say,  
Do you remember crossing the Cedar Swamp  
one particular day,

When I got out of your pocket and flew  
away?

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! How it makes me  
laugh!

You'd a pretty chase after me!—ha! ha! a  
pretty chase!

And I sat in the hiccory trees, laughing in  
your face!

Ha! ha! ha! how I did laugh.

What cypress-berries, cockle-burrs, and beech-  
nuts grew there!

You may look all this country over, and find  
none anywhere.

And what fun it was—me, and a thousand be-  
beside,

To fly in the merry sunshine through those  
forests wide,

And build our nests — Oh, what nests we  
had!—

Did you ever see one of our nests, Captain?  
Eh, my lad?"

## CAPTAIN.

I've heard of nests of cinnamon,  
With the great Phoenix set thereon;  
And swallows' nests, so rich and sweet,  
Of which the Chinese people eat;  
But of *your* nests I never heard,  
What kind are they, I pray thee, bird?

## PARROT.

Nests! ha! ha! ha! what sort of nests should  
they be?

You may fancy if you please, but you'll never  
know from me!

I never blab, not I! What sort of nest is built?  
Ha! ha! ha! with sheets and blankets and a  
fine Marseilles quilt! ha! ha! ha!

Put it down in your little book,—a four-post  
bed, I say,

With damask moreen hangings, and made every  
day! ha! ha! ha!

Oh, how it makes me laugh! ha! ha! ha!  
I shall split my sides with laughing some of  
these days! ha! ha! ha!

CAPTAIN.

Come, now, you silly prate-a-pace,  
Tell us about that Big-bone place,  
Where our acquaintance first began;  
And of those swamps, untrod by man,  
Where you came, impudent and merry,  
For cockle-burr and hackle-berry.

PARROT.

Of the Big-bone lick, did you say?—Ay, we  
used to go there,

A Parrot's very fond of salt! I really declare  
I've seen ten thousand of us there altogether,—  
A beautiful sight it was, in fine summer weather,

Like a grand velvet carpet, of orange, green,  
and yellow,  
Covering the ground! Ah, Captain! my good  
fellow,  
I had reason to rue the day you came there  
with your gun!  
I would laugh if I could, but to me it was no  
fun—heigh-ho!  
No fun at all, Captain, heigh-ho!

## CAPTAIN.

Nay, Poll, cheer up, you're better here  
Than at the Big-bone lick, my dear!

## PARROT.

Captain, how you talk! we Parrots love each  
other—  
There you shot dozens of us,—my father and  
my mother,—  
I shall not forget it in a hurry,—what wailing  
and crying,  
What flying round and round there was! What  
comforting the dying!

You, yourself, laid down your gun,—overcome  
by the sight,

And said you would not shoot again, at least  
that night!

Heigh-ho! I am just ready to cry!

And I think I shall cry before I have done!

*(She cries like a child.)*

There, now, I am better! but my throat is  
quite hot;

Can't I have a glass of water?—*(She coughs.)*

Bless me, what a cold I've got!

Do, shut that window, Jenny, or we shall all  
die of cold;

And mend the fire, can't you, as you already  
have been told!

And let's have a cup of tea, for I'm just tired  
to death.

What a shocking cold it is! and I'm so short  
of breath!—*(She coughs again.)*

*(She speaks in another voice.)*

Tea's ready, if you please. Ready is it?

With the water in the pot?

Yes, ma'am! Well, then, I'll go and have my  
tea, while the muffin's hot!

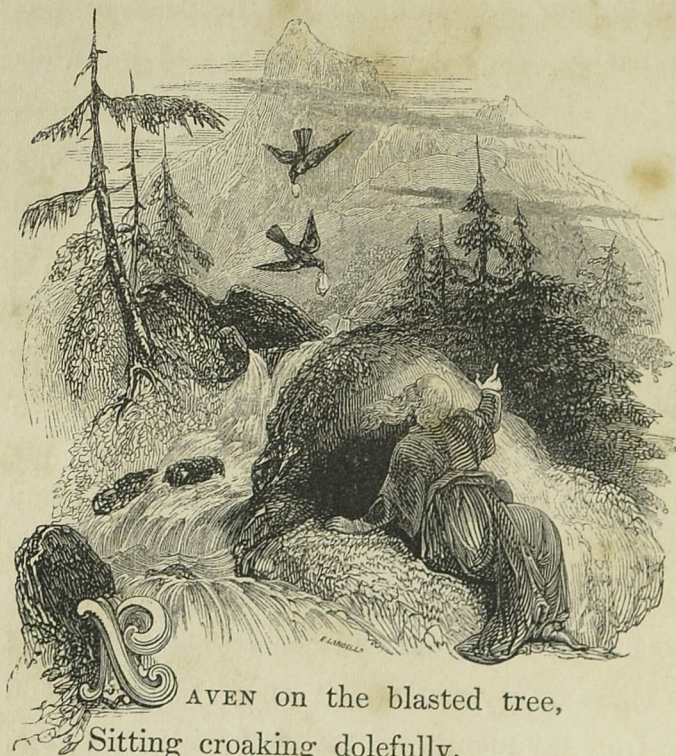
*Exit POLL.*

The Parrot, of which we have been reading, may be supposed to have been the one of which so interesting an account is given by Wilson in his American Ornithology. It was taken at the Big-bone lick, where he witnessed the extreme affection and strong sympathy which the parrots have for each other, and of which we have imagined our bird to speak. Its merriment, too, respecting the nests of the tribe, may pass as natural, considering the little light Wilson could obtain on the subject, and the vivacious mockery of the bird's disposition, even if it had had the power of giving him the requisite information.

The parrot has been made to speak of her travels with "the Captain" through the morasses and cedar-swamps, and of the trouble she gave him, "when many a time," says he (Wilson) "I was tempted to abandon it." "And in this manner," he goes on to say, "I carried it upwards of a thousand miles in my pocket, where it was exposed all day to the jolting of the horse, but regularly liberated at meal-times and in the evening, at which it always expressed great satisfaction." The Chickasaw and the Chactaw

Indians, among whom he was travelling, collected about him whenever he stopped, men, women, and children, laughing greatly at his novel companion. *Kelinky* was the name the Chickasaws called the parrot; but hearing the name of Poll, they immediately adopted it, and through Poll's medium, he and the Indians always became very sociable. "On arriving," says Wilson, "at Mr. Dunbar's, below Natchez, I procured a cage, and placed it under the piazza, where, by its call, it soon attracted the passing flocks, such is the attachment they have for each other. Numerous parties frequently alighted on the trees immediately above, keeping up a continual conversation with the prisoner. One of these I wounded slightly in the wing, and the pleasure Poll expressed on meeting with this new companion, was really amusing. She crept close up to it, as it hung on the side of the cage; chattered to it in a loud tone of voice, as if sympathising in its misfortunes; scratched about its head and neck with her bill; and both, at night, nestled as close as possible to each other, sometimes Poll's head being thrust among

the plumage of the other. On the death of this companion, she appeared restless and inconsolable for several days. On reaching New Orleans, I placed a looking-glass inside the place where she usually sat, and the instant she perceived her image, all her former fondness seemed to return, so that she could scarcely absent herself from it for a moment. It was evident that she was completely deceived, Always when evening drew on, and often during the day, she laid her head close to that of the image in the glass, and began to doze with great composure and satisfaction. In a short time she had learned to know her name ; to answer and come when called on ; to climb up my clothes, sit on my shoulder, and eat from my mouth. I took her with me to sea, determined to persevere in her education." And, to give an ending rather different to Mr. Wilson's, here we have presented her to our readers in the possession of an English lady, and with her education, for a Parrot, very complete.



RAVEN on the blasted tree,  
Sitting croaking dolefully,  
I would have a word with thee!

Raven thou art silent now  
On the splintered forest bough,  
Glancing on me thy bright eye,  
I shall ask,—do thou reply!  
In that far-gone, awful time,  
When the earth was purged of crime,

And old Noah and the seven  
In the gopher-ark were driven.

RAVEN.

I was there.

POET.

I know it bird.  
And when rain no more was heard  
Plashing down in torrents wild;  
When the face of heaven grew mild,  
And from mountain-summits brown  
The subsiding floods went down,  
And the prisoned creatures fain  
Scented the young earth again;  
Wherefore when the patriarch forth  
Sent thee to look round the earth  
And bring tidings to his door,  
Cam'st thou to the ark no more?

RAVEN.

Narrow was the ark, but wide  
And fair the earth on every side;  
And all around in glens and plains  
Lay of life the lorn remains;

Man and beast and bird, like seed  
Scattered on the harvest mead :  
How could I return to bear  
Tidings ? I was feasting there !

## POET.

Raven ha ! I thought the same.  
But in after times ye came,  
To the exiled prophet good  
Bringing him his daily food.

## RAVEN.

Yes, — by Cherith-brook there grew  
Mighty cedars not a few ;  
And a raven-tree was there  
Spreading forth its branches bare.  
'Twas our home, when thither ran  
From the king an awful man,  
Robed and sandalled as in haste,  
With a girdle round his waist ;  
Strongly built, with brow severe,  
And the bearing of a seer.  
Down by Cherith-brook he lay ;  
And at morn and set of day

Thus a voice unto us said,  
"By you must this man be fed;  
Bring him flesh, and bring him bread!"  
And by us he was supplied,  
Duly morn and eventide,  
Until Cherith-brook was dried!

POET.

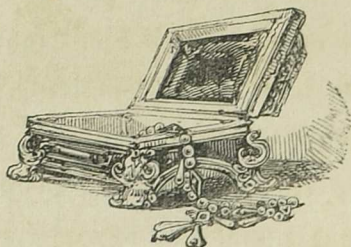
Wondrous miracle of love!

RAVEN.

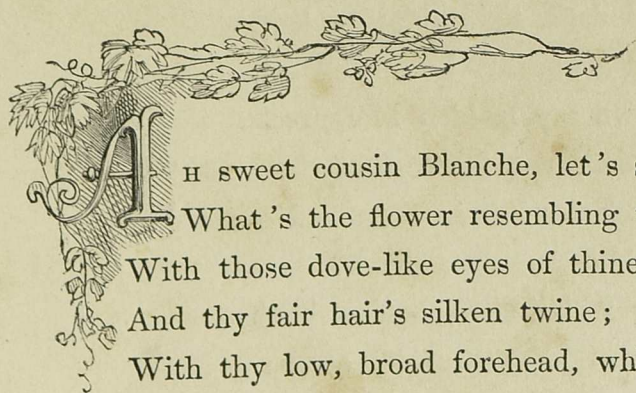
Doth it thus thy spirit move?  
Deeper truth than this shall reach thee,  
Christ he bade the raven teach thee:  
They plough not, said he, nor reap,  
Nor have costly hoards to keep;  
Storehouse none, nor barn have they,  
Yet God feeds them every day!  
Fret not then your souls with care  
What to eat, or what to wear,  
He who hears the ravens' cry  
Looketh with a pitying eye  
On his human family.

POET.

Raven thou art spirit-cheering;  
What thou say'st is worth the hearing;  
Never more be it averred  
That thou art a doleful bird!



FLOWER COMPARISONS.



Th sweet cousin Blanche, let's see  
What's the flower resembling thee!  
With those dove-like eyes of thine,  
And thy fair hair's silken twine;  
With thy low, broad forehead, white  
As marble, and as purely bright;  
With thy mouth so calm and sweet,  
And thy dainty hands and feet;  
What's the flower most like thee?

Blossom of the orange-tree!

Where may the bright flower be met  
That can match with Margaret,—  
Margaret stately, staid, and good,  
Growing up to womanhood;

Loving, thoughtful, wise, and kind,  
Pure in heart and strong in mind?  
Eyes deep-blue as is the sky  
When the full moon sails on high;  
Eye-brow true and forehead fair,  
And dark, richly-braided hair,  
And a queenly head well set,  
Crown my maiden Margaret.  
Where's the flower that thou canst find  
Match for her in form and mind?

Fair white lilies, having birth  
In their native genial earth;—  
These, in scent and queenly grace,  
Match thy maiden's form and face!

Now for madcap Isabel —  
What shall suit her, pr'ythee tell?  
Isabel is brown and wild;  
Will be evermore a child;  
Is all laughter, all vagary,  
Has the spirit of a fairy.  
Are you grave?—The gipsy sly  
Turns on you her merry eye,

And you laugh, despite your will.  
Isabel is never still,  
Always doing, never done,  
Be it mischief, work, or fun.  
Isabel is short and brown,  
Soft to touch as eider-down;  
Tempered, like the balmy south,  
With a rosy, laughing mouth;  
Cheeks just tinged with peachy red,  
And a graceful Hebe-head;  
Hair put up in some wild way,  
Decked with a hedge-rose's spray.  
Now, where is the bud or bell  
That may match with Isabel?

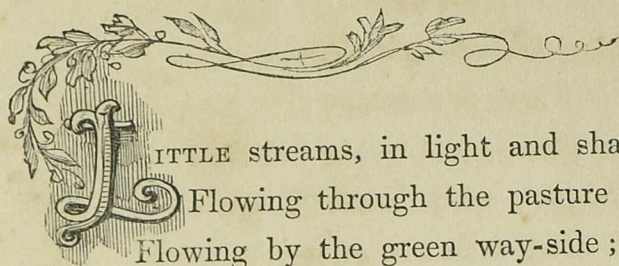
Streaky tulip jet and gold,  
Dearly priced whenever sold;  
Rich in colour, low and sweet,  
This for Isabel is meet.

Last for Jeanie, grave and mild—  
Jeanie never was a child!  
Sitting on her mother's knee,  
Hers was thoughtful infancy;

Growing up so meek and good,  
Even from her babyhood.  
All her mother's labour sharing;  
For the house and children caring;  
To her bed in silence creeping;  
Rising early, little sleeping;  
Learning soon of care and need;  
Learning late to write and read;  
To all hardships reconciled,  
For she was a poor man's child!  
What's the lowly flower of earth  
Match for Jeanie's humble worth?

Soon poor Jeanie's flower is met,—  
The meek, precious violet!

LITTLE STREAMS.



LITTLE streams, in light and shadow  
Flowing through the pasture meadow ;  
Flowing by the green way-side ;  
Through the forest dim and wide ;  
Through the hamlet still and small ;  
By the cottage ; by the hall ;  
By the ruined abbey still ;  
Turning, here and there, a mill ;  
Bearing tribute to the river ;  
Little streams, I love you ever !

Summer music is their flowing ;  
Flowering plants in them are growing ;  
Happy life is in them all,  
Creatures innocent and small ;

Little birds come down to drink  
Fearless on their leafy brink ;  
Noble trees beside them grow,  
Glooming them with branches low,  
And between, the sunshine glancing,  
In their little waves is dancing.

Little streams have flowers a many,  
Beautiful and fair as any ;  
Typha strong, and green bur-reed ;  
Willow-herb with cotton-seed ;  
Arrow-head with eye of jet,  
And the water-violet ;  
There the flowering rush you meet,  
And the plummy meadow-sweet ;  
And in places deep and stilly,  
Marble-like, the water-lily.

Little streams, their voices cheery  
Sound forth welcomes to the weary,  
Flowing on from day to day  
Without stint and without stay.  
Here, upon their flowery bank,  
In the old-times Pilgrims drank ;

Here have seen, as now, pass by  
Kingfisher and dragon-fly;  
Those bright things that have their dwelling  
Where the little streams are welling.

Down in valleys green and lowly,  
Murmuring not and gliding slowly;  
Up in mountain hollows wild,  
Fretting like a peevish child;  
Through the hamlet, where all day  
In their waves the children play,—  
Running west, or running east,  
Doing good to man and beast,  
Always giving, weary never,  
Little streams, I love you ever!



