The King & the Abbot & other Stories:

Fawcett & Bingen Chromolith. 15 Holborn Viaduct.

LONDON—FREDERICK WARNE & CO.

P
KING...
[ca. 1880]

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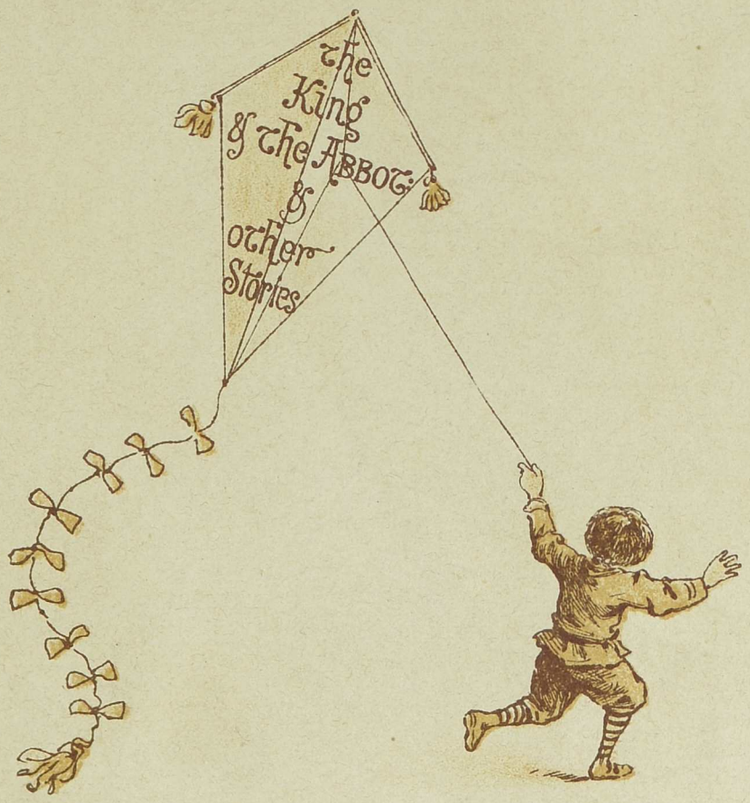
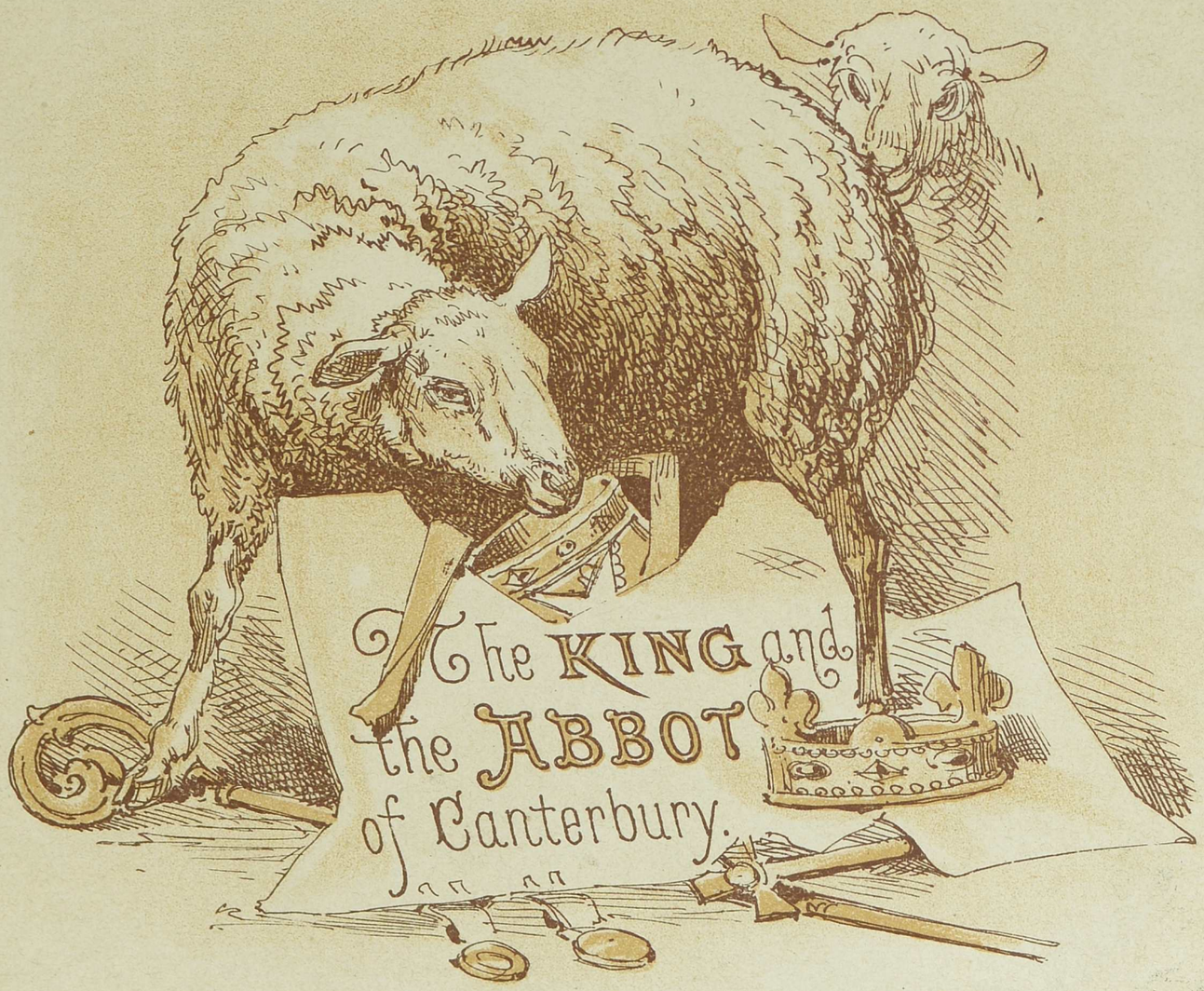
Emrik & Binger, Chromolith, 15 Holborn Viaduct E.C.

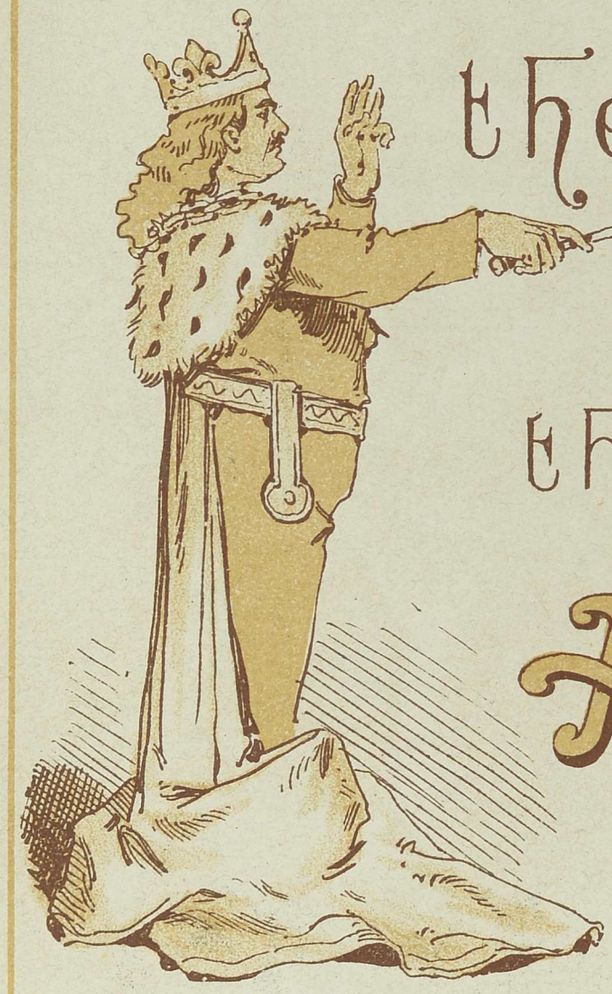
This amusing Ballad is very old. It was first called "King John and the Bishop of Canterbury"; but in King James Ist's time it was written again as we have it here. It is almost the only time when we hear anything merry or good-humoured of King John, the most wicked of all our kings. Children must especially dislike the cruel Uncle, who caused his poor little nephew Arthur to be killed, that he might take his crown. But I think before that time John may have been rather a better man, and able to laugh at a good joke.

It was the fashion in those days to ask these puzzling kinds of questions.


The
King
& The Abbot
&
other
Stories

A GLADE in SHERWOOD:


The KING and
the ABBOT
of Canterbury.

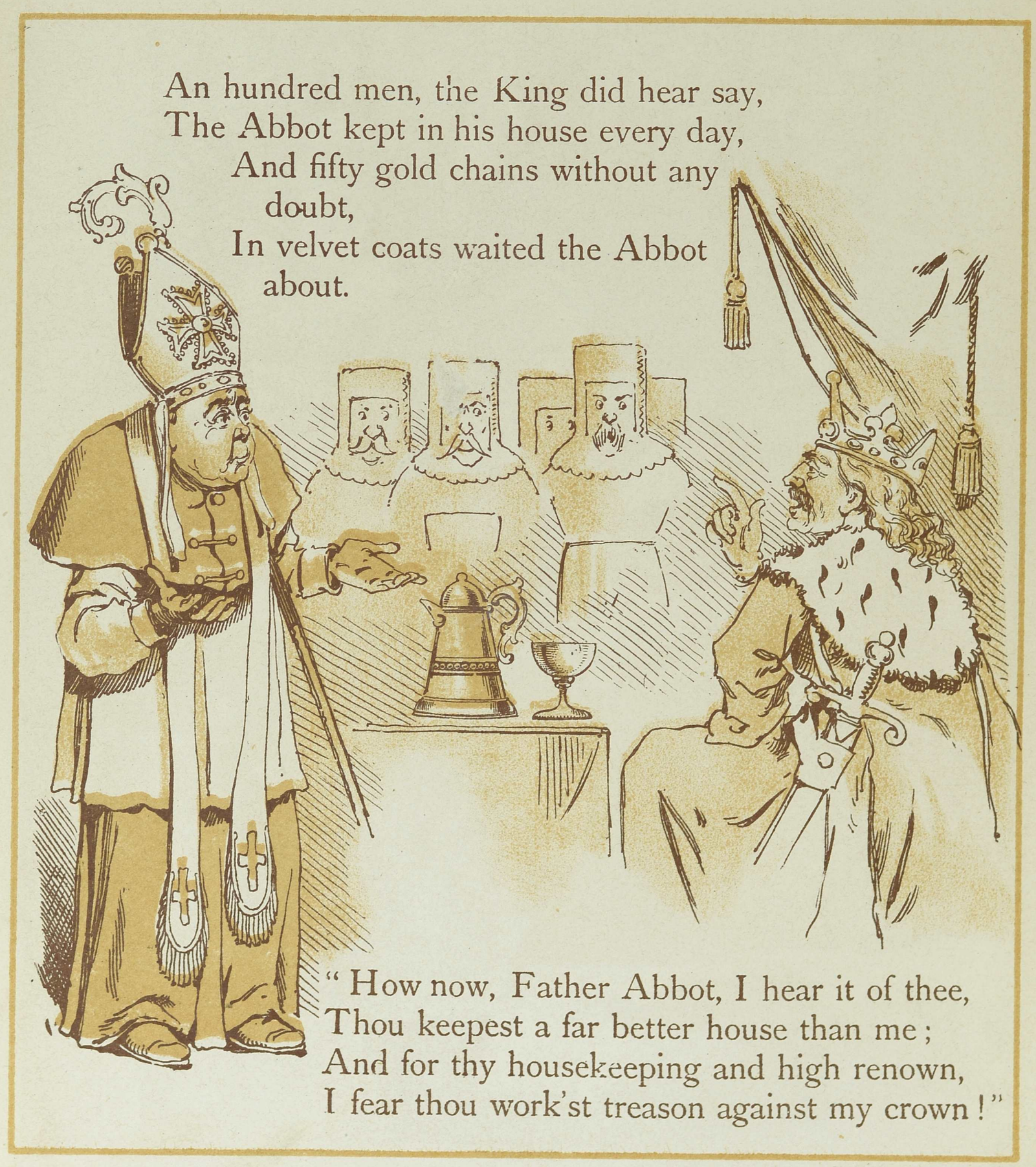


The King and the ABBOT

N ancient story I'll tell you anon,
Of a notable Prince that was called King John;
And he ruled England with main and with might,
For he did great wrong and maintained little right.

And I'll tell you a story, a story so merrie,
Concerning the Abbot of Canterbury;
How for his housekeeping and high renown,
They rode post for him to fair London town.

THE ABBOT
AT
HOME:



An hundred men, the King did hear say,
The Abbot kept in his house every day,
And fifty gold chains without any doubt,
In velvet coats waited the Abbot about.

"How now, Father Abbot, I hear it of thee,
Thou keepest a far better house than me;
And for thy housekeeping and high renown,
I fear thou work'st treason against my crown!"

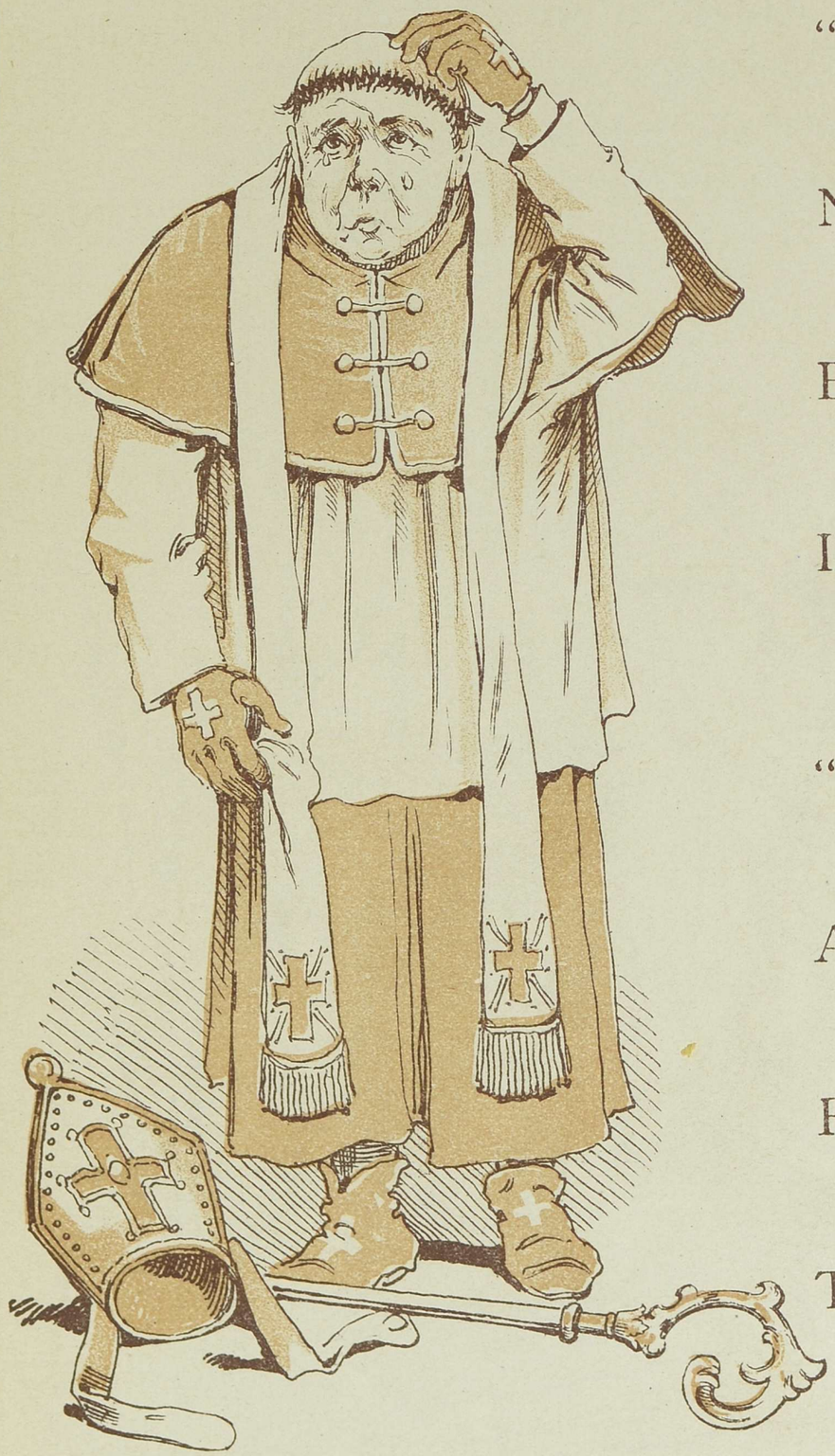
" My liege," quo' the Abbot, " I would it were known,
I never spend nothing but what is my own ;
And I trust your Grace will not put me in fear,
For spending of my own true gotten gear."