**T**HINK 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  
'Mong the lime-trees' yellow racimes;  
Of the pebbly waters gliding by,  
Of the woodbird's peaceful sylvan cry,  
Then turn thy thought to a land of snow  
Where the cutting icy wind doth blow—

A dreary land of mountains cold,  
With ice-crag's splintered hoar and old,  
Jaggéd 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 the 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 man are alike afraid  
Of that cruelest 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 sees 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 ;

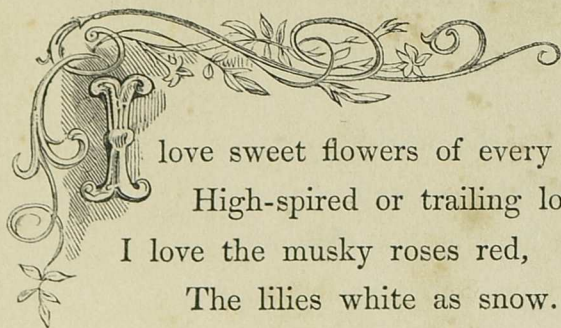
And ere the day come o'er the hill,  
The wolves are gone, the place is still,  
And to none that dreadful death is known,  
Save to some ermine hunter lone,  
Who in that death foresees his own !

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 a while 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 those 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 PASSION-FLOWER.



I love sweet flowers of every sort,  
High-spired or trailing low ;  
I love the musky roses red,  
The lilies white as snow.

The aster and the columbine,  
Sweet-pea and virgin-bower,  
I love them all — but most I love  
The good old passion-flower !

Oh yes, the good old passion-flower !  
It bringeth to my mind,  
The young days of the Christian church,  
Dim ages left behind.

I see the bloody streets of Rome ;  
The throng—the burning pyre,  
And christians stand with clasped hands  
Amid the raging fire.

I hear the women, angel-toned,  
The men with courage high,  
Preach their dear Lord amid their pangs,—  
Forgive their foes—and die.

I see, far from the world apart,  
In desert-places dwell,  
The early fathers of the church,  
In wood or mountain-cell.

And there the wondering thousands come,  
By love and pity brought,  
To hear them tell of Jesus Christ,  
And the new truths he taught.

I see the fearless fathers stand,  
Amid the eager throng,  
Preaching like Paul at Ephesus,  
In burning words and strong.

— Again I see a lonely man,  
Of spirit sad and mild,  
Who hath his little dwelling-place  
Amid a region wild.

The wild flowers of the desert  
Grow round him thick as weeds,  
And, in their beautiful array,  
Of holy things he reads.

The red is the dear blood of Christ,  
The white, the pure from sin,  
The yellow, is the seamless robe  
Christ was apparelled in.

All four-leaved flowers bring to his mind  
The cross whereon he died;  
And every thorn the cruel spear,  
That pierced his blessed side.

I see him as he mused one day  
Beneath a forest-bower,  
With clasped hands stand, and upturned eyes,  
Before an open flower;

Exclaiming with a fervent joy,

“I have found the Passion-flower !

“The Passion of our blessed Lord,

With all his pangs and pain,

Set forth within a little flower,

In shape and colour plain !

“Behold the ladder, and the cord

With which his limbs were tied ;

Behold his five deep, cruel wounds

In hands, and feet, and side !

“Behold the hammer and the nails ;

The bloody crown of thorn ;

And these his precious tears, when left

Of God and man forlorn !

Up, I will forth into the world,

And take this flower with me,

To preach the death of Christ to all,

As it has preached to me !”

And thus the good old passion-flower

Throughout the world was sent,

To breathe into all Christian hearts  
It's holy sentiment.

And in the after-times, when kings  
Of Christian fathers came ;  
And to profess the faith of Christ  
No longer purchased shame :

When abbeyes rose in towered state ;  
And over wood and dell,  
Went sounding, with a royal voice,  
The stately minster-bell :

Then was the abbey-garden made  
All with the nicest care ;  
Its little borders quaintly cut  
In fancies rich and rare.

And there they brought all curious plants,  
With sainted names, a flower  
For every saint's day of the year, —  
For every holy hour ;  
And there was set, in pride of place,  
The noble passion-flower.

And there they kept, the pious monks,  
    Within a garden small,  
All plants that had a healing power,  
    All herbs medicinal.

And thither came the sick, the maimed,  
    The moonstruck and the blind,  
For holy flower, for wort of power,  
    For charmed root and rind!

—Oh, those old abbey-gardens  
    With their devices rich,  
Their fountains, and green, solemn walks,  
    And saint in many a niche!

I would I could call back again  
    Those gardens in their pride,  
And see slow walking up and down,  
    The Abbot dignified.

And the fat monk with sleepy eyes,  
    Half dozing in his cell;  
And him, the poor lay-brother,  
    That loved the flowers so well;

That laid the abbey-gardens out,  
With all their fancies quaint,  
And loved a little flower as much  
As his own patron saint!

That gardened late and early,  
And twined into a bower,  
Wherein he set the crucifix  
The good old passion-flower!

Oh, would I could bring back again,  
Those abbey-gardens old,  
And see the poor lay-brother  
So busy in the mould;

Tying up his flowers and thinking  
The while, with streaming eyes,  
Of Jesus in the garden;  
Of Eve in Paradise!

—Alas, the abbey lieth low;  
The Abbot's tomb is bare;  
And he, the abbey-gardener,  
Is all forgotten there;

His garden is a pasture-field  
Wherein the flocks repose ;  
And where his choicest flowers were set  
The common clover grows !

But still we have the passion-flower,  
Although he lieth low,  
And ever may its holy flowers  
In pleasant gardens grow !

To garland bower and window pane,  
And ever bring to mind,  
The young days of the Christian church,  
Long ages left behind !

To bring the abbey's garden back,  
With its quaint beds and bowers,  
And him the good lay-brother  
That worked among the flowers.



**R**EINDEER, 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  
Hast thou 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 ;  
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.

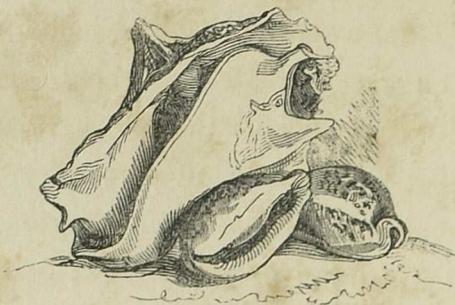
When thou wast at first designed  
By the great Creative Mind—  
With thy patience and thy speed ;  
With thy aid for human need ;  
With thy gentleness ; thy might ;  
With thy simple appetite ;  
With thy foot so framed to go  
Over frozen wastes of snow,  
Thou wast made for sterner skies  
Than horizoned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

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

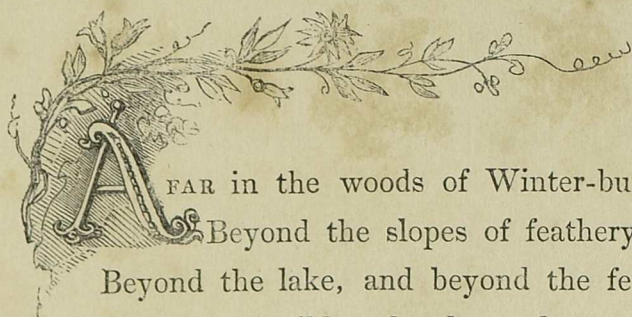
What the camel is, thou art,  
Strong of frame, and strong in heart !  
Peaceful ; stedfast to fulfil ;  
Serving man with right good-will ;  
Serving long, and serving hard ;  
Asking but a scant reward ;  
Of the snow a short repast,  
Or the mosses cropped in haste ;  
Then away ! with all thy strength,  
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 ;  
Through the burning sand he goes,  
Thou upon the upland snows ;  
Gifted each alike, yet meant  
For lands and labours different !

Meek Reindeer, of wondrous 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 ;  
Coined gold and silver fine,  
And the riches of the mine,  
These, elsewhere, as wealth are known,  
Here, 't is thou art wealth alone !



THE IVY-BUSH.



FAR in the woods of Winter-burn,  
Beyond the slopes of feathery fern ;  
Beyond the lake, and beyond the fen,  
Down in a wild and sylvan glen,  
In the very heart of Winter-burn wood ;  
Last summer an ivy-bush there stood,  
As strong as an oak, as thick as a yew,  
This ivy-bush in the forest grew :  
Let us go down this day and see  
If in Winter-burn still grows this tree.

Now we are here:—the words I spoke  
Were not, ye see, an idle joke !  
Stem, branch, and root, what think ye all  
Of this ivy-bush, so broad and tall ?

Many and many a year I wis,  
The tree has throve ere it grew to this!  
Many a year has tried its speed,  
Since this old bush was an ivy-seed;  
And the woodman's children that were then,  
Long years ago were ancient men,  
And now no more on earth are seen;  
But the ivy-bush is hale and green,  
And ere it sinks in slow decay,  
Many years to come will have passed away.

All round about 'mong its twisting boughs  
There's many an owl doth snugly house,  
Warm feathered o'er, yet none can see  
How they winking sit in the ivy-tree,  
For the leaves are thick as they can be.  
But at fall of night, when the stars come out,  
The old owls begin to move about;  
And the ivy-bush, like a busy hive,  
Within its leaves is all alive;  
And were you here you would declare,  
That the very bush began to stare,  
For in the dusk of leaves dark-green,  
The owl-eyes look out fixed and keen;

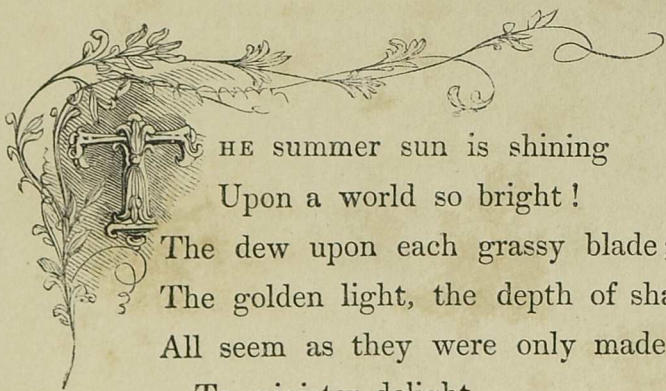
North and south, and round about,  
East and west the eyes look out.  
And anon is heard afar and nigh  
How the ivy-bush sends forth a cry,  
A cry so long, a cry so wild,  
That it wakes, almost, the cradled child;  
And the coach that comes with its peopled load,  
Man, woman and babe, up the hilly road,  
They hear in amaze the sudden hoot  
That shakes the old bush, branch and root,  
And the caped-up coachman, then says he,  
"In Winter-burn there grows a tree,  
And in this tree more owls abide  
Than in all Winter-burn beside;  
And every night as we climb this brow,  
The owls hoot out as they're hooting now!"  
And when they hoot and when they shout,  
'Tis woe to the wood-mice all about,  
And when the fires of their eyes appear,  
The weak little birds they quake for fear,  
For they know that the owls, with a fierce delight,  
Riot and feast, like lords, at night.

Oh bush, of ivy-trees the prime,  
Men find thee out at winter time,

From the distant town through frost and snow  
To the woods of Winter-burn they go ;  
And if care were killed by an ivy-bough,  
What a killer of care, old tree, wert thou !  
And high in the hall, with laughter merry,  
They hang thy twigs with their powdered berry ;  
And the red-gemmed holly they mix also,  
With the spectral branches of misseltoe.  
Rare old tree ! and the cottage small  
Is decked as well as the baron's hall,  
For the children's hands are busy and fain  
To dress up the little window-pane,  
And set in the chinks of the roof-tree wood  
The holly and ivy, green and good.

'Twere well for us, thou rare old tree,  
Could we gladden the human heart like thee ;  
Like thee and the holly, that thus make gay  
The lowliest cot for a winter's day !

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!

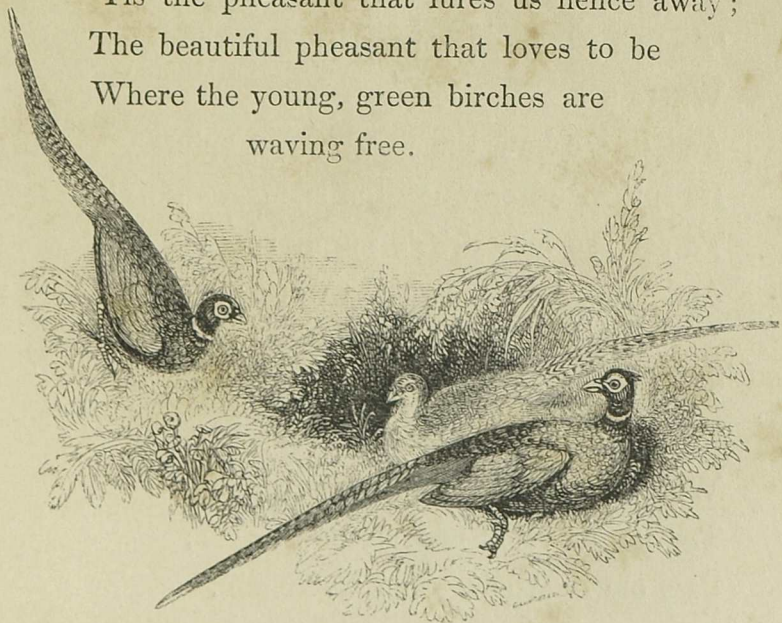
I think of pain and dying,  
As that which is but nought,  
When glorious morning, warm and bright,  
With all its voices of delight,  
From the chill darkness of the night,  
Like a new life, is brought.

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 PHEASANT.

**T**HE stock-dove builds in the old oak  
wood,

The rook in the elm-tree rears his brood ;  
The owl in a ruin doth hoot and stare ;  
The mavis and merle build everywhere ;  
But not for these will we go to-day,  
'Tis the pheasant that lures us hence away ;  
The beautiful pheasant that loves to be  
Where the young, green birches are  
waving free.



Away to the woods with the silvery rind,  
And the emerald tresses afloat on the wind !  
For 'tis joy to go to those sylvan bowers  
When summer is rich with leaves and flowers ;  
And to see, 'mid the growth of all lovely things,  
The joyous pheasant unfold his wings,  
And then cower down, as if to screen  
His gorgeous purple, gold, and green !

The streams run on in music low,  
'T will be joy by their flowery banks to go ;  
'T will be joy to come to the calamus beds,  
Where a broken root such odour sheds ;  
And to see how the water-sedge uplifts  
Its spires and crowns—the summer's gifts ;  
To see the loosestrife's purple spear,  
And the wind through the waving reeds to hear.

Then on through hazelly lanes, away  
To the light-green fields all clear of hay,  
Where along the thick hedge-side we greet,  
Tall purple vetch and meadow-sweet ;  
Past old farm-house and water-mill,  
Where the great colt's-foot grows wild at will ;

Where the water-rat swims calm and cool,  
And pike bask in the deep mill-pool.

So on and away to the mossy moor,  
Stretching on for many a mile before,  
A far-seen wild, where all around  
Some rare and beautiful thing is found;  
Green mosses many, and sundew red,  
And the cotton-rush with its plumy head;  
The spicy sweet-gale loved so well,  
And golden wastes of the asphodel!

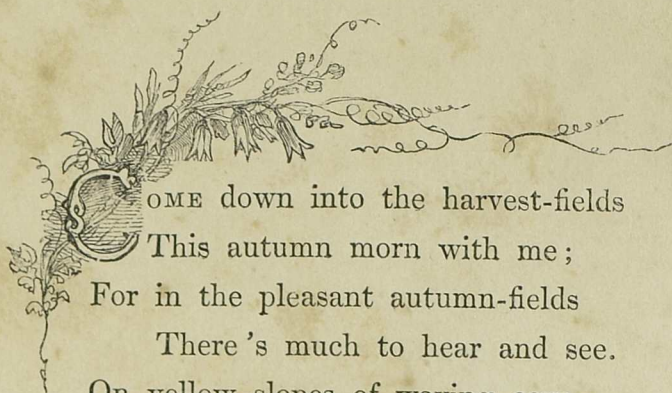
Yet on and on, o'er the springy moss,—  
We have yet the bog-rush bed to cross;  
And then a-nigh, all shimmering green  
To the sunny breeze, are the birch-woods seen,—  
Than the green birch-wood a lovelier spot  
In the realms of fairy-land was not!  
And the pheasant is there all life, all grace,  
The lord of this verdurous dwelling-place.

Oh! beautiful bird, in thy stately pride,  
Thou wast made in a waste of flowers to hide,

And to fling to the sun the glorious hues  
Of thy rainbow-gold, thy greens and blues !  
Yes, beautiful pheasant, the birch-wood bowers,  
Rich many-formed leaves, bright-tinted flowers,  
Broad masses of shade, and the sunshine free,  
In thy gorgeous beauty are meet for thee !



HARVEST-FIELD FLOWERS.



COME down into the harvest-fields  
This autumn morn with me ;  
For in the pleasant autumn-fields  
There's much to hear and see.  
On yellow slopes of waving corn  
The autumn sun shines clearly ;  
And 'tis joy to walk, on days like this,  
Among the bearded barley.

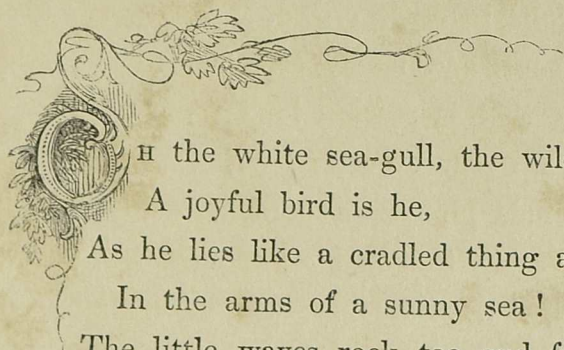
Within the sunny harvest-fields  
We'll gather flowers enow ;  
The poppy red, the marigold,  
The buglos brightly blue ;

We'll gather the white convolvulus  
That opes in the morning early ;  
With a cluster of nuts, an ear of wheat,  
And an ear of the bearded barley.

Bright over the golden fields of corn  
Doth shine the autumn sky ;  
So let's be merry while we may,  
For time goes hurrying by.  
They took down the sickle from the wall  
When morning dew's shone pearly ;  
And the mower whets the ringing scythe  
To cut the bearded barley.

Come then into the harvest-fields ;  
The robin sings his song ;  
The corn stands yellow on the hills,  
And autumn stays not long.  
They'll carry the sheaves of corn away ;  
They carried to-day so early,  
Along the lanes, with a rustling sound,  
Their loads of the bearded barley !

THE SEA-GULL.



H the white sea-gull, the wild sea-gull,  
A joyful bird is he,  
As he lies like a cradled thing at rest  
In the arms of a sunny sea !  
The little waves rock too and fro,  
And the white gull lies asleep,  
As the fisher's bark, with breeze and tide,  
Goes merrily over the deep.  
The ship, with her fair sails set, goes by,  
And her people stand to note,  
How the sea-gull sits on the rocking waves  
As still as an anchored boat.  
The sea is fresh, the sea is fair,  
And the sky calm overhead,  
And the sea-gull lies on the deep, deep sea,  
Like a king in his royal bed !

Oh the white sea-gull, the bold sea-gull,  
A joyful bird is he,  
Sitting, like a king, in calm repose  
On the breast of the heaving sea!  
The waves leap up, the wild wind blows,  
And the gulls together crowd,  
And wheel about, and madly scream  
To the sea that is roaring loud;—  
And let the sea roar ever so loud,  
And the winds pipe ever so high,  
With a wilder joy the bold sea-gull  
Sendeth forth a wilder cry,—  
For the sea-gull he is a daring bird,  
And he loves with the storm to sail;  
To ride in the strength of the billowy sea;  
And to breast the driving gale!  
The little boat she is tossed about,  
Like a sea-weed to and fro;  
The tall ship reels like a drunken man,  
As the gusty tempests blow.  
But the sea-gull laughs at the pride of man,  
And sails in a wild delight  
On the torn-up breast of the night-black sea,  
Like a foam-cloud, calm and white.

The waves may rage and the winds may roar,  
But he fears not wreck nor need,  
For he rides the sea, in its stormy strength,  
As a strong man rides his steed!

Oh the white sea-gull, the bold sea-gull!  
He makes on the shore his nest,  
And he tries what the inland fields may be;  
But he loveth the sea the best!  
And away from land, a thousand leagues  
He goes 'mid surging foam;  
What matter to him is land or shore,  
For the sea is his truest home!  
And away to the north 'mong ice-rocks stern,  
And among the frozen snow,  
To a sea that is lone and desolate,  
Will the wanton sea-gull go.  
For he careth not for the winter wild,  
Nor those desert-regions chill;  
In the midst of the cold, as on calm, blue seas,  
The sea-gull hath his will!  
And the dead whale lies on the northern shores,  
And the seal, and the sea-horse grim,  
And the death of the great sea-creatures makes  
A full, merry feast for him!

Oh the wild sea-gull, the bold sea-gull!

As he screams in his wheeling flight:

As he sits on the waves in storm or calm,

All cometh to him aright!

All cometh to him as he liketh best;

Nor any his will gainsay;

And he rides on the waves like a bold, young  
king,

That was crowned but yesterday!

The Gull, notwithstanding the gormandizing, and rather disgusting character given of it by Bewick, figures beautifully in his inimitable wood-cuts; giving the very spirit of wildness and freshness to his sea-side sketches.

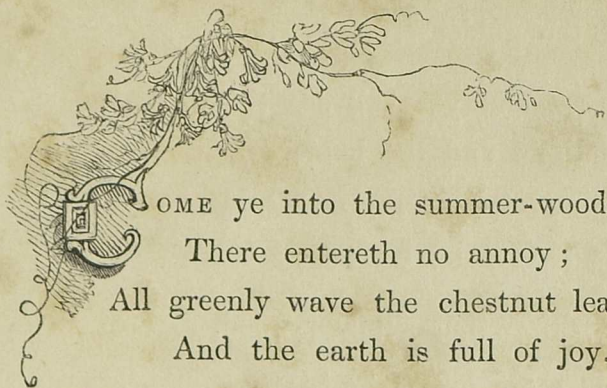
The Gull may occasionally be found far inland, domesticated in old-fashioned gardens, where it is an indulged and amusing habitant, feeding on slugs and worms, and becoming thus a useful assistant to the gardener. In this state it seems entirely to throw off its wild native character, and assumes a sort of mock-heroic style, which is often quite ludicrous. We have seen one

strutting about the straight alleys of such a garden, with the most formal, yet conscious air imaginable, glancing first to one side then to the other, evidently aware of your notice, yet pretending to be busied about his own concerns. It was impossible to conceive that this bird, walking "in his dignified way," upon his two stiff little legs, and so full of self-importance, had ever been a free, wild, winged creature, wheeling about and screaming in the storm, or riding gracefully upon the sunshiny waters. His nature had undergone a land-change; he was transformed into the patron of poodles, and the condescending companion of an old black cat. With these creatures, belonging to the same place, he was on very friendly terms, maintaining, nevertheless, an air of superiority over them, which they permitted, either out of pure good-nature, or because their simplicity was imposed upon. They were all frequently fed from the same plate, but the quadrupeds never presumed to put in their noses till the Gull was satisfied, and to his credit it may be told, that he was not insatiable, although a reasonably voracious bird on ordinary occasions.

We saw last summer, also, a Gull well known to northern tourists, which for twenty years has inhabited one of the inner green-courts at Alnwick Castle, and has outlived two or three companions. It is an interesting bird, of a venerable appearance ; but, as it has been described in books, more need not be said of it.

In one of the towers of this same Castle, also, we were shown a pair of perfect bird-skeletons, under a glass shade, the history of which is mysterious. They are the skeletons of a pair of jackdaws, which had built in one of the upper towers of the Castle, and had been found in their present state, apparently nestled together. From the account given us by the porter, an intelligent old man, they appeared not to have been discovered in any confined place, where they might have died from starvation, but by their own tower, on the open roof, as if they had been death-stricken side by side.

SUMMER WOODS



COME ye into the summer-woods ;  
There entereth no annoy ;  
All greenly wave the chestnut leaves,  
And the earth is full of joy.

I cannot tell you half the sights  
Of beauty you may see,  
The bursts of golden sunshine,  
And many a shady tree.

There, lightly swung, in bowery glades,  
The honey-suckles twine ;  
There blooms the rose-red campion,  
And the dark-blue columbine.

There grows the four-leaved plant "true-love,"  
In some dusk woodland spot;  
There grows the enchanter's night-shade,  
And the wood forget-me-not.

And many a merry bird is there,  
Unscared by lawless men;  
The blue-winged jay, the wood-pecker,  
And the golden-crested wren.

Come down, and ye shall see them all,  
The timid and the bold;  
For their sweet life of pleasantness,  
It is not to be told.

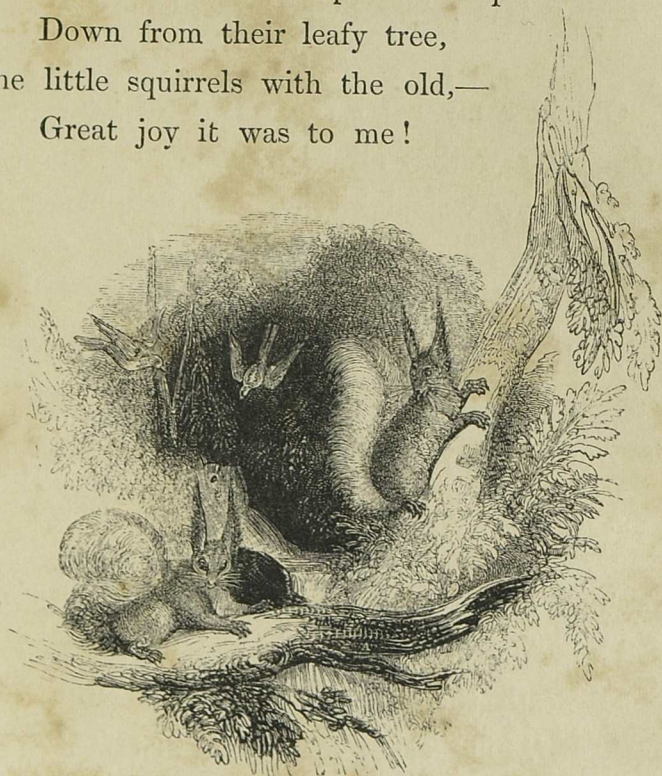
And far within that summer-wood,  
Among the leaves so green,  
There flows a little gurgling brook,  
The brightest e'er was seen.

There come the little gentle birds,  
Without a fear of ill;  
Down to the murmuring water's edge  
And freely drink their fill!

And dash about and splash about,  
The merry little things;

And look askance with bright black eyes,  
And flirt their dripping wings.

I've seen the freakish squirrels drop  
Down from their leafy tree,  
The little squirrels with the old,—  
Great joy it was to me!



And down unto the running brook,  
I've seen them nimbly go;  
And the bright water seemed to speak  
A welcome kind and low.

The nodding plants they bowed their heads,  
As if, in heartsome cheer,  
They spake unto those little things,  
“ ’Tis merry living here!”

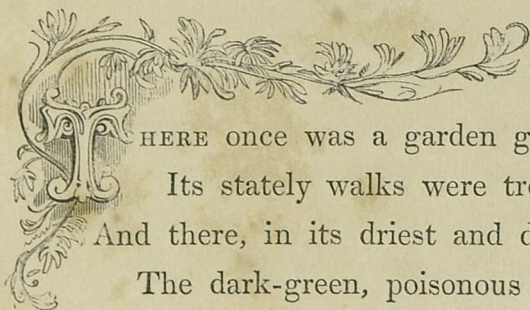
Oh, how my heart ran o’er with joy!  
I saw that all was good,  
And how we might glean up delight  
All round us, if we would!

And many a wood-mouse dwelleth there,  
Beneath the old wood-shade,  
And all day long has work to do,  
Nor is, of aught, afraid.

The green shoots grow above their heads,  
And roots so fresh and fine,  
Beneath their feet, nor is there strife  
’Mong them for *mine and thine*.

There is enough for every one,  
And they lovingly agree;  
We might learn a lesson, all of us,  
Beneath the green-wood tree!

THE MANDRAKE.



HERE once was a garden grand and old,  
Its stately walks were trodden by few;  
And there, in its driest and deepest mould,  
The dark-green, poisonous mandrake grew.

That garden's lord was a learned man,—  
It is of an ancient time we tell,—  
He was grim and stern, with a visage wan,  
And had books which only he could spell.

He had been a monk in his younger days,  
They said, and travelled by land and sea,  
And now, in his old, ancestral place,  
He was come to study in privacy.

A garden it was both large and lone,  
And in it was temple, cave and mound ;  
The trees were with ivy overgrown,  
And the depth of its lake no line had found.

Some said that the springs of the lake lay deep  
Under the fierce volcano's root ;  
For the water would oft-times curl and leap,  
When the summer air was calm and mute.

And all along o'er its margin dank  
Hung massy branches of evergreen ;  
And among the pebbles upon the bank  
The playful water-snakes were seen.

And yew-trees old, in the alleys dim,  
Were cut into dragon-shapes of dread ;  
And in midst of shadow, grotesque and grim,  
Stood goat-limbed statues of sullen lead.

The garden-beds they were long, and all  
With a tangle of flowers were overgrown ;  
And each was screened with an ancient wall,  
Or parapet low of mossy stone.

And from every crevice and broken ledge  
The harebell blue and the wall-flower sprung;  
And from the wall, to the water's edge,  
Wild masses of tendrilled creepers hung;

For there was a moat outside where slept  
Deep waters with slimy moss grown o'er,  
And a wall and a tower securely kept  
By a ban-dog fierce at a grated door.

This garden's lord was a scholar wise,  
A scholar wise, with a learned look;  
He studied by night the starry skies,  
And all day long some ancient book.

There were lords hard by who lived by spoil,  
But he did the men of war eschew;  
There were lowly serfs who tilled the soil,  
But with toiling serfs he had nought to do.

But now and then might with him be seen,  
Two other old men with look profound,  
Who peered 'mong the leaves of the mandrake  
green,  
And lightened with care the soil around.

For the king was sick and of help had need ;  
Or he had a foe whom art must quell,  
So he sent to the learned man with speed  
To gather for him a mandrake-spell.

And at night when the moon was at the full,  
When the air was still and the stars were out,  
Came the three the mandrake root to pull,  
With the help of the ban-dog fierce and stout.

Oh, the mandrake root! and they listened all three,  
For awful sounds, and they spoke no word,  
And when the owl screeched from the hollow tree,  
They said 'twas the mandrake's groan they  
heard.

And words they muttered, but what none knew,  
With motion slow of hand and foot ;  
Then into the cave the three withdrew,  
And carried with them the mandrake root.

They all were scholars of high degree,  
So they took the root of the mandrake fell,  
And cut it and carved it hideously,  
And muttered it into a charmèd spell.

Then who had been there, by dawn of day,  
Might have seen the two from the grated door  
Speed forth; and as sure as they went away,  
The charmèd mandrake root they bore.

And the old lord up in his chamber sat,  
Blessing himself, sedate and mute,  
That he thus could gift the wise and great  
With more than gold—the mandrake root.

The reverence attached to the mandrake may be classed among the very oldest of superstitions, for the Hebrews of the patriarchial ages regarded it as a plant of potent influence. The Greeks, who held it in the same estimation, called it after Circe, their celebrated witch, and also after Atropos, the eldest of the three Fates. The Romans adopted the same opinions respecting it, and Pliny relates the ceremonies which were used in obtaining the root.

In the middle ages, when the traditional superstitions of the antients were grafted upon the popular ignorance, the mandrake was a powerful engine in the hands of the crafty.