'Yes, yes, Father Abbot, thy fault it is high,
And now for the same thou needest must die,
For except thou can'st answer me questions three,
Thy head shall be smitten from thy bodie !

E.B

"And first," quo' the King, "when I'm in this stead,
With my crown of gold so fair on my head,
Among all my liegemen so noble of birth,
Thou must tell me to one penny what I am worth.

"Secondly, tell me without any doubt,
How soon I may ride the whole world about;
And at the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think."



"Oh! these are hard questions
for my shallow wit.
Now I cannot answer your
Grace as yet;
But if thou wilt give me but
three weeks' space,
I'll do my endeavour to answer
your Grace."

"Now three weeks' space to
thee will I give,
And that is the longest time
thou hast to live;
For if thou dost not answer
my questions three,
Thy lands and thy livings are
forfeit to me."

So away rode the Abbot, all sad at that word,
And he rode to Cambridge and Oxenforde ;
But never a doctor there was so wise,
That could with his learning an answer devise.

"Now, cheer up, Sir Abbot,
did you never hear yet
That a fool he may learn a
wise man wit?
Lend me horse and serving
men and your apparel,
And I'll ride to London to
answer your quarrel.

"Nay, frown not, for it hath
been told unto me,
I am like your Lordship as
ever may be;
And if you will but lend me
your gown,
There is none shall know us
at fair London town."

"Now horses and serving-
men thou shalt have,
With sumptuous array most
gallant and brave,
With crozier and mitre and
rochet and cope,
Fit to appear 'fore our father
the Pope."

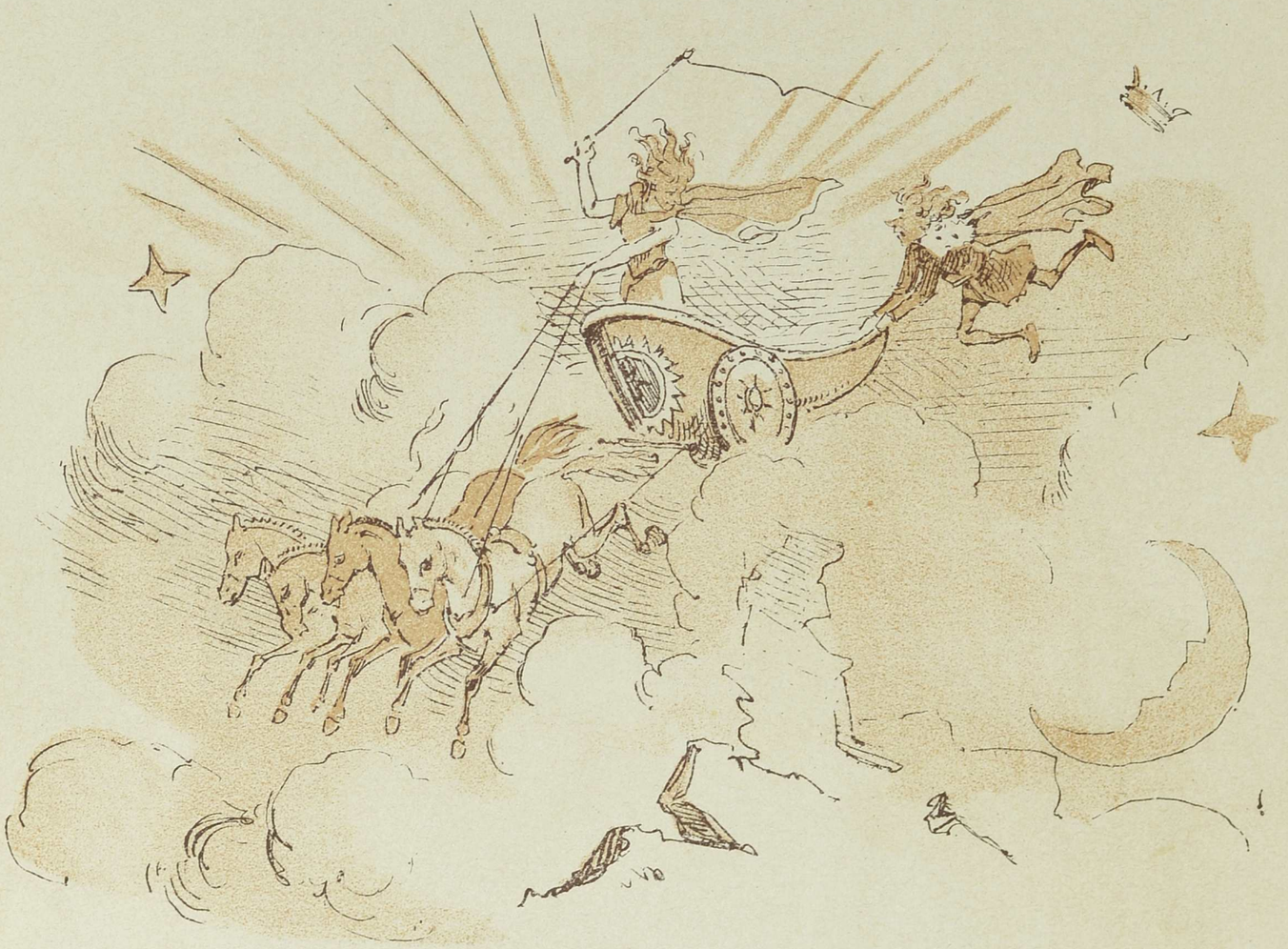
" Now welcome, Sir Abbot," the King he did say,
" 'Tis well thou'rt come back to keep thy day;
For if thou can'st answer my questions three,
Thy life and thy living both saved shall be.

" And first, when thou see'st me here in this stead,
With my crown of gold so fair on my head,
Among all my liegemen so noble of birth,
Tell me to one penny what I am worth ?"

"For twenty pence St. Joseph
was sold
To the Ishmaelites, as I have
been told,
And just nineteen is the worth
of thee,
For I think thou'rt one penny
worse than he."

The King he laughed, and he
swore by St. Bittel,
"I did not think I had been
worth so little!
Now, secondly, tell me, without
any doubt,
How soon I may ride this whole
world about?"

"You must rise with the sun, and ride with the same,
Until the next morning he rises again;
And then your Grace need not make any doubt,
But in twenty-four hours you'll ride it about."