It was believed that when the mandrake was taken from the earth, it uttered a dreadful shriek; and that any human being who was presumptuous enough to remove it, was suddenly struck dead. Dogs, therefore, were used for this purpose. The earth was carefully lightened, and the plant fastened to the animal's tail; he was then made to draw it forth, and pay whatever penalty the demon of the plant thought fit to impose upon the disturber of his rest. The pretenders to medical skill in those days made great profit by the little hideous images which they fashioned out of the mandrake root, and sold as charms against every kind of sickness and misfortune. They were brought over from Germany in the reign of Henry the VIII., under the name of *Abrunes*, and by the help of certain pretended magical words, the knowledge of which the credulous obtained at a great price, were said to increase whatever money was placed near them. It was believed, also, at that time, that the mandrake was produced from the decaying flesh of malefactors hung upon the gibbet, and was to be found only in such situations. Dr. Turner, who

lived in the time of Queen Elizabeth, declares, that he had divers times taken up the roots of the mandrake, but had never found them under the gallows; nor of the form which the pedlars, who sold them in boxes, pretended them to have been. This form was that of an ugly little man, with a long beard hanging down to his feet. Gerard, the herbalist, also, who wrote thirty years later, used many endeavours to convince the world of the impositions practised upon them, and states, that he and his servant frequently dug up the roots without receiving harm, or hearing any shrieks whatever.

The mandrake grows naturally in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the Levant, and it is also indigenous to China. It was introduced into this country about 1564. It is a handsome plant, and would, in particular situations, be ornamental to our gardens, independent of the strange, old associations connected with it, which would always make it an interesting object. I have seen it, however, only in one garden, that of the King of the Belgians at Claremont.

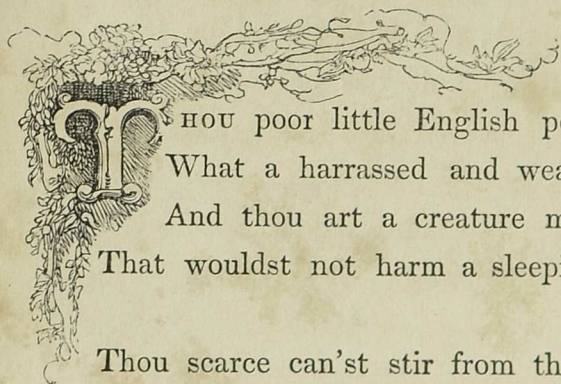
“It is,” says Mr. Phillips, in his pleasant gar-

den companion, the *Flora Historica*, from which work the above historical notices of the mandrake have been principally taken, “ a species of deadly nightshade, which grows with a long taper root like the parsnip, running three or four feet deep ; these roots are frequently forked, which assisted to enable the old quacks to give it the shape of a monster. This plant does not send up a stalk, but, immediately from the crown of the root arises a circle of leaves, which at first stand erect, but when grown to their full size, which is about a foot in length and five inches broad, of an ovate-lanceolate shape, waved at the edges, these spread open and lie on the ground ; they are of a dark-green, and give out a fetid smell. About the month of April the flowers come out among the leaves, each on a scape about three inches long ; they are of a bell shape with a long tube, and spread out into a five-cleft corolla. The colour of the flower is of an herbaceous white, but frequently has a tinge of purple. The flower is succeeded by a globular soft berry, when full grown, as large as a common cherry, but of a yellowish-green colour, when ripe

and full of pulp, intermixed with numerous reniform seeds."

If any of my readers should wish to cultivate this plant of "old renown," they should do it by sowing the seed in autumn, soon after it is ripe; as the seed kept till spring seldom produces plants. It should be set in a light, dry soil, and of a good depth, so that the root may not be chilled or obstructed; and care should be taken not to disturb it when it has once obtained a considerable size.

THE HEDGE-HOG



THOU poor little English porcupine,  
What a harrassed 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 shew a single spine,  
But the urchin-rabble are in a rout,  
With terrier curs to hunt thee out.

The poor Hedgehog! 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.

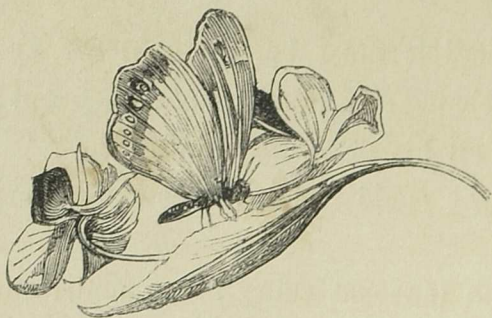
How unkind the world must seem to him,  
Living under the thicket dusk and dim,  
And getting his living among the roots,  
Of the insects small, and dry hedge-fruits.

How hard it must be, to be kicked about,  
If by chance his prickly back peep 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 among 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!

Oh, 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 !





**P**EE! pee! pee!" says the merry Pee-Bird;  
And as soon as the children hear it,  
"The Cuckoo's a-coming," they say,  
"for I heard,

Up in his tree the merry Pee-Bird,

And he'll come in three days, or near it!"

The days go on, one, two, three;

And the little bird singeth "pee! pee! pee!"

Then on the morrow, 'tis very true,

They hear the note of the old Cuckoo;

Up in the elm-tree, through the day,  
Just as in gone years, shouting away;  
    “Cuckoo,” the Cuckoo doth cry,  
And the little boys mock him as they  
    go by.

The wood-pecker laughs to hear the strain,  
And says “the old fellow is come back again;  
He sitteth again on the very same tree,  
And he talks of himself again!—he! he! he!”  
The stock-doves together begin to coo  
When they hear the voice of the old cuckoo;  
“Ho! ho!” say they, “he did not find  
Those far-away countries quite to his mind,  
So he’s come again to see what he can do  
With sucking the small birds’ eggs, coo-coo!”  
The black-bird, and throstle, and loud missel-  
    cock,  
They sing altogether, the Cuckoo to mock:  
“What want we with him? let him stay over  
    sea!”  
Sings the bold, piping reed-sparrow, “want him?  
    not we!”

“Cuckoo!” the Cuckoo shouts still,  
“I care not for you, let you rave as you  
will!”

“Cuckoo!” the Cuckoo doth cry,  
And the little boys mock him as they  
go by.

“Hark! hark!” sings the chiff-chaff, “hark!  
hark!” sings the lark,  
And the white-throats and buntings all twitter  
“hark! hark!”

The wren and the hedge-sparrow hear it anon,  
And “hark! hark!” in a moment shouts every  
one.

“Hark! hark!—that’s the Cuckoo there, shout-  
ing amain!

Bless our lives! why that egg-sucker’s come  
back again!”

“Cuckoo!” the Cuckoo shouts still,  
“I shall taste of your eggs, let you rave  
as you will!”

“Cuckoo!” the Cuckoo doth cry,  
And the little boys mock him as they  
go by.

The water-hens hear it, the rail and the smew,  
And they say,—“ Why on land there’s a pretty  
to-do !

Sure the Cuckoo’s come back, what else can  
be the matter ?

The pyes and the jays are all making a  
clatter !”

“ Hark ! hark !” says the woodcock, “ I hear  
him myself,

Shouting up in the elm-tree, the comical elf !”

“ Hark ! hark !” cries the widgeon, “ and I hear  
him too,

Shouting loudly as ever, that self-same Cuckoo !”

“ Well, well,” says the wild duck, “ what is  
it to us ;

I’ve no spite ’gainst the Cuckoo ; why make  
such a fuss ?

Let him shout as he listeth—he comes over sea—  
And his French may be French, ’tis no matter  
to me ;

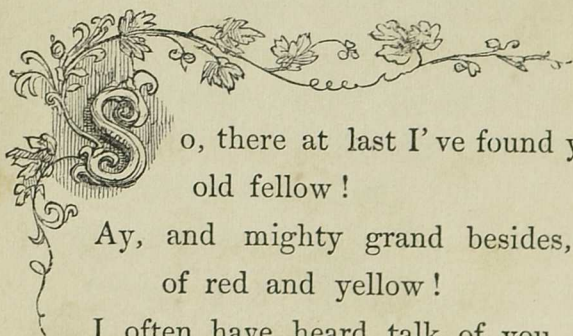
I have no spite against him, my soul’s not so  
narrow,

I leave all such whims to the tomtit and spar-  
row !”

“Cuckoo!” the Cuckoo shouts still,  
“You may all hold your peace, I shall do  
as I will!”  
“Cuckoo!” the Cuckoo doth cry,  
And the little boys mock him as they  
go by.



THE HORNET



So, 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!

My word! 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 fel-  
lows 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 flit 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 rascal has for  
biting!

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

If wasp or fly come in their gripe, that mo-  
ment they are 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 of his  
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 re-  
treat into the wood.

Oh! 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 sha-  
dow 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 hol-  
low and decayed,  
Must be a perfect paradise, for the hornet le-  
gions 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-  
winged 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. Since coming to reside in Surrey, we have found plenty of them. They come buzzing into the house, and are almost as common in the garden as

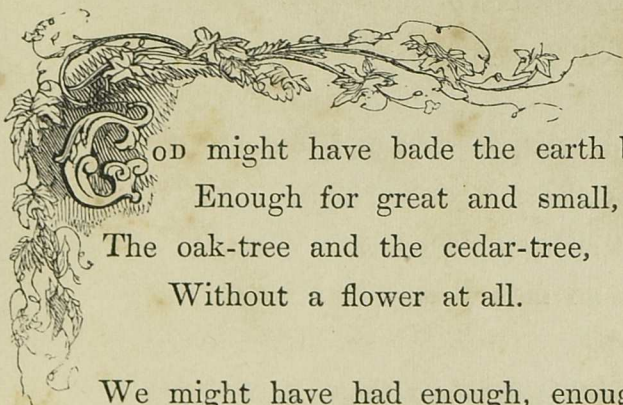
wasps themselves, devouring the fruits above-mentioned, and also as voracious of the green, tender bark of the dahlia, as ants are of the juice of the yucca. They peel the young branches with their nippers or shears, as a rabbit peels a young tree ; and wasps, and the great blue-bottle and other flies 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 turfey 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 USE OF FLOWERS.



God might have bade the earth bring forth  
Enough for great and small,  
The oak-tree and the cedar-tree,  
Without a flower at all.

We might have had enough, enough  
For every want of ours,  
For luxury, medicine, and toil,  
And yet have had no flowers.

The ore within the mountain mine  
Requireth none to grow ;  
Nor doth it need the lotus-flower  
To make the river flow.

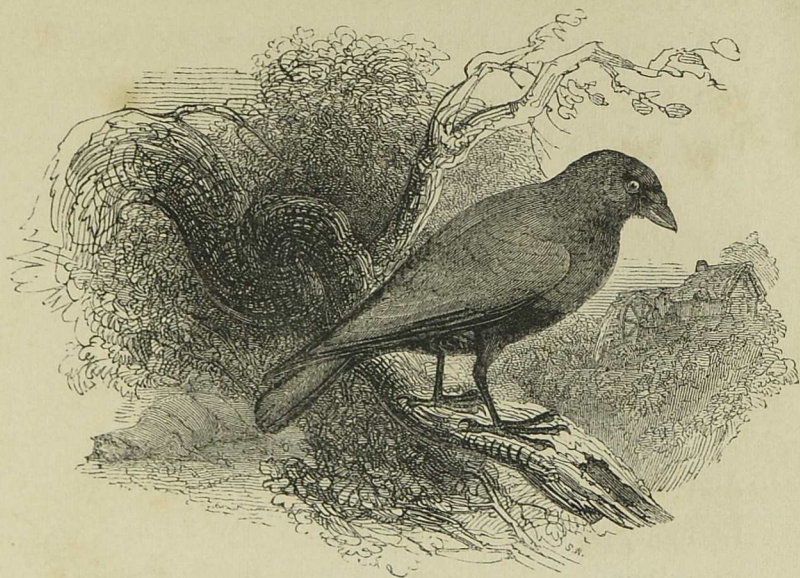
The clouds might give abundant rain;  
The nightly dews might fall,  
And the herb that keepeth life in man,  
Might yet have drunk them all.

Then wherefore, wherefore were they made,  
All dyed with rainbow-light,  
All fashioned with supremest grace  
Upspringing day and night:—

Springing in valleys green and low,  
And on the mountains high,  
And in the silent wilderness  
Where no man passes by?

Our outward life requires them not—  
Then wherefore had they birth?—  
To minister delight to man,  
To beautify the earth;

To comfort man—to whisper hope,  
Whene'er his faith is dim,  
For who so careth for the flowers  
Will much more care for him!



ON a splintered bough sits the Carrion-crow,  
And first he croaks loud and then he croaks  
low ;

Twenties of years ago, that bough  
Was leafless and barkless as it is now.

It is on the top of an ancient oak  
That the Carrion-crow has perched to croak ;  
In the gloom of a forest the old oak grows,—  
When it was young there's nobody knows.

'Tis but half alive, and up in the air  
You may see its branches splintered and bare ;  
You may see them plain in the cloudy night,  
They are so skeleton-like and white.

The old oak trunk is gnarled and grey,  
But the wood has rotted all away,  
Nothing remains but a cave-like shell,  
Where bats, and spiders, and millepedes dwell ;

And the tawny owl and the noisy daw,  
In many a hollow and many a flaw ;  
By night or by day, were you there about,  
You might see them creep in, or see them  
creep out.

And there, on the top of that ancient oak,  
The Carrion-crow he sits to croak ;—  
The words of his croaking I fain would know ;  
What does he say—that Carrion-crow ?

He says, and he's merry as he can be,—  
“ To-night there's a famous feast for me ;  
For me and my mate so beautiful,  
Where the hound lies dead by the forest-pool.

“ His master he knows not where he lies,  
So we shall go down to peck out his eyes;  
His master he mourneth, early and late;—  
But 'tis joy to me and my beautiful mate!

“ And the miller last week he killed his mare,—  
She lies in a hollow, I know where,—  
There's an ancient cross of crumbling stone  
Down in that hollow, dank and lone!

“ The mare was blind, and lame, and thin,  
And she had not a bone but it pierced her skin;  
For twenty years did she come and go,—  
We'll be with her anon!” croaked the Carrion-  
crow.

“ And there bleats a lamb by the thundering linn,  
The mother ewe she has tumbled in;  
Three days ago and the lamb was strong,  
Now he is weak with fasting long.

“ All day long he moans and calls,  
And over his mother the water falls;  
He can see his mother down below,  
But why she comes not he does not know.

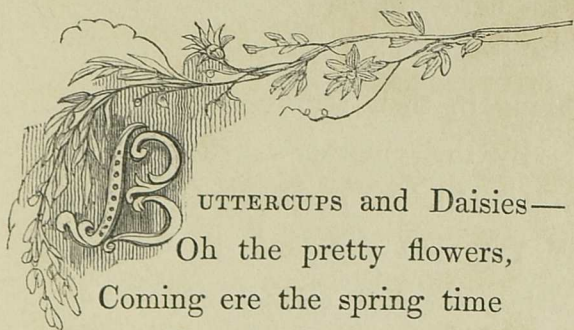
“ His little heart doth pine away,  
And fainter and fainter he bleats to-day ;  
So loud o’er the linn the waters brawl,  
That the shepherd he hears him not at all !

“ Twice I’ve been down to look at him,  
But he glanced on me his eyeballs dim ;  
And among the stones so cold and bare,  
I saw the raven watching there.

“ He’ll have the first peck at his black eye,  
And taste of his heart before it die :—  
Aha ! though the hungry raven is there,  
As soon as he’s ready we’ll have our share !”

These are the words of the Carrion-crow,  
As he first croaks loud and then croaks low,  
And the spiders and millepedes hear him croak,  
As he sits up aloft on the ancient oak.

BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES.



BUTTERCUPS and Daisies—  
Oh the pretty flowers,  
Coming ere the spring time  
To tell of sunny hours.  
While the trees are leafless ;  
While the fields are bare,  
Buttercups and Daisies  
Spring up here and there.

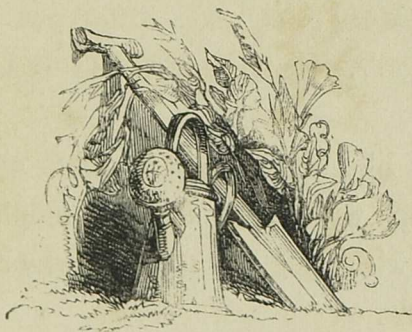
Ere the snow-drop peepeth ;  
Ere the crocus bold ;  
Ere the early primrose  
Opes its paly gold,

Somewhere on a sunny bank  
Buttercups are bright ;  
Somewhere 'mong the frozen grass  
Peeps the Daisy white.

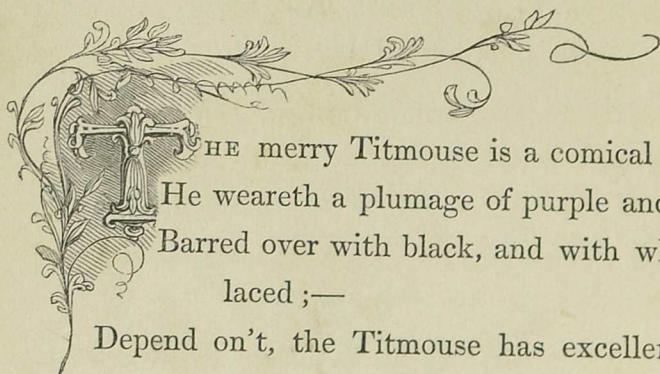
Little hardy flowers  
Like to children poor,  
Playing in their sturdy health  
By their mother's door :  
Purple with the north-wind  
Yet alert and bold,  
Fearing not and caring not,  
Though they be a-cold !

What to them is weather !  
What are stormy showers !  
Buttercups and daisies  
Are these human flowers !  
He who gave them hardship  
And a life of care,  
Gave them likewise hardy strength,  
And patient hearts, to bear.

Welcome yellow buttercups,  
Welcome daisies white,  
Ye are in my spirit  
Visioned, a delight!  
Coming ere the spring-time  
Of sunny hours to tell—  
Speaking to our hearts of HIM  
Who doeth *all things well*.



THE TITMOUSE, OR BLUE-CAP.



THE merry Titmouse is a comical fellow ;  
He weareth a plumage of purple and yellow,  
Barred over with black, and with white inter-  
laced ;—  
Depend on't, the Titmouse has excellent taste.

And he, like his betters of noble old blood,  
Keeps up, with great spirit, a family feud ;  
A feud with the owl ;—and why ? would you  
know,—  
An old, by-gone quarrel of ages ago :—

Perhaps in the Ark might be taken offence,—  
But I know not, indeed, of the where and the  
whence ;—

Only this is quite true,—let them meet as they  
may,  
Having quarrelled long since, they would quarrel  
to-day.

But we'll leave them to settle this ancient affair,  
And now look at his nest, made with exquisite care,  
Of lichen, and moss, and the soft downy feather,  
And the web of the spider to keep it together.

Is a brick out of place by your window?—don't  
send

For the man with the trowel the fracture to  
mend,

Through the dry months of summer, just leave  
it alone,

For the poor little Titmouse has made it his  
own.

Peep in now, and look at that wonderful labour ;

And be glad to have near you so merry a  
neighbour ;

His work unto him is no trouble—behold  
For one moment his motions, so tricky and  
bold.

How he twists, how he turns with a harlequin  
grace !

He can't lift a feather without a grimace ;  
He carries the moss in his bill with an air ;  
And he laughs at the spider he robs of his lair.

See his round, burley head, that is like a Friar  
Tuck,

And his glancing black eye that is worthy of  
Puck ;

Saw you ever a merrier creature than he ?

Oh, no !—make him welcome, as welcome can  
be !

His nest now is finished with fine cobweb thread,  
And the eggs are laid in it, white, speckled with  
red ;

Now knock at the wall, or rap loud on the  
pane,

Hark ! what is that rapping so briskly again !

'Tis the blithe mother-bird, all alive and alert,  
As her mate, every whit, is she comic and  
pert ;

Rap you once,—she raps twice ;—she has no-  
thing to do,

But to keep her eggs warm, and be neighbourly  
too !

Oh, what ! did you say that the Titmouse was  
stealing,

That he ate your pear-buds while he shammed  
to be reeling ;

And nipped off the apricot-bloom in his fun ?—  
And that shortly you'll end his career with a  
gun !

Oh ! hold back your hand,—'twere a deed to  
repent ;

Of your blame the poor fellow is quite inno-  
cent,—

Stand back for one moment—anon he'll be here,  
He believes you his friend, and he thinks not  
of fear.

Here he comes!—See how drolly he looketh  
askew;—

And now hangs head downward; now glances  
on you!

Be not rash, though he light on your apricot-  
bough,—

Though he touches a bud,—there, he touches  
it now!

There, he's got what he wanted, and off he  
has flown!—

Now look at the apricot bud,—is it gone?

Not the apricot bud,—but the grub that was  
in it!—

You may thank him,—he does you a service  
each minute.

Then love the poor Titmouse, and welcome  
him too,

Great beauty is there in his yellow and blue;  
He's a fine cheerful fellow—so let him be free  
Of your garden—to build in your wall or your  
tree!



I LOVE the sunshine everywhere,—  
In wood, and field, and glen ;  
I love it in the busy haunts  
Of town-imprisoned men.

I love it when it streameth in  
The humble cottage door,  
And casts the chequered casement shade  
Upon the red-brick floor.

I love it where the children lie  
    Deep in the clovery grass,  
To watch among the twining roots  
    The gold-green beetles pass.

I love it on the breezy sea,  
    To glance on sail and oar,  
While the great waves, like molten glass,  
    Come leaping to the shore.

I love it on the mountain-tops,  
    Where lies the thawless snow,  
And half a kingdom, bathed in light,  
    Lies stretching out below.

And when it shines in forest-glades,  
    Hidden, and green, and cool.  
Through mossy boughs and veined leaves,  
    How is it beautiful!

How beautiful on little streams,  
    When sun and shade at play,  
Make silvery meshes, while the brook  
    Goes singing on its way.

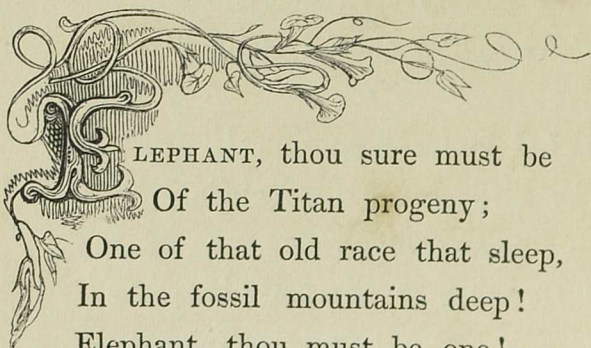
How beautiful, where dragon-flies  
Are wondrous to behold,  
With rainbow wings of gauzy pearl,  
And bodies blue and gold!

How beautiful, on harvest slopes,  
To see the sunshine lie;  
Or on the paler reaped fields,  
Where yellow shocks stand high!

Oh, yes! I love the sunshine!  
Like kindness or like mirth,  
Upon a human countenance,  
Is sunshine on the earth!

Upon the earth; upon the sea;  
And through the crystal air,  
On piled-up cloud; the gracious sun  
Is glorious everywhere!

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 up-turned trunk didst browse,  
On the reed-palms' 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 do, I pray thee tell,  
It were worth the knowing well.

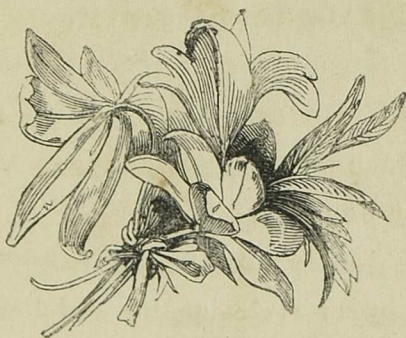
Elephant, so old and vast,  
Thou a kindly nature hast;

Grave thou art, and strangely wise,  
With observant, serious eyes,  
Somewhat in thy brain must be  
Of an old sagacity.

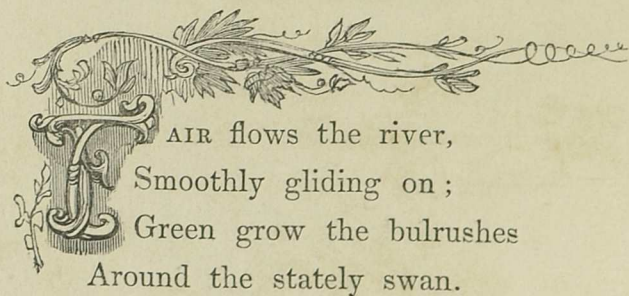
Thou art solemn, wise and good ;  
Thou liv'st not on streaming blood ;  
Thou, and all thine ancient frere,  
Were of natures unsevere ;  
Preying not on one another ;  
Nourished by the general mother  
Who gave forests thick and tall,  
Food and shelter for you all.

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!



THE WILD SWAN.



AIR flows the river,  
Smoothly gliding on ;  
Green grow the bulrushes  
Around the stately swan.  
What an isle of beauty  
The noble bird hath formed,  
The greenest trees and stateliest  
Grow all the isle around.

Low bend the branches  
In the water bright,  
Up comes the swan sailing,  
Plumy all and white.

Like a ship at anchor,  
Now he lies at rest,  
And little waves seem daintily  
To play about his breast.

Wild bird of beauty,  
Strong, and glad, and free!  
Dwelling on these waters,—  
How pleasant it must be!  
Like a gleam of sunshine  
In shadow passing on,—  
Like a wreath of snow, thou art,  
Wild and graceful swan!

Thick grow the flowers  
'Neath the chestnut shade;  
Green grow the bulrushes  
Where thy nest is made:  
Lovely ye, and loving, too,  
The mother bird and thee,  
Watching o'er your cygnet brood,  
Beneath the river tree.

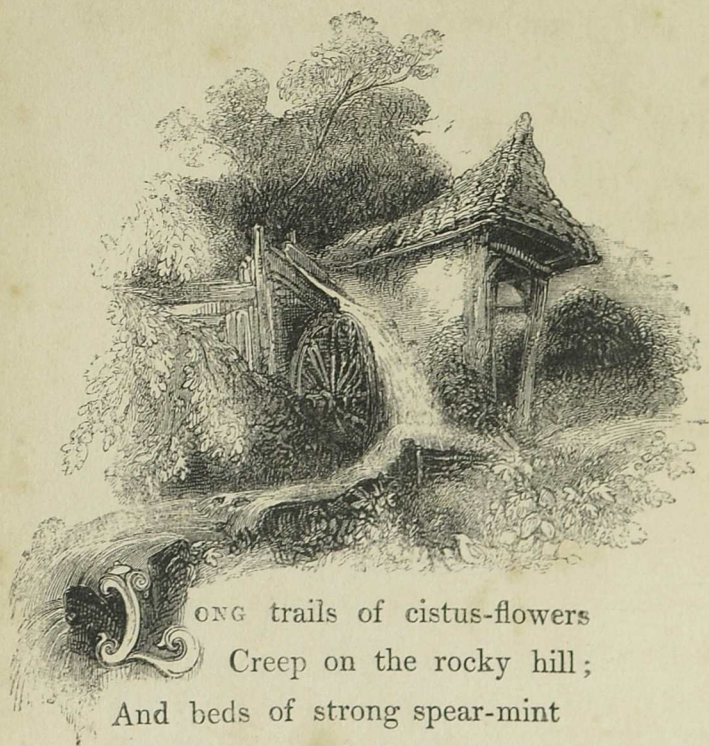
Kings made laws a-many,  
Laws both stern and strong,  
In the days of olden time,  
You to keep from wrong;  
And o'er their palace-waters  
Ye went, a gallant show,  
And Surrey and his Geraldine,  
Beheld ye sailing slow.

Tell me, Swan, I pray thee,  
Art of that high race,  
Or a sylvan creature  
From some far, lone place?  
Saw ye in woody Athelney,  
True Alfred's care and pain,  
Or, riding out among his men,  
Good King Canute the Dane?

No, from 'mid the icebergs,  
Through long ages piled,  
Sometime ye were driven  
By the winter wild;

From where the ermine hunters,  
    On their far journeys go ;  
From where the rein-deer sledges speed  
    O'er the wastes of snow :

From northern wildernesses,  
    Wild, and lone, and drear,  
Ice-lakes, cold and gleaming,  
    Ye have hastened here.  
The pleasant streams of England  
    Your homeward flight have stayed,  
And here among the bulrushes  
    Your English nest is made.



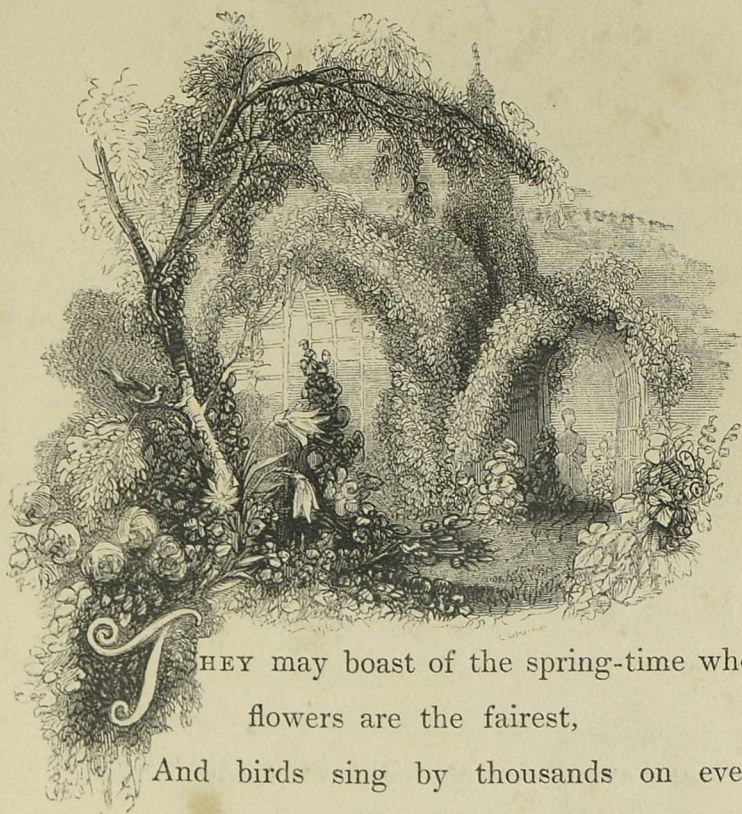
**L**ONG trails of cistus-flowers  
Creep on the rocky hill;  
And beds of strong spear-mint  
Grow round about the mill;  
And from a mountain tarn above,  
As peaceful as a dream,  
Like to child unruly,  
Though schooled and counselled truly,  
Foams down the wild mill-stream!

The wild mill-stream it dasheth,  
In merriment away,  
And keeps the miller and his son  
So busy all the day!

Into the mad mill-stream  
The mountain-roses fall;  
And fern and adder's tongue  
Grow on the old mill-wall.  
The tarn is on the upland moor,  
Where not a leaf doth grow;  
And through the mountain-gashes,  
The merry mill-stream dashes  
Down to the sea below:  
But, in the quiet hollows,  
The red trout groweth prime,  
For the miller and the miller's son  
To angle when they've time.

Then fair befall the stream  
That turns the mountain-mill;  
And fair befall the narrow road  
That windeth up the hill!

And good luck to the countryman,  
And to his old grey mare,  
That upward toileth steadily,  
With meal-sacks laden heavily,  
In storm as well as fair!  
And good luck to the miller,  
And to the miller's son;  
And ever may the mill-wheel turn  
While mountain-waters run!