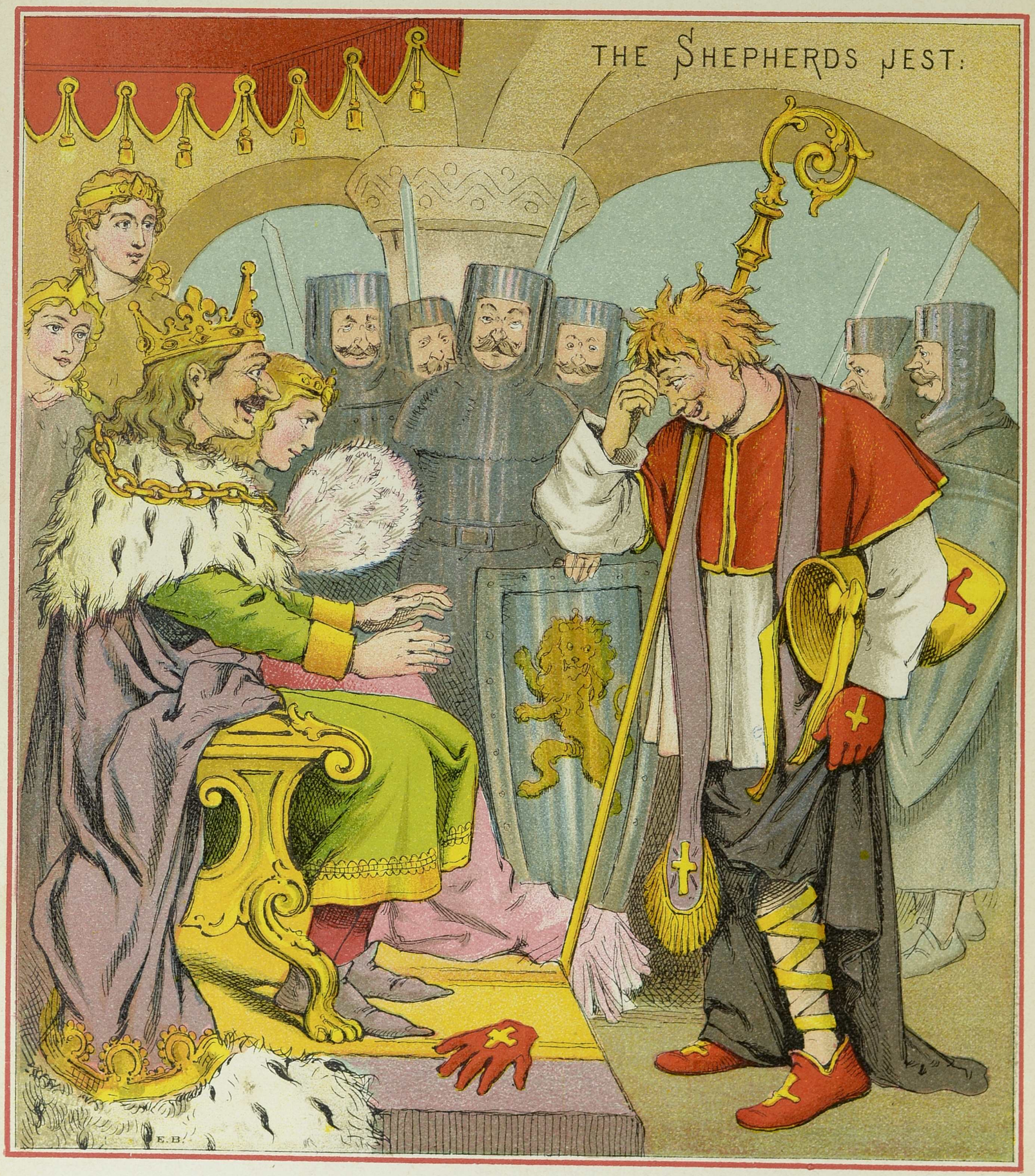


The King he laughed, and swore by St. John,
"I did not think it could be done so soon!
Now from the third question you must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think."

E.B

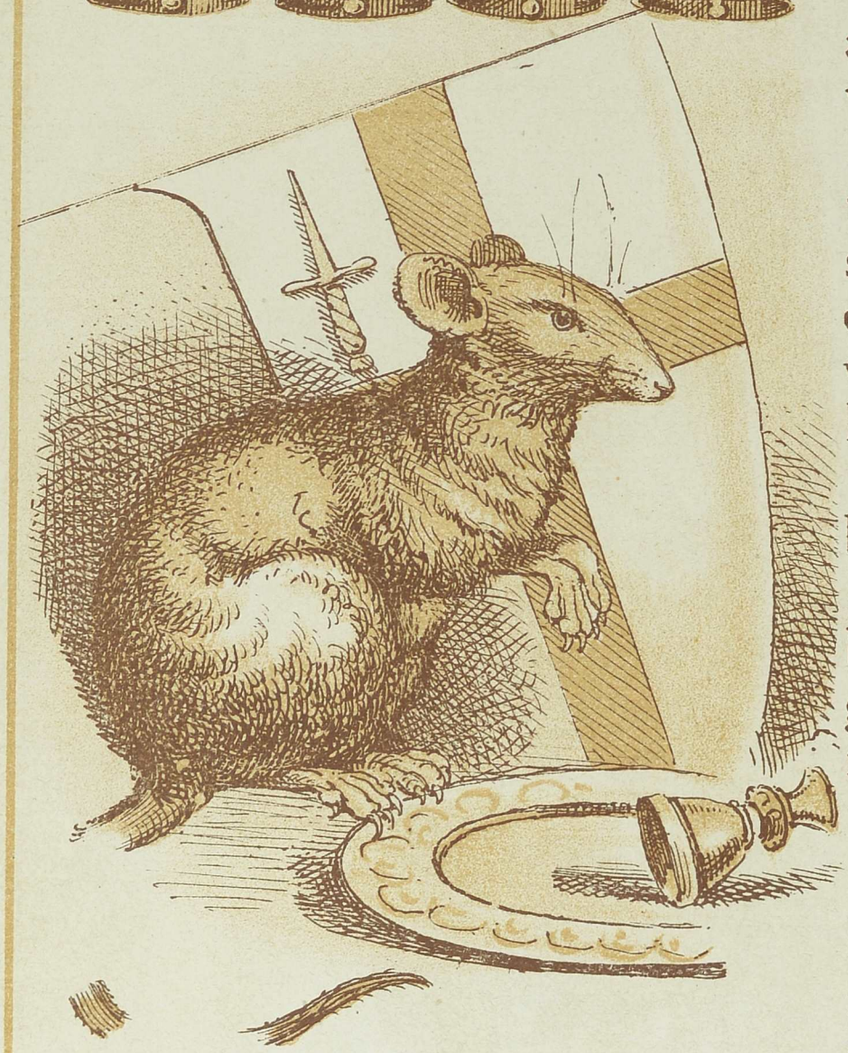
" Yea, that shall I do, and make your Grace merry,
You think I'm the Abbot of Canterbury;
But I'm his poor shepherd, as here you may see,
That am come to beg pardon for him and for me."

The King he laughed, and swore by the Mass,
" I'll make thee Lord Abbot to-day in his place."
" Now nay, my liege, be not in such speed,
For, alack! I can neither write nor read."


THE SHEPHERDS JEST:
E.B.

"Four nobles a week, then, I will give thee,
For this merry jest thou hast shown unto me;
And tell the Abbot when thou comest home,
Thou hast brought him a pardon from good
King John."

DICK Whittington



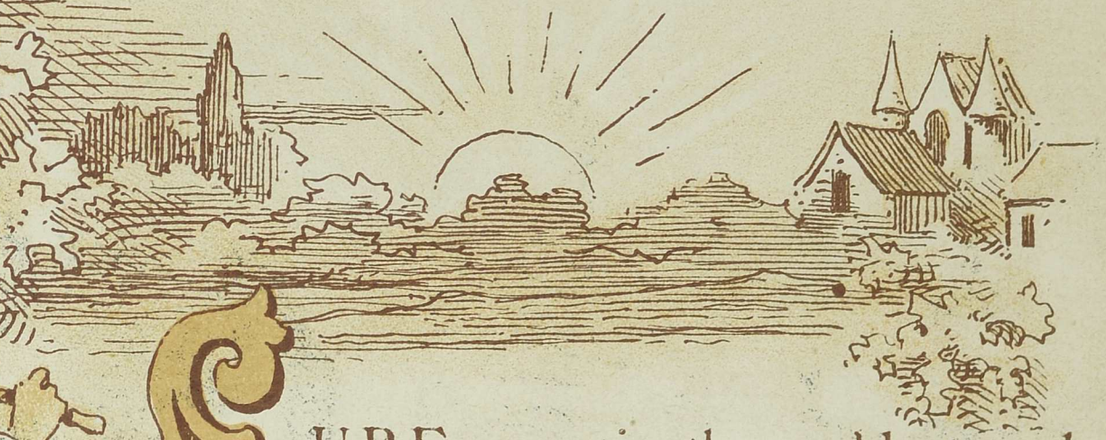
as the old books called him, was the youngest son of Sir William de Whittington, of Pauntley, Gloucestershire. He had to get his own living, and really walked to London, where he was apprenticed to a Mercer. He ran away, but at the foot of Highgate Hill the bells called him back; and he returned, and grew rich, and married his master's daughter, Alice Fitzwarren.

He lent money to King Henry IV., and to King Henry V.; and was much loved for his goodness and charity.

Buying and selling for profit was then known in France under the name of '*achat*,' which the English pronounced '*acat*.' It is thought this word '*acat*' made people believe that Whittington had made his money by selling *his cat*. But *we* still believe in poor Pussy, and so we are sure will our little readers

Sir Richard Whittington

DICK WHITTINGTON and his CAT:



SURE never in the world around
Were such great honours won,
As told us in the tale renown'd
Of Lord Mayor Whittington.

With stick and wallet, poorly clad,
He trudg'd to London vast,
A simple-hearted country lad,
And found some work at last.

A scullion's place, a weary lot
For one so blithe and gay;
Of temper, too, the cook was hot,
And scolded night and day.

In the KITCHEN:

He lodging had, with meat and drink,
But wages were refus'd:
No wonder Dick began to think
That he had been ill-us'd.

So, resolute, he left the place,
His thoughts were homeward bound,
And with a stealthy, rapid pace,
He soon his freedom found.