THEY may boast of the spring-time when  
flowers are the fairest,  
And birds sing by thousands on every  
green tree;  
They may call it the loveliest, the greenest,  
the rarest ;—  
But the summer's the season that's dearest  
to me!

For the brightness of sunshine ; the depth of  
the shadows ;

The crystal of waters ; the fulness of green,  
And the rich flowery growth of the old pasture  
meadows,

In the glory of summer can only be seen.

Oh, the joy of the green-wood ! I love to be  
in it,

And list to the hum of the never-still bees,  
And to hear the sweet voice of the old mother  
linnet,

Calling unto her young 'mong the leaves of  
the trees !

To see the red squirrel frisk hither and thither,  
And the water-rat plunging about in his  
mirth ;

And the thousand small lives that the warm  
summer weather,

Calls forth to rejoice on the bountiful earth !

Then the mountains, how fair ! to the blue  
vault of heaven

Towering up in the sunshine, and drinking  
the light,

While adown their deep chasms, all splintered  
and riven,

Fall the far-gleaming cataracts silvery white !

And where are the flowers that in beauty are  
glowing

In the garden and fields of the young, merry  
spring,

Like the mountain-side wilds of the yellow  
broom blowing,

And the old forest pride, the red wastes of  
the ling ?

Then the garden, no longer 'tis leafless and  
chilly,

But warm with the sunshine and bright with  
the sheen

Of rich flowers, the moss-rose and the bright  
tiger-lily,  
Barbaric in pomp as an Ethiop Queen.

Oh, the beautiful flowers, all colours combining,  
The larkspur, the pink, and the sweet mignonette,  
And the blue fleur-de-lis, in the warm sunlight  
shining,  
As if grains of gold in its petals were set!

Yes, the summer,—the radiant summer's the  
fairest,  
For green-woods and mountains, for meadows and bowers,  
For waters, and fruits, and for flowers the  
rarest,  
And for bright shining butterflies, lovely as  
flowers!



**H**ARK! hark! the merry warder's horn  
Far o'er the wooded hills is borne,  
Far o'er the slopes of ripening corn,

On the free breeze away!

The bolts are drawn; the bridge is o'er  
The sullen moat,—and steeds a score  
Stand saddled at the castle-door,

For 'tis a merry day!

With braided hair, of gold or jet,  
There's many a May and Margaret,  
Before her stately mirror set,

With waiting-woman by ;  
There's scarlet cloak, and hat and hood ;  
And riding-dress of camlet good,  
Green as the leaf within the wood,  
To shroud those ladies high.

And presently they are arrayed,  
And plaits are smoothed and folds are laid,  
And all the merry gabble stayed  
That showered down like rain ;  
And down the stately stairs they go,  
Where dainty pages stand a-row,  
To greet them with obeisance low,  
And follow in the train.

And then into the castle-hall,  
Come crowding gallant knights and tall,  
Equipped as for a festival,  
For they will hawk to-day.

And then outbreaks a general din  
From those without, as those within  
Upon the terrace-steps are seen,  
In such a bright array !

The kennelled hounds' long bark is heard ;  
The falconer talking to his bird ;  
The neighing steeds ; the angry word  
Of grooms impatient there.  
But soon the bustle is dismissed ;—  
The falconer sets on every wrist  
A hooded hawk, that's stroked and kissed  
By knight and lady fair.

And sitting in their saddles free,  
The brave, the fair of high degree,  
Forth rides that gallant company,  
Each with a bird on hand ;  
And falconers with their hawking-gear,  
And other birds, bring up the rear ;  
And country-folk from far and near  
Fall in and join the band.

And merrily thus in shine and shade,  
Gay glancing through the forest glade,  
On rides the noble cavalcade,  
To moorlands wild and grey;  
And then the noble sport is high!  
The jess is loosed, the hood thrown by;  
And *leurre* the jolly falconers cry;  
And wheeling round the falcons fly  
Impatient of their prey.

A moment and the quarry's ta'en;  
The falconers' cry sounds forth amain;  
The true hawk soars and soars again,  
Nor once the game is missed!  
And thus the jocund day is spent,  
In jolly sport and merriment:  
And baron bold were well content,  
To fell his wood, and pawn his rent  
For the hawk upon his wrist!

Oh gay goshawk and tercel bold,  
Then might ye rule it as ye "wold;"  
Then sate ye on a perch of gold,  
And kings were your compeers!

But that was in the days gone by;  
The days of Norman chivalry,  
When the low crouched unto the high;—  
The times of other years!

Oh gay goshawk, your days were when  
Came down at night the ruffian men,  
To slay the sleeping children then  
Lying in London Tower;  
Yours were the days of civil feud;  
Of Rufus slain within the wood;  
Of servile John; of Robin Hood;  
Of Woodstock's bloody bower!

Oh, gay goshawk, you but belong  
To troubadour and minstrel song;  
To shirt of mail and hauberk strong;  
To moat and castle-wall;  
To serf and baron, page and dame;  
To abbot sleek, as spaniel tame;  
To kings who could not sign their name;  
To times of wrong and thrall!

Times are not now as they were then ;  
Ours is a race of different men,  
Who loathe the sword and love the pen ;  
                    For right, not rapine, bold.  
No more, as then, the ladies bright  
Work tapestry-work from morn till night ;  
The very children read and write,  
                    Like learned clerks of old !

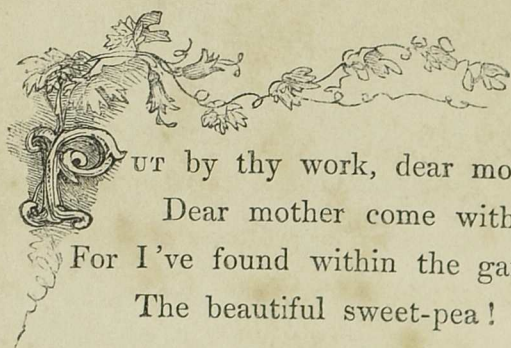
Oh, Falcon proud, and goshawk gay,  
Your pride of place has passed away ;  
The lone wood is your home by day,  
                    Your resting perch by night ;  
The craggy rock your castle-tower ;  
The gay green-wood your ladies' bower ;  
Your own wild will, the master power  
                    That can control your flight !

Yet noble bird old fame is thine ;  
Still livest thou in the minstrel's line ;  
Still in old pictures art the sign  
                    Of high and pure degree ;

And still, with kindling hearts we read,  
How barons came to Runymede,  
Falcon on wrist, to do the deed,  
That made all England free!



THE CHILD AND THE FLOWERS.



PUT by thy work, dear mother ;  
Dear mother come with me,  
For I've found within the garden,  
The beautiful sweet-pea !

And rows of stately hollyhocks  
Down by the garden-wall,  
All yellow, white, and crimson,  
So many-hued and tall !

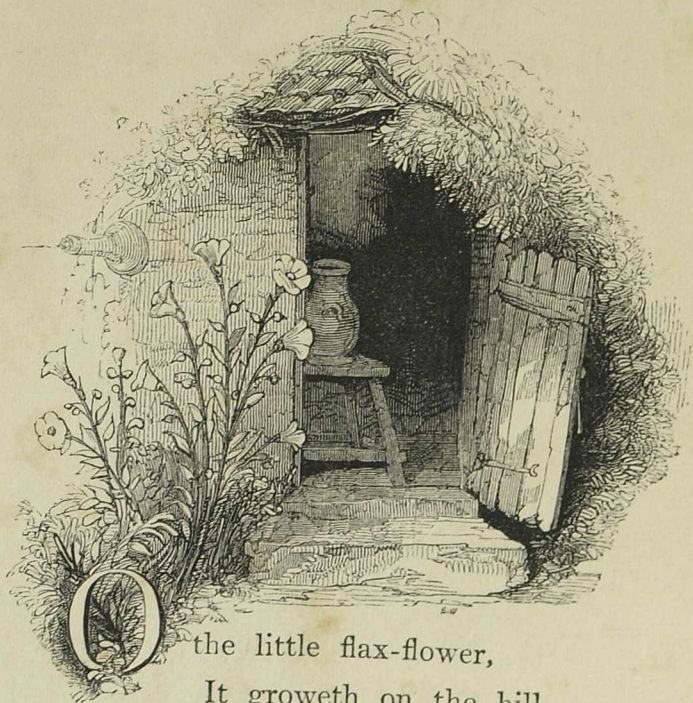
And bending on their stalks, mother,  
Are roses white and red ;  
And pale-stemmed balsams all a-blow,  
On every garden-bed.

Put by thy work, I pray thee,  
And come out, mother dear !  
We used to buy these flowers,  
But they are growing here !

Oh, mother ! little Amy,  
Would have loved these flowers to see ;—  
Dost remember how we tried to get  
For her a pink sweet-pea ?

Dost remember how she loved  
Those rose-leaves pale and sere ?  
I wish she had but lived to see  
The lovely roses here !

Put by thy work, dear mother,  
And wipe those tears away !  
And come into the garden  
Before 'tis set of day !



O the little flax-flower,  
It groweth on the hill,  
And, be the breeze awake or sleep,  
It never standeth still.  
It groweth, and it groweth fast;  
One day it is a seed,  
And then a little grassy blade,  
Scarce better than a weed.  
But then out comes the flax-flower,  
As blue as is the sky;  
And “ ’tis a dainty little thing!”  
We say, as we go by.

Ah, 'tis a goodly little thing,  
It groweth for the poor,  
And many a peasant blesses it,  
Beside his cottage-door.  
He thinketh how those slender stems  
That shimmer in the sun,  
Are rich for him in web and woof,  
And shortly shall be spun.  
He thinketh how those tender flowers,  
Of seed will yield him store ;  
And sees in thought his next-year's crop  
Blue shining round his door.

Oh, the little flax-flower !  
The mother, then says she,  
“ Go pull the thyme, the heath, the fern,  
But let the flax-flower be !  
It groweth for the children's sake,  
It groweth for our own ;  
There are flowers enough upon the hill,  
But leave the flax alone !  
The farmer hath his fields of wheat,  
Much cometh to his share ;  
We have this little plot of flax,  
That we have tilled with care.

“ Our squire he hath the holt and hill,  
Great halls and noble rent;  
We only have the flax-field,  
Yet therewith are content.  
We watch it morn, we watch it night,  
And when the stars are out,  
The good man and the little ones,  
They pace it round about;  
For it we wish the sun to shine,  
For it the rain to fall;  
Good lack! for who is poor doth make  
Great count of what is small!”

Oh, the goodly flax-flower!  
It groweth on the hill,  
And, be the breeze awake or sleep,  
It never standeth still!  
It seemeth all astir with life,  
As if it loved to thrive;  
As if it had a merry heart  
Within its stem alive!  
Then fair befall the flax-field,  
And may the kindly showers,  
Give strength unto its shining stem,  
Give seed unto its flowers!

It is so rare a thing now-a-days to see flax grown in any quantity, that my English readers will not feel the full force of the above little poem. The English cottager has not often ground which he can use for this purpose ; and, besides, he can purchase calico for the wear of his family at a much cheaper cost than he could grow flax. Nor is the English woman “ handy ” at such matters. She would think it a great hardship to till, perhaps, the very ground upon which it was grown ; to pull it with the help of her children only, and, to her other household cares and occupations, to add those of preparing, spinning, and, it might be, to help even to weave it into good home-spun cloth. Seventy or eighty years ago, however, this was not uncommon in England ; and it is still common, and in some districts even general in Scotland. Burns alludes to the growth of flax in many of his poems ; and, in the “ Cottar’s Saturday Night,” the mother reckons the age of the cheese from the time of the flax flowering.

The household interest which is taken in the flax-field presented itself strongly to us in many a wild glen, and in many a desolate mountain-side in the Highlands of Scotland, in the summer of

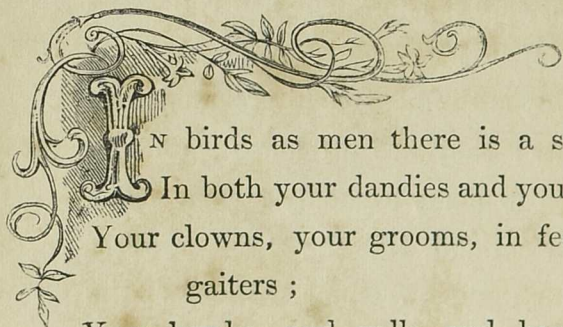
1836. You came, in the midst of those stony and heathy wildernesses, upon a few turf-erections, without windows and without chimneys ; the wild grasses of the moor and the heath itself grew often upon the roof, for all had originally been cut from the mountain-side ; and, but for the smoke which issued from the door, or the children that played about it, you might have doubted of its being a human dwelling. Miserable, however, as such homes may appear at first sight, they are, as it were, the natural growth of the mountain-moorland, and the eye soon finds in them much that is picturesque and characteristic.

About such places as these are frequently, too, patches of cultivated ground ; the one of potatoes, and perhaps oats or barley, the other of flax. Thus grow, at the very door of this humble human tenement, the food and clothing of the family. How essential this growth is to them, may be seen from the nature of the ground. It is frequently the most difficult that can be conceived to bring into cultivation ; one mass, as it seems, of stones, with the scantiest intermixture of soil. These stones, many of which are of immense size,

are with infinite toil and patience gathered from the earth, and piled into walls round the little fields, otherwise the mountain sheep, and perhaps the wild roes, would soon lay the whole waste. Here the mother, as well as the father, labours, and indeed the flax seems especially to belong to her, for she must spin it before she can convert it into family use.

In the same way is the household provided with woollen garments; they are all home-spun and home-made, even to many a goodly tartan. The “tarry woo” of Scotland, like the “lint-flower,” is a national thing; the affections, as well as the fire-side-interests of that country are connected with them.

THE HOUSE-SPARROW.



IN birds as men there is a strange variety,  
In both your dandies and your *petits maitres* ;  
Your clowns, your grooms, in feathered legs or  
gaiters ;

Your hawks, and gulls, and harpies to satiety.  
On sea or land it matters not an ace—  
You find the feathered or unfeathered race  
Of bipeds, showing every form and figure,  
But everywhere the sharp-clawed and the  
bigger —

Falcons that shoot, and men that pull the  
trigger —

Still pressing on the lesser and forlorn !

'Tis hard to bear, and yet it must be borne,  
Although we walk about in wrath and scorn,

To see the hectoring, lording, and commotion  
For ever going on in earth or ocean !  
The conquerors fierce ; those thievish chaps, the  
lawyers,  
That chirp and gabble, wheedle and bamboozle ;  
The jackdaw-race of pleaders, the pert cawyers  
In their grey wigs, the sober rooks that puzzle :  
Land-sharks, and pirates both of sea and land ;  
Your cormorants acting the sedate and grand :  
The singers, and the Paganinis,  
Who filch your fruit, and pocket up your  
guineas ;  
The tomtit, mime ;—the wren, small poet :  
The silly creatures that by scores  
Nurse cuckoo-imps, that out of doors  
Have turned their children, and they never  
know it !

I walk in cities, 'mong the human herds,  
And then I think of birds :  
I walk in woods among the birds, and then  
I think of men !  
'Tis quite impossible in one or other  
To walk and see not—man and bird are brother.

The owl can't see in day light;—  
Oh no! he's blind and stupid—  
A very fool,—a blockhead plain to see!  
But just step out and look at him at night,  
When all the world is slumbering, save he—  
My word! you'll find him then as brisk as  
Cupid!

With open eyes and beak that has the knack  
To snap up mouse or rabbit by the back!  
The owl in hollow oak—the man in den,  
Chamber, or office, dusky and obscure,  
Are creatures very heavy and demure;  
But soon their turn comes round, and then,  
Oh, what sharp claw and pitiless beak have  
they  
To feather, fleece and worry up their prey!

“A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind,”  
So sang the noble bard, who, like the swallow,  
Flew through far climes and soared where few  
can follow.