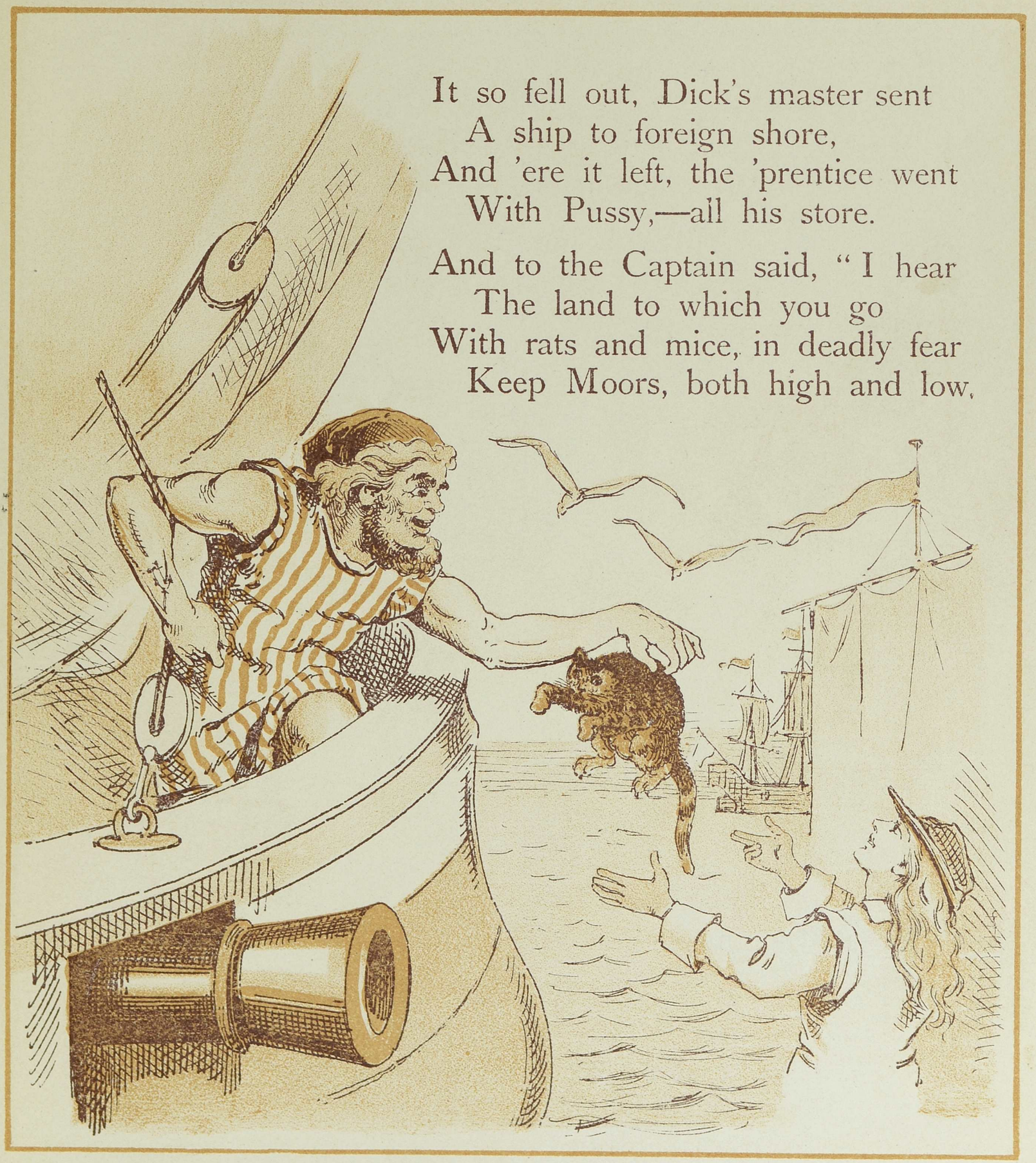
But, pausing for a while to rest,
The London bells he heard;
From north to south, from east to west,
They seemed like magic stirr'd.

"Return," they cried, "to London quick,
Lord Mayor you'll one day be"!
"Now surely this is news," thought Dick,
"That must be meant for me."

So, Whittington, with happy mind,
Went back the way he came,
And soon a worthier place did find,
With merchants known to fame.

He had with him, as 'prentice bold,
A Cat of famous breed,

But little knew the store of gold
That Puss would bring indeed.



It so fell out, Dick's master sent
A ship to foreign shore,
And 'ere it left, the 'prentice went
With Pussy,—all his store.

And to the Captain said, "I hear
The land to which you go
With rats and mice, in deadly fear
Keep Moors, both high and low.

"My cat will all
the vermin kill;
The wealth you
will obtain
Bring home, and I your purse will fill;
Much profit you will gain."

And so it prov'd: the Captain found
The Moors in great affright,
For rats and mice, in myriads round.
Were feasting day and night.

But when they loos'd Dick's fearless Cat,
A wond'rous change was seen;
For not the strongest mouse nor rat,
Could stand good Puss, I ween.

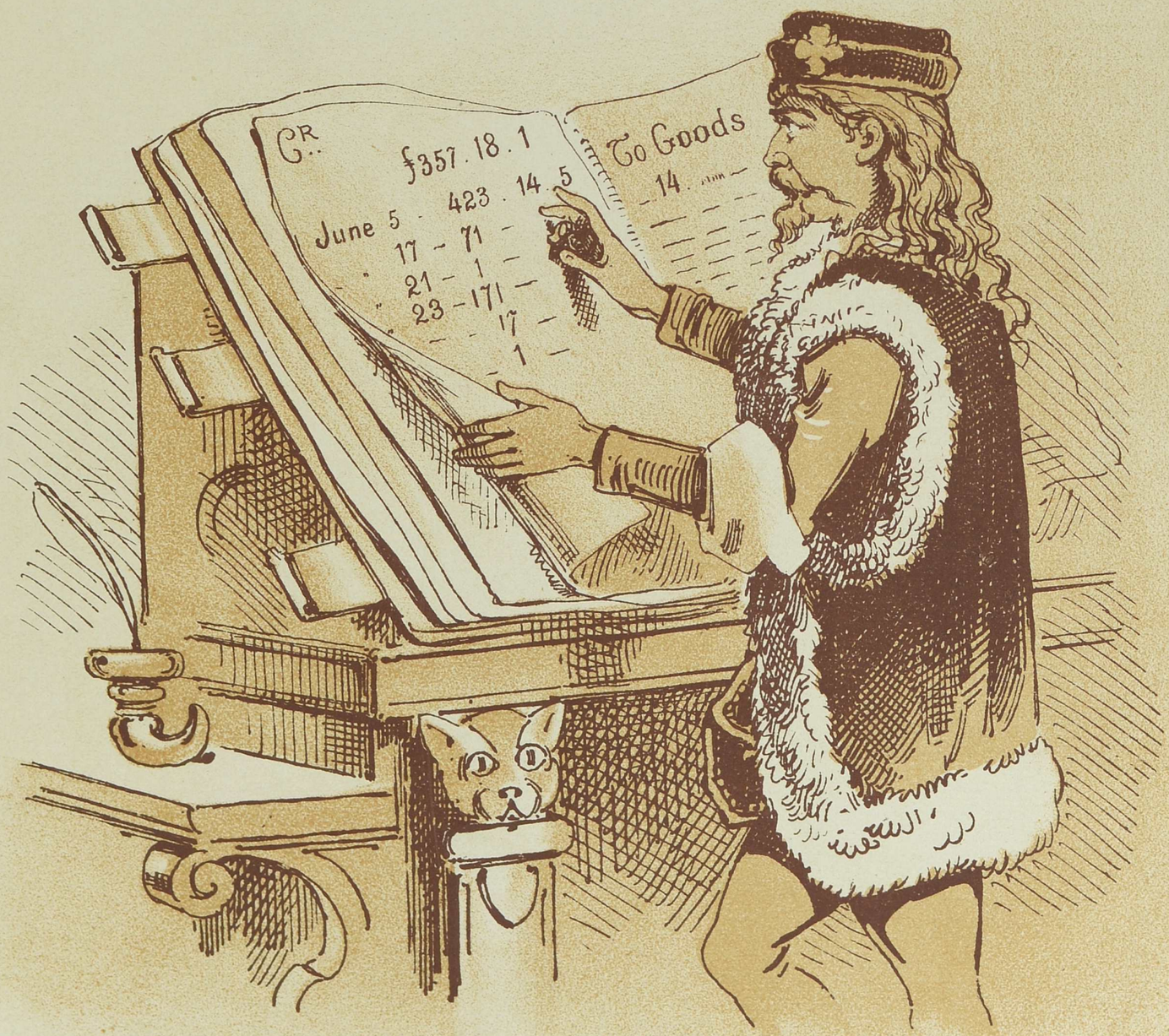
Away they scamper'd, but not long,
The Cat soon clear'd the land,
And gold, in coffers large and strong,
Was soon at Dick's command.

PUSS astonishes the RATS:

PUSS makes new friends:

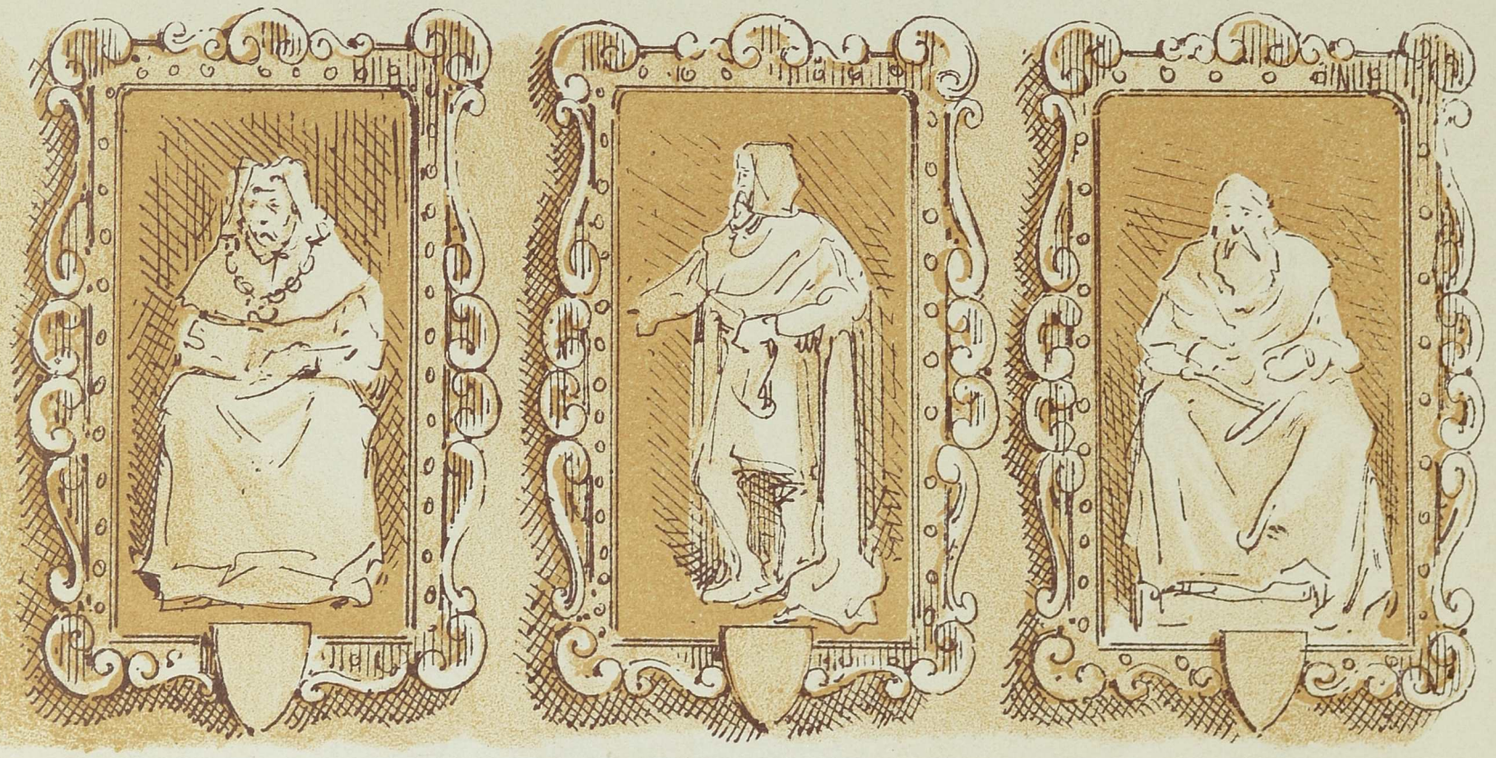
His master gave his daughter fair,
To Dick with ample dower,
So fortune smil'd upon the pair,
And brighten'd every hour.

A merchant grave he now became,
And o'er his ledgers ran,
Sure, London, with its men of fame,
Saw never such a man!



And Whittington to honours rose
Within that city great,
And one and all for Sheriff chose
A man of such estate.

The civic chair as Mayor he grac'd,
And thrice he held the trust;
His portraits in Guildhall were plac'd,
So lov'd he was and just.



He lent some thousands to his King,
For he could spare them well;
In fact, the treasures he could bring
No living man could tell.

And at a civic feast, for jest,
The bonds to flames were sent
That freed from debt his royal guest,
Much to the King's content.

And not alone for King or Earl
Did Dick his wealth bestow,
But many a poor and honest churl
His kindly care would know.

The men in prison he would feed,
And help'd them in distress;
He paid their debts, and, with "God Speed,"
The boon would, pitying, bless.

Of Newgate, noisome, dark, and drear,
He made a durance mild;
At Christchurch too, with feelings dear,
He dower'd each poor child.

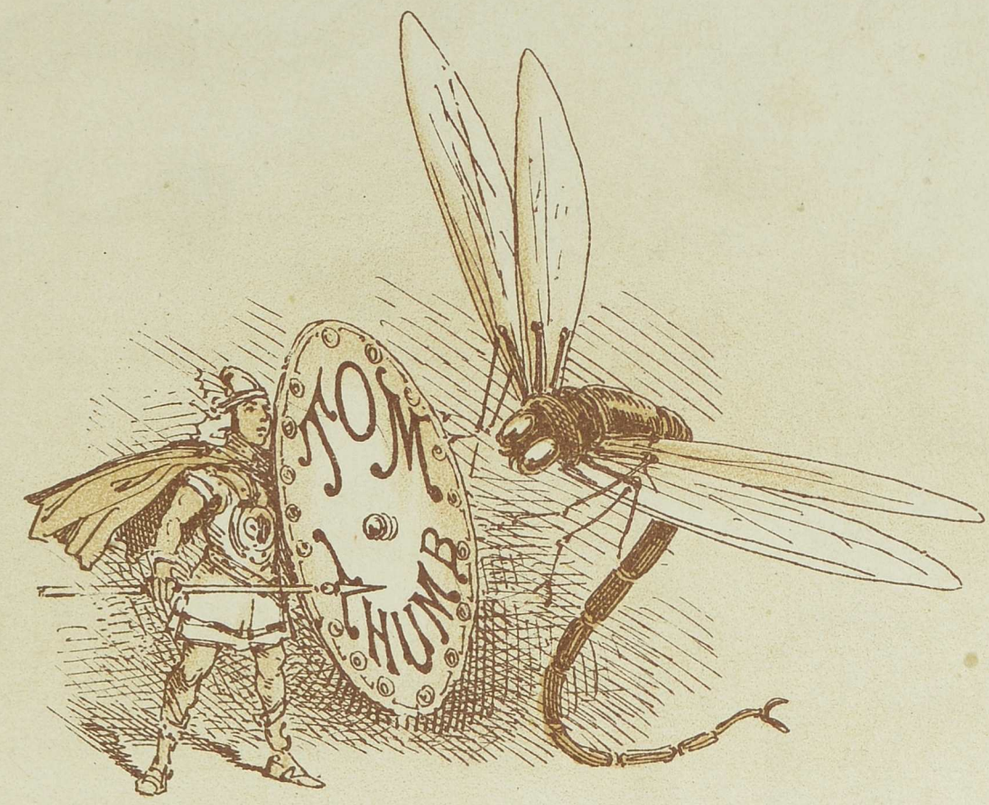
Throughout Old England lives the name
Of this great-minded man,
Dick Whittington of lasting fame!
Whose life so strange began;

SIR RICHARD'S CHARITY:

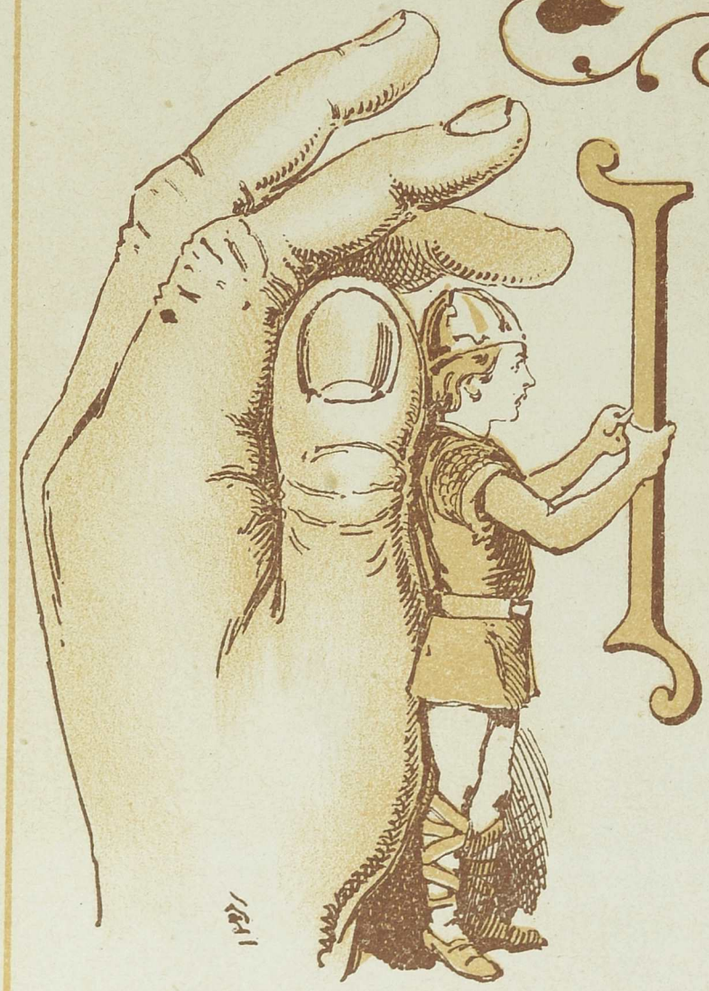
But who the Bells did loudly hail
Thrice Mayor of London high !
Whose actions no one could assail,
Whose virtues none deny !

This Ballad is only a Fairy Tale, but there really was a Tom Thumb once upon a time, a very little dwarf, who was the toy slave of King Edgar, one of our Saxon kings. This poor little man must have been brave and good, or he would not have been remembered so long, or have had a ballad written on him. Every very small dwarf since his days has been called after him, "Tom Thumb."

The Ballad was sung hundreds of years ago, and in Charles Ist's time it was written as it now is, and we are sure amused all the little children as much as it does you, for children are very much alike in all ages, and the favourite songs and stories of the young in old days are the favourite songs and stories of the little ones still.


TOM
THUMB

Tom Thumb:



IN Arthur's Court of old renown
There lived a gallant wight,
Tom Thumb, a name so often heard
With wonder and delight.

So called because his tiny form,
Though fashioned well, was small,
Maybe a ploughman's thumb in height,
Though scarce, perhaps, so tall.

'T is said, that at his christening, a fairy did appear, With sprites and elves, to wish him joy through many a coming year.

Tom Thumb, however, had his ills,
And once at Christmas-tide,
He mounted on a dish to see
The rich minced meat inside,

A candlestick he bore—too large
For such a dwarfish hand—
It slipped—and Tom, though really brave,
Now lost his self-command.

And headlong in the dish he fell,
Amidst the liquid mess;

And lay unconscious, while his loss
Caused great and deep distress.

The mother ran from place to place,
To find her missing son,
And then returned with heavy heart
To see the minced meat done.

Strange were the throbbings in that mass
Of rich and unctuous meat,
As though a witch had charmed the dish,
By some uncanny feat.

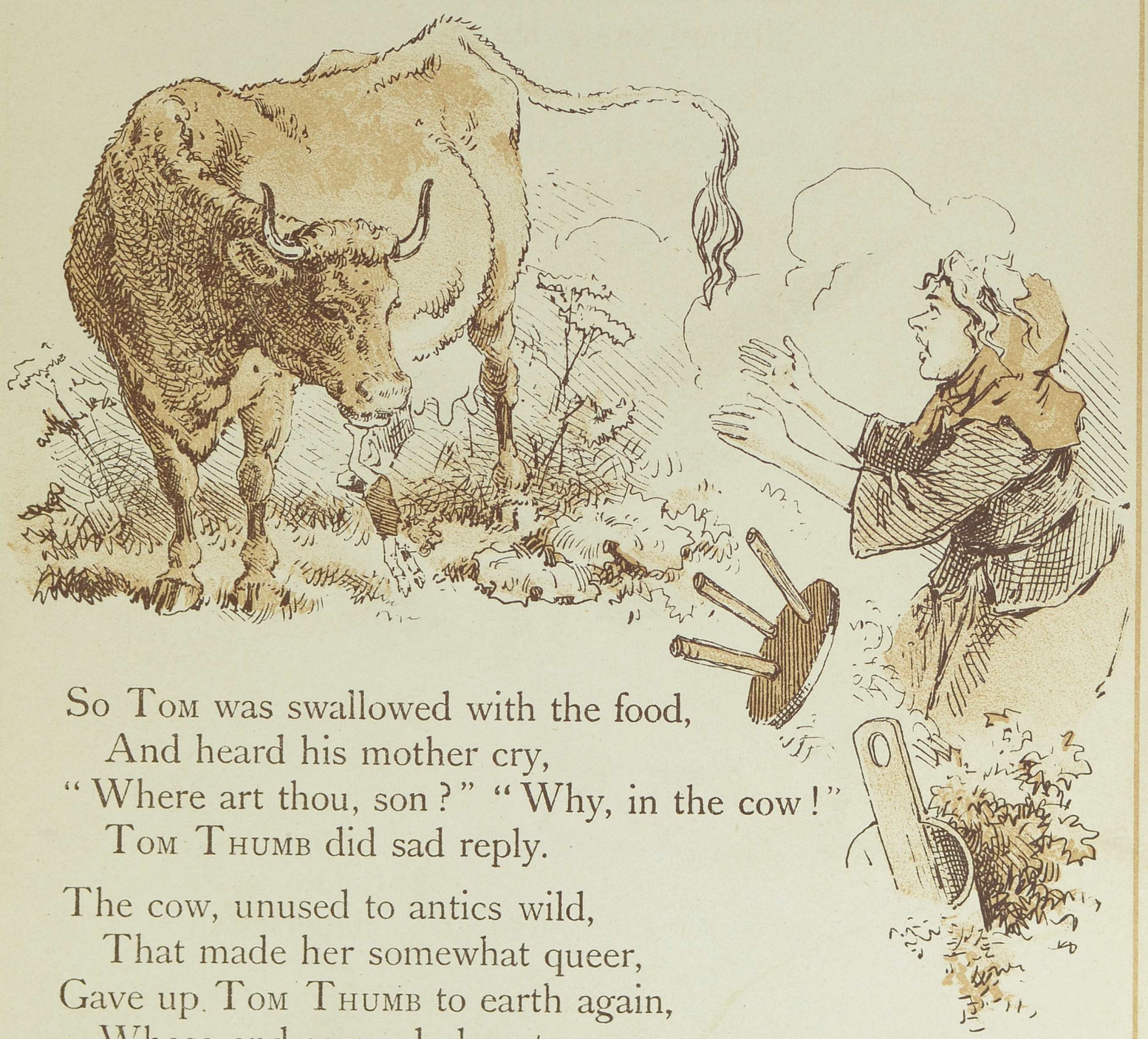
Dismay'd, she placed it in a bag,
And, fearing mischief sore,
She gave it to a tinker old,
Then passing near the door.

He opened it soon after, when,
Tom getting free at last,
Quick found his way to home again,
All dangers, so far, past.

But not for long; his mother went
To milk the cows one day,
And tied him to a thistle near,
In dread lest he should stray.

A hungry cow, it seems, came by,
And o'er the thistle bent,

With mouth out-stretched, rejoiced to find
A meal so succulent.



So Tom was swallowed with the food,
And heard his mother cry,
"Where art thou, son?" "Why, in the cow!"
Tom Thumb did sad reply.