'Tis true; and therefore still we find  
That gentle spirits love the robin,  
That comes, as Wordsworth says, “when winds  
are sobbing;”

Pecks at your window ; sits upon your spade,  
And often thanks you in a serenade.  
But what is it that brings about you  
That pert, conceited good-for-nothing Sparrow,  
Which seems to say—" I 'd do as well without  
you,"

Yet, never for a second,  
Night or day  
Will be away,  
Though hooted, shot at, nor once coaxed or  
beckoned?

In town or country—in the densest alley  
Of monstrous London—in the loneliest valley—  
On palace-roof—on cottage-thatch,  
On church or chapel—farm or shop,  
The Sparrow 's still " the bird on the house-top."  
I think 'twas Solomon who said so,  
And in the bible having read so,  
You find that his ubiquity  
Extends itself far up into antiquity.  
Yes, through all countries and all ages  
While other birds have sung in woods or cages,  
This noisy, impudent and shameless varlet  
Though neither noble, rich, nor clad in scarlet,

Would have the highest place without the asking.

Upon your roof the lazy scamp is basking—  
Chirping, scuffling, screaming, fighting,  
Flying and fluttering up and down  
From peep of day to evening brown.  
You may be sleeping, sick, or writing,  
And needing silence—there's the Sparrow,  
Just at your window—and enough to harrow  
The soul of Job in its severest season.  
There, as it seemeth, for no other reason  
But to confound you;—he has got,  
Up in the leaden gutter burning hot,  
Every low scape-grace of the Sparrow-clan,  
Loons of all ages,—grandsire, boy and man,  
Old beldame Sparrow, wenches bold,  
All met to wrangle, raffle, rant and scold.  
Send out your man! shoot! blow to powder  
The villanous company, that fiercer, louder  
Drive you distracted. There! bang! goes the gun  
And all the little lads are on the run  
To see the slaughter;—not a bird is slain—  
There were some feathers flew—a leg was broke,  
But all went off as if it were a joke—  
In comes your man—and there they are again!

Of all the creatures, that were ever set  
Upon two legs, there 's nothing to be met,  
Save some congeners in our own sweet race,  
Made of such matter, common, cocket, base,  
As are these Sparrows! Would that some magician,

Philosopher or chemist would but show us  
What 'tis that constitutes the composition  
Of certain men in town, who drive, or row us,  
Cads, jarvies, porters of a low degree,  
Haunters of theatre, tavern, and coach-doors,  
Men all alert in dust and misery;  
Men made to elbow, bustle, cheat or steal,  
Careless of scorn, incapable to feel  
Indignity or shame—vulgar and vain,  
Hunger and cold their only sense of pain.

Just of this class, amongst all feathered things,  
Is this Jack Sparrow. He 's no bird that sings,  
He makes no grand pretences; has no fine  
Airs of high breeding—he but wants to dine.  
His dress is brown, his body stiff and stout,  
Coarse in his nature, made to prog about.

What are his delicate fancies? Who e'er sees  
The Sparrow in his sensibilities?

There are the nightingales, all soul and song,  
Moaning and warbling the green boughs among.

There are the larks that on etherial wing,  
Sing to high Heaven as heavenly spirits sing;  
There are the merle, the mavis, birds whose  
lays,

Inspired the minstrel songs of other days.

There are the wandering tribes, the cuckoo  
sweet;

Swallows that singing on your chimneys meet,  
Through spring and summer, and anon are flown  
To lands and climes, to sages yet unknown.

Those are your poets;—birds of genius—those  
That have their nerves and feel refined woes.

But these Jack Sparrows; why they love far  
more

Than all this singing nonsense, your barn-door!

They love your cherry-tree—your rows of peas,  
Your ripening corn crop, and to live at ease!

You find no Sparrow in the far-off-woods—

No—he's not fond of hungry solitudes.

He better loves the meanest hamlet—where

Aught's to be had, the Sparrow will be there,  
Sturdy and bold, and wrangling for his share.  
The tender linnet bathes her sides and wings  
In running brooks and purest forest-springs.  
The Sparrow rolls and scuffles in the dust—  
That is his washing, or his proper rust.

Before your carriage as you drive to town  
To his base meal the Sparrow settles down ;  
He knows the safety-distance to an inch,  
Up to that point he will not move or flinch ;—  
You think your horse will crush him—no such  
thing—

That coachman's whip might clip his fluttering  
wing,  
Or take his head of in a twink—but he  
Knows better still and liveth blithe and free.

At home he plagues the martins with his  
noise—  
They build, he takes possession and enjoys ;  
Or if he want it not, he takes it still,  
Just because teasing others is his will.  
From hour to hour, from tedious day to day  
He sits to drive the rightful one away.

At home, abroad, wherever seen or heard  
Still is the Sparrow just the self-same bird ;  
Thievish and clamorous, hardy, bold and base,  
Unlike all others of the feathered race.  
The bully of his tribe—to all beyond  
The gipsey, beggar, knave, and vagabond !

It may be thought that I have here dealt hard measure to the Sparrow, but the character I have given of him will be recognised by those who know him, as true. Cowper calls them, a thievish race, that scared as often as you please,

As oft return, a pert, voracious kind ;

and that every farmer knows them to be. What multitudes do you see dropping down upon, or rising from the wheat as it is ripening in the fields. Formerly a price was set upon their heads, and eggs by country parishes. In many places a penny was given for a Sparrow's head, and the same for three or four eggs ; but this is now done away with, and the farmer must destroy them himself, or pay dearly for it in his corn.

Nothing can exceed the self-complacence of

this bird. You see him build his nest amongst the richest tracery of a church roof or window ; within the very coronet or escutcheon set up over the gate of hall or palace. We saw this summer, the hay and litter of his nest hanging out from the richly-cut initial-letters of William and Mary over one of the principal windows of Hampton Court. Nay he would build in a span-new V. R. set up only yesterday, or in the queen's very crown itself though it were worth a kingdom, if it were only conveniently placed for his purpose. He thinks nothing too good for him.

But the most provoking part of his character is, the pleasure which he takes in teasing, molesting and hectoring over birds of the most quiet and inoffensive nature. He builds about your houses, and thinks no other bird has any business to do the same, The martin, which loves to build under the eaves of our dwellings, after crossing the seas from some far country,—has especially to bear his insolence and aggressions. There is a pretty story in the “Evenings at Home,” of two of these interesting birds, who had their nest usurped by a Sparrow, getting

together their fellows, and building him up in the nest, where he was left a prisoner amid his plunder. But the gentleness of the martin is so great, that such an instance of poetical justice is more curious, than likely to occur a second time. But every summer the Sparrow lords it over the martin, and frequently drives it away by its impertinence. We watched his behaviour this year with a good deal of attention. Two pairs of martins came and built their nests beneath the eaves of the stable, near each other. Scarcely were the nests half finished, when several sparrows were seen watching on the tiles close to them, chirping loudly, and conceitedly, and every now and then flying at the martins. The nests, however, were completed; but no sooner was this done, than the sparrows took possession of them, and lined them with coarse hay, which is an abomination to the martin, which lines its nest with the softest feathers. Having witnessed this, we waited for about ten days, by which time we supposed the sparrows would have laid their full number of eggs; and a ladder was set up, in order to inflict just retribution on them, by taking

the whole. But to our surprise there were none. The hay was therefore carefully removed, that the martins, if they pleased, might retake possession; but the very next day, the nests were again filled with hay, and long bents of it hung dangling from the entrance-hole. The sparrows had, with wonderful assiduity, and, as it were, with a feeling of vindictive spite, relined the nests with as much hay as they ordinarily carry to their own nests in several days. Now it was supposed they would really lay in these nests, but no such thing,—they never did. Their only object had been to dislodge the martins, for it was found that these very sparrows had nests of their own in the water-spouts of the house, with young ones in them, at the very time, and their purpose of ousting the martins from their own nests being accomplished, the hay remained in the nests quietly all summer.

But this was not all. The poor martins, driven from the stable, came now to the house; and, as if for special protection, began to build their nests under the roof, nearly over the front door. No sooner was this intention discovered by the sparrows, than they were all in arms again. They

were seen watching for hours on the tiles just above, chirping, strutting to and fro, flying down upon the martins when they came to their nests with materials, and loudly calling upon their fellow sparrows to help them to be as offensive as possible. The martins, however, rendered now more determined, persisted in their building, and so far succeeded as to prevent the sparrows getting more than a few bents of hay into their nests when complete. The martins laid their eggs; but for several times successively, the sparrows entered in their absence, and hoisted out all the eggs, which of course fell to the ground and were dashed to pieces. Provoked at this mischievous propensity of the sparrows, we had them now shot at, which had the desired effect. One or two of them were killed, and the rest took the hint, and permitted the martins to hatch and rear their young in peace.



OH, when I was a little child,  
My life was full of pleasure;  
I had four-and-twenty living things,  
And many another treasure.

But chiefest was my sister dear,—  
Oh, how I loved my sister!  
I never played at all with joy,  
If from my side I missed her.

I can remember many a time,  
    Up in the morning early,—  
Up in the morn by break of day,  
    When summer dewes hung pearly ;

Out in the fields, what joy it was,  
    While the cowslip yet was bending,  
To see the large round moon grow dim,  
    And the early lark ascending !

I can remember, too, we rose  
    When the winter stars shone brightly ;  
'Twas an easy thing to shake off sleep,  
    From spirits strong and sprightly.

How beautiful were those winter skies,  
    All frosty-bright and unclouded,  
And the garden-trees, like cypresses,  
    Looked black, in the darkness shrouded !

Then the deep, deep snows were beautiful,  
    That fell through the long night stilly,  
When behold, at morn, like a silent plain,  
    Lay the country wild and hilly !

And the fir-trees down by the garden side,  
In their blackness towered more stately ;  
And the lower trees were feathered with snow,  
That were bare and brown so lately.

And then, when the rare hoar-frost would come,  
'Twas all like a dream of wonder,  
Where over us grew the crystal trees,  
And the crystal plants grew under !

The garden all was enchanted land ;  
All silent and without motion,  
Like a sudden growth of the stalactite,  
Or the corallines of ocean !

'Twas all like a fairy forest then,  
Where the diamond trees were growing,  
And within each branch the emerald green,  
And the ruby red were glowing.

I remember many a day we spent  
In the bright hay-harvest meadow ;  
The glimmering heat of the noonday ground,  
And the hazy depth of shadow.

I can remember, as to-day,  
The corn-field and the reaping,  
The rustling of the harvest-sheaves,  
And the harvest-wain's upheaping :

I can feel, this hour, as if I lay  
Adown 'neath the hazel bushes,  
And as if we wove, for pastime wild,  
Our grenadier-caps of rushes.

And every flower within that field  
To my memory's eye comes flitting,  
The chiccory-flower, like a blue cockade,  
For a fairy-knight befitting.

The willow-herb by the water side,  
With its fruit-like scent so mellow ;  
The gentian blue on the marly hill,  
And the snap-dragon white and yellow.

I know where the hawthorn groweth red ;  
Where pink grows the way-side yarrow ;  
I remember the wastes of woad and broom,  
And the shrubs of the red rest-harrow.

I know where the blue geranium grows,  
And the stork's-bill small and musky;  
Where the rich osmunda groweth brown,  
And the wormwood white and dusky.

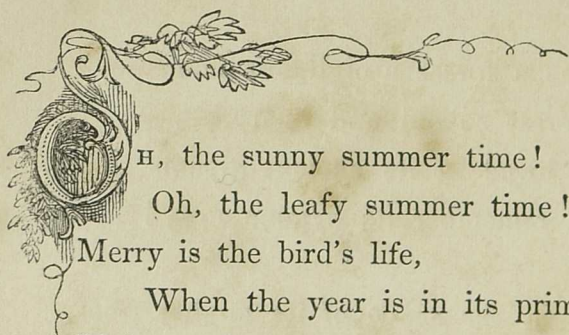
There was a forest a-nigh our home,—  
A forest so old and hoary,—  
How we loved in its ancient glooms to be,  
And remember its bygone story!

We sate in the shade of its mighty trees,  
When the summer noon was glowing,  
And heard in the depths of its undergrowth  
The pebbly waters flowing.

We quenched our thirst at the forest-well;  
We ate of the forest berry;  
And the time we spent in the good green-wood,  
Like the times of song, were merry.

We had no crosses then, no cares;  
We were children like yourselves then;  
And we danced and sang, and made us mirth,  
Like the dancing moonlight elves then!

BIRDS.



H, the sunny summer time!  
Oh, the leafy summer time!  
Merry is the bird's life,  
When the year is in its prime!  
Birds are by the water-falls  
Dashing in the rainbow-spray;  
Everywhere, everywhere  
Light and lovely there are they!  
Birds are in the forest old,  
Building in each hoary tree;  
Birds are on the green hills;  
Birds are by the sea!  
  
On the moor, and in the fen,  
'Mong the wortle-berries green;  
In the yellow furze-bush  
There the joyous bird is seen;

In the heather on the hill ;  
    All among the mountain thyme ;  
By the little brook-sides,  
    Where the sparkling waters chime ;  
In the crag ; and on the peak,  
    Splintered, savage, wild, and bare,  
There the bird with wild wing  
    Wheeeth through the air.

Wheeeth through the breezy air,  
    Singing, screaming in his flight,  
Calling to his bird-mate,  
    In a troubleless delight !  
In the green and leafy wood,  
    Where the branching ferns up-curl,  
Soon as is the dawning,  
    Wakes the mavis and the merle ;  
Wakes the cuckoo on the bough ;  
    Wakes the jay with ruddy breast ;  
Wakes the mother ring-dove  
    Brooding on her nest !

Oh, the sunny summer time !  
    Oh, the leafy summer time !

Merry is the bird's life

When the year is in its prime !

Some are strong and some are weak ;

Some love day and some love night ;—

But whate'er a bird is,

Whate'er loves—it has delight,

In the joyous song it sings ;

In the liquid air it cleaves ;

In the sunshine ; in the shower ;

In the nest it weaves !

Do we wake ; or do we sleep ;

Go our fancies in a crowd

After many a dull care,—

Birds are singing loud !

Sing then linnet ; sing then wren ;

Merle and mavis sing your fill ;

And thou, rapturous skylark,

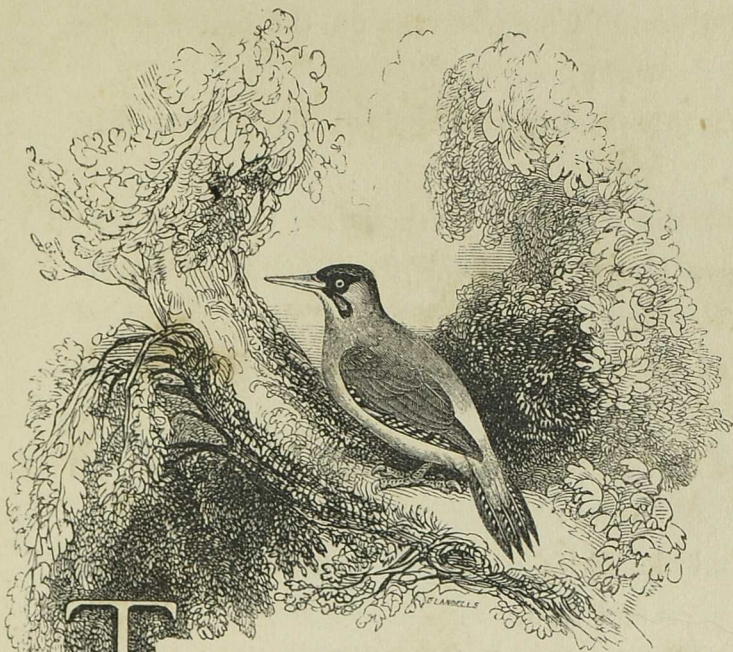
Sing and soar up from the hill !

Sing, oh, nightingale, and pour

Out for us sweet fancies new !—

Singing thus for us, birds,

We will sing of you !



**T**HE woodpecker green he has not his  
abiding

Where the owls and the bats from the  
daylight are hiding ;

Where the bright mountain-streams glide on  
rock-beds away,

The dark water-ousel may warble and play ;  
In the sedge of the river the reed-sparrow  
build ;

And the peewit among the brown clods of the  
field ;

The sea-gull may scream on the breast of the  
tide ;

On the foam-crested billows the peterel may  
ride ;

But the woodpecker asketh nor river nor sea ;  
Give him but the old forest, and old forest-  
tree,

And he'll leave to the proud lonely eagle the  
height

Of the mist-shrouded precipice splintered and  
white ;

And he'll leave to the gorcock the heather  
and fern,

And the lake of the valley to woodcock and  
hern ;

To the sky-lark he'll leave the wide fields of  
the air,

The sunshine and rainbow ne'er tempted him  
there.

The greenwood for him is the place of his  
rest,

And the broad-branching tree is the home he  
loves best.

Let us go to the haunt of the woodpecker green,  
In those depths of the wood there is much  
to be seen.

There the wild-rose and woodbine weave  
fairy-land bowers,  
And the moth-mullein grows with its pale  
yellow flowers ;

There the hum of the bees through the noon-  
day is heard,  
And the chirp, and the cry, and the song of  
the bird ;

There up the tree-trunk, like a fly on the wall,  
To pick the grey moss, runs the tree-creeper  
small ;

There the wren golden-crested, so lovely to see,  
Hangs its delicate nest from the twigs of the tree ;  
And there coos the ring-dove—oh, who would not  
go,

That voice of the wood to hear, dreamy and low !  
Yes, come to the wood—to the woodpecker's  
tree,

There is joy 'mong the green leaves for thee  
and for me !

Hark ! heard you that laughter so loud and  
so long ?—

Again now !—it drowneth the wood-linnet's  
song !

'Tis the woodpecker laughing !—the comical elf !  
His soul must be merry to laugh to himself !—  
And now we are nearer—speak low—be not  
heard !

Though he's merry at heart he's a shy, timid  
bird.

Hark !—now he is tapping the old, hollow tree :—  
One step farther on—now look upward—that's  
he !

Oh, the exquisite bird !—with his downward-  
hung head.

With his richly dyed greens—his pale yellow  
and red !

On the gnarled tree-trunk with its sober-toned  
grey,

What a beautiful mingling of colours are they !  
Ah, the words you have spoken have frightened  
the bird—

For by him the lowest of whispers were heard ;

Or a footfall as light as the breezes, that pass  
Scarcely bending the flowers, he perceives on  
the grass.

The squirrel above him might chatter and  
chide ;

And the purple-winged jay scream on every side ;  
The great winds might blow, and the thunder  
might roll,

Yet the fearless woodpecker still cling to the  
bole ;

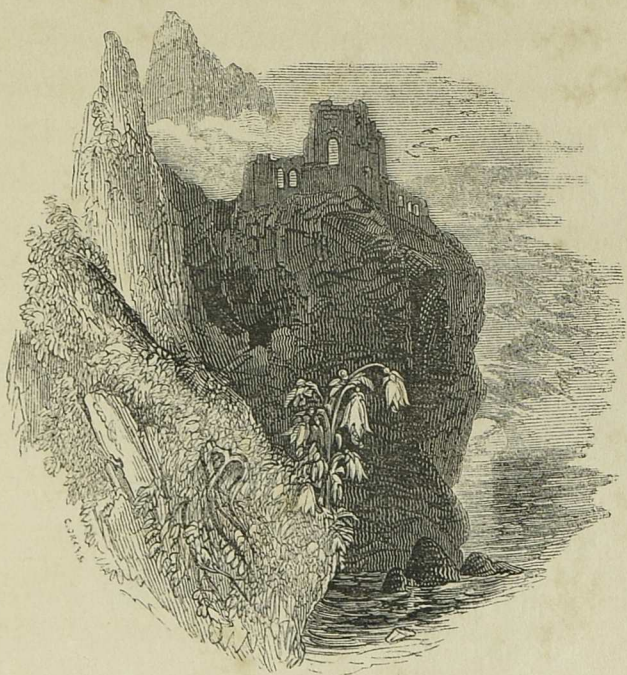
But soon as a footstep that's human is heard,  
A quick terror springs to the heart of the bird !  
For man, the oppressor and tyrant, has made  
The free harmless dwellers of nature afraid !

'Neath the fork of the branch, in the tree's  
hollow bole,

Has the timid woodpecker crept into his hole ;  
For there is his home in deep privacy hid,  
Like a chamber scooped into a far pyramid ;  
And there is his mate, as secure as can be,  
And his little young woodpeckers deep in the  
tree.

And not till he thinks there is no one about,  
Will he come to his portal and slyly peep out ;  
And then, when we're up at the end of the lane,  
We shall hear the old woodpecker laughing  
again.





THE HAREBELL.

(*CAMPANULA ROTUNDIFOLIA.*)

It springeth on the heath,  
The forest-tree beneath,  
Like to some elfin dweller of the wild ;  
Light as a breeze astir,  
Stemmed with the gossamer ;  
Soft as the blue eyes of a poet's child.

The very flower to take  
Into the heart, and make  
The cherished memory of all pleasant places ;  
Name but the light harebell,  
And straight is pictured well  
Where'er of fallen state lie lonely traces.

We vision wild sea-rocks,  
Where hang its clustering locks,  
Waving at dizzy height o'er ocean's brink ;  
The hermit's scoopèd cell ;  
The forest's sylvan well,  
Where the poor wounded hart came down to  
drink.

We vision moors far-spread,  
Where blooms the heather red,  
And hunters with their dogs lie down at noon ;  
Lone shepherd-boys who keep,  
On mountain-sides their sheep,  
Cheating the time with flowers and fancies  
boon.

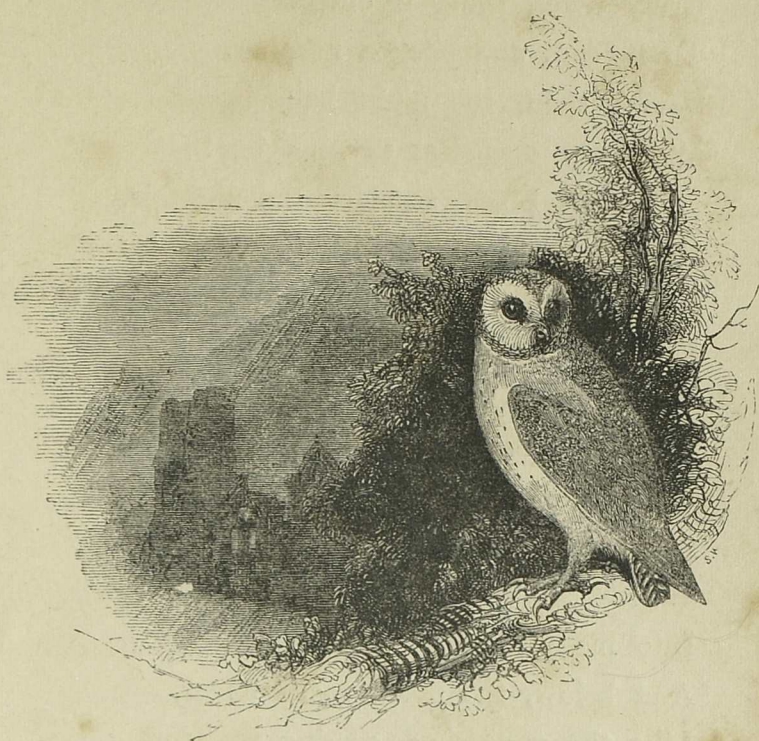
Old slopes of pasture ground ;  
Old fosse, and moat, and mound,  
Where the mailed warrior and crusader came ;  
Old walls of crumbling stone,  
Where trails the snap-dragon ;  
Rise at the speaking of the Harebell's name.

We see the sere turf brown,  
And the dry yarrow's crown  
Scarce raising from the stem its thick-set  
flowers ;  
The pale hawkweed we see,  
The blue-flowered chiccory,  
And the strong ivy-growth o'er crumbling towers.

Light Harebell, there thou art,  
Making a lovely part  
Of the old splendour of the days gone by,  
Waving, if but a breeze  
Pant through the chestnut trees,  
That on the hill-top grow broad-branched and  
high.

Oh, when I look on thee,  
In thy fair symmetry,  
And look on other flowers as fair beside,  
My sense is gratitude,  
That God has been thus good,  
To scatter flowers, like common blessings, wide !





PRAY thee, Owl, what art thou doing,  
With that dolefullest tu-whoo-ing ?  
Dark the night is, dark and dreary,  
Never a little star shines cheery ;  
Wild north winds come up the hollow,  
And the pelting rain doth follow ;  
And the trees, the tempest braving,  
To and fro are wildly waving !

Every living thing is creeping  
To its den, and silence keeping,  
Saving thou, the night hallooing  
With thy dismalest tu-whoo-ing!

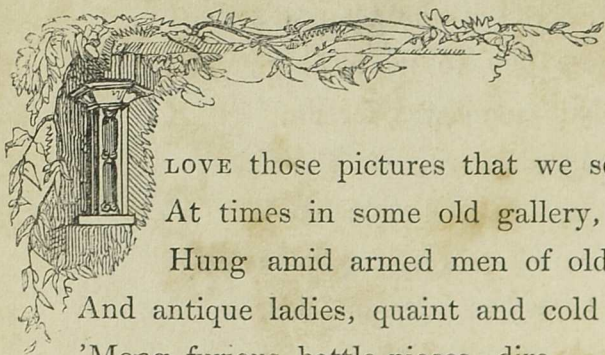
Nought I see, so black the night is,  
Black the storm, too, in its might is;  
But I know there lies the forest,  
Peril ever there the sorest,  
Where the wild deer-stealers wander;  
And the ruin lieth yonder,  
Splintered tower and crumbling column,  
All among the yew-trees solemn,  
Where the toad and lizard clamber  
Into many an ancient chamber,  
And below, the black rocks under,  
Like the muttering, coming thunder,  
Lowly muttering, rolling ever,  
Passes on the fordless river:—  
Yet I see the black night only  
Covering all, so deep and lonely!

Pr'ythee, Owl, what is 't thou'rt saying,  
So terrific and dismaying?  
Dost thou speak of loss and ruin,  
In that ominous tu-whoo-ing?

While the tempest yet was stiller,  
Homeward rode the kindly miller,  
With his drenchèd meal-sacks o'er him,  
And his little son before him ;  
Dripping wet, yet loud in laughter,  
Rode the jolly hunters after ;  
And sore wet, and blown, and wildern,  
Went a huddling group of children ;  
But each, through the tempest's pother,  
Got home safely to its mother ;  
And ere afternoon was far on,  
Up the mountain spurred the Baron.  
How can evil then betide 'em !  
In their houses warm they hide 'em.  
In his chimney-corner smoking,  
Sits the miller, spite thy croaking ;  
And the children, snug and cozy,  
In their beds sleep warm and rosy ;  
And the Baron with his lady,  
Plays at chess sedate and steady.

Hoot away, then, 'an it cheer thee,  
Only I and darkness hear thee.  
Trusting Heaven, we'll fear no ruin,  
Spite thy ominous tu-whoo-ing !

FLOWER-PAINTINGS.



LOVE those pictures that we see  
At times in some old gallery,  
Hung amid armed men of old,  
And antique ladies, quaint and cold ;  
'Mong furious battle-pieces, dire  
With agony, and blood, and fire ;—  
Flower-pictures, painted long ago,  
Though worn, and old, and dimmed of glow,  
I love them, although art may deem  
Such pictures but of light esteem.

There are the red rose and the white ;  
And stems of lilies, strong and bright ;

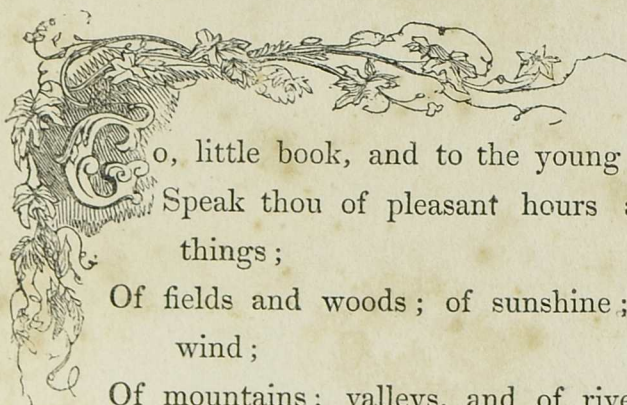
The leaf and tendril of the vine ;  
The iris and the columbine ;  
The streaky tulip, gold and jet ;  
The amaranth and violet ;  
There is the bright jonquil ; the trail  
Of bind-weed, chalice-like and pale ;  
The crumpled poppy, brave and bold ;  
The pea ; the pink ; the marigold.

There are they grouped, in form and hue,  
Flower, bud, and leaf to nature true !  
Yes, although slighted and forlorn,  
And oft the mark of modern scorn,  
I love such pictures, and mine eye  
With cold regard ne'er passed them by.  
I love them most, that they present  
Ever some goodly sentiment ;  
The virgin-mother, young and mild ;  
The cradle of the holy child ;  
Or, 'mid a visioned glory faint,  
The meek brow of some martyred saint ;  
And with their painters I can find  
A kindred sympathy of mind.

Flowers are around me, bright of hue,  
The quaint, old favourites and the new,  
In form and colour infinite,  
Each one a creature of delight.  
But with this fair array is brought  
Full many a deep and holy thought,  
And for me garden-beds and bowers,  
Like the old pictures of the flowers,  
Within their bloomy depths enshrine  
Ever some sentiment divine !



L'ENVOI.



O, little book, and to the young and kind,  
Speak thou of pleasant hours and lovely  
things ;  
Of fields and woods ; of sunshine ; dew and  
wind ;  
Of mountains ; valleys, and of river-springs ;  
Speak thou of every little bird that sings ;  
Of every bright, sweet-scented flower that  
blows ;  
But chiefest speak of Him whose mercy flings  
Beauty and love abroad, and who bestows  
Light to the sun alike, with odour to the rose.

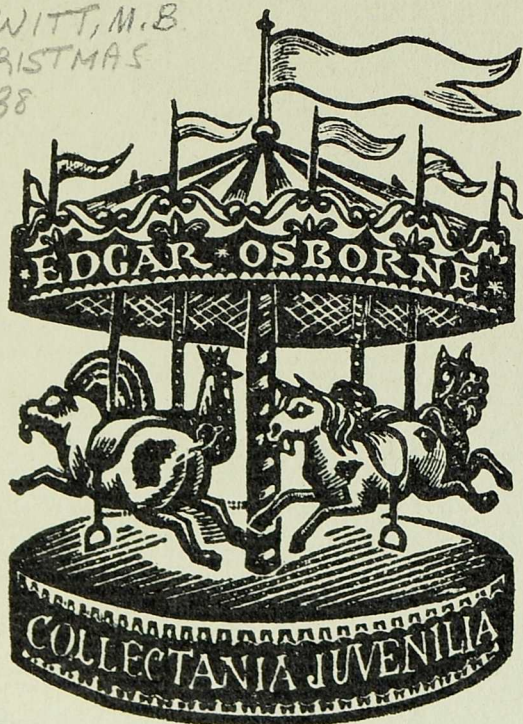
My little book, that hast been unto me,  
Even as a flower reared in a pleasant place,  
This is the task that I impose on thee :—  
Go forth ; with serious style or playful grace,  
Winning young, gentle hearts ; and bid them  
trace  
With thee, the Spirit of Love through earth  
and air ;  
On beast and bird, and on our mortal race.  
So, do thy gracious work ; and onward fare,  
Leaving, like angel-guest, a blessing everywhere !







P  
HOWITT, M.B.  
CHRISTMAS  
1838



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