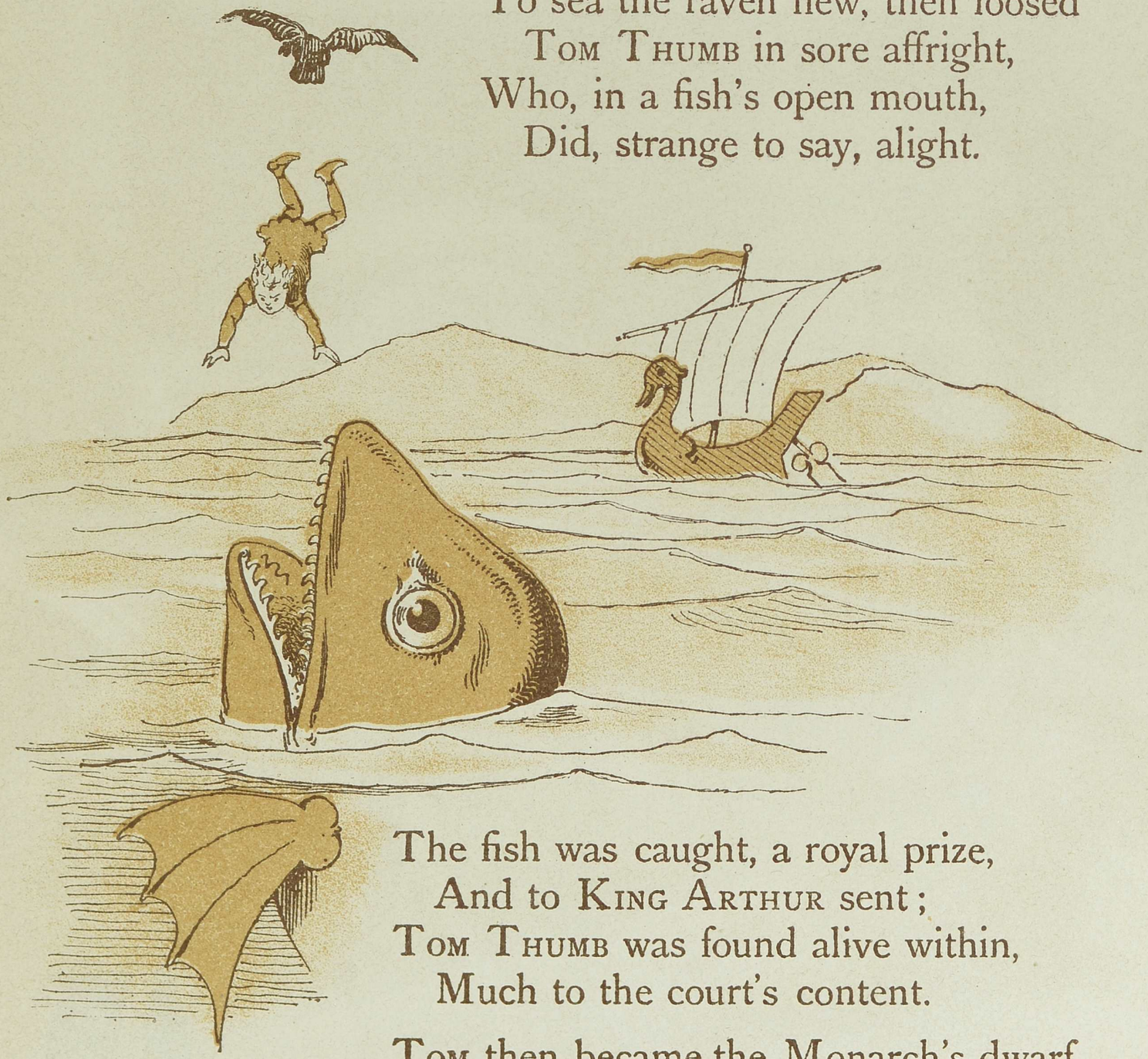
The cow, unused to antics wild,
That made her somewhat queer,
Gave up Tom Thumb to earth again,
Whose end seemed almost near.

But troubles soon came on again,
And thus it happened now,
The father took him to the field
To help him at the plough.

Tom had a whip of barley straw
To drive the cattle on,
But soon, the father looking round,
Found out that he was gone.

And looking up, dismayed, beheld
A raven great and strong,
Who held poor Tom within his beak,
And bore him swift along.

To sea the raven flew, then loosed
TOM THUMB in sore affright,
Who, in a fish's open mouth,
Did, strange to say, alight.

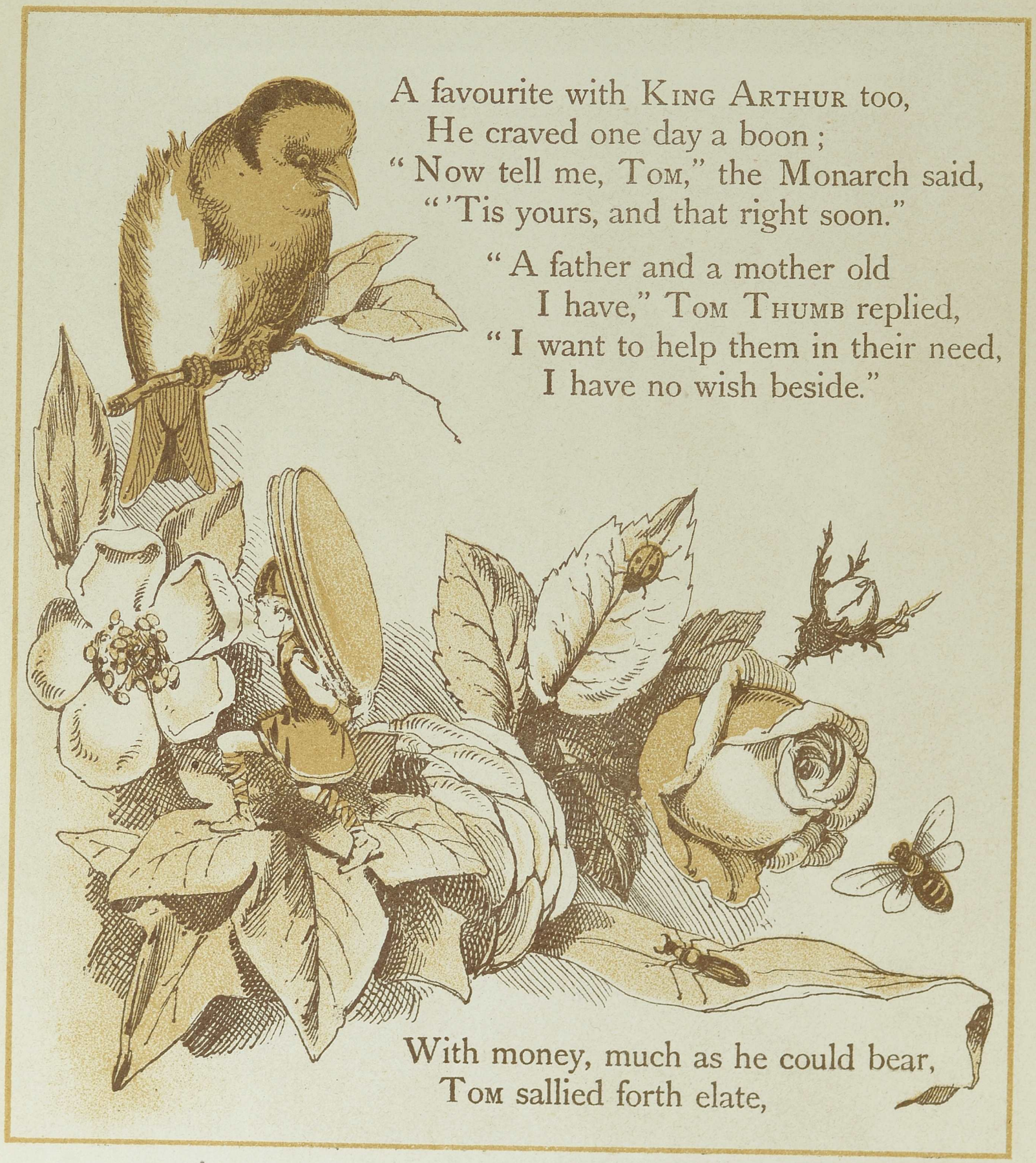


The fish was caught, a royal prize,
And to KING ARTHUR sent;
TOM THUMB was found alive within,
Much to the court's content.

TOM then became the Monarch's dwarf,
And shared the sports and feast,
As gallant as the tallest knight,
Although he was the least.

TOM THUMB re-appears at Court.

And dances a GALLIARD on the QUEEN'S hand:



A favourite with King Arthur too,
He craved one day a boon;
"Now tell me, Tom," the Monarch said,
"'Tis yours, and that right soon."

"A father and a mother old
I have," Tom Thumb replied,
"I want to help them in their need,
I have no wish beside."

With money, much as he could bear,
Tom sallied forth elate,

And though the silver was but scant,
To him it was of weight.

He travelled on two days and nights,
With weary heart and slow,
Until he reached his parents' home,
And heard the cattle low.

In truth, 'tis said, the distance from
King Arthur's court was short,
And what was painful to Tom Thumb,
To others would be sport.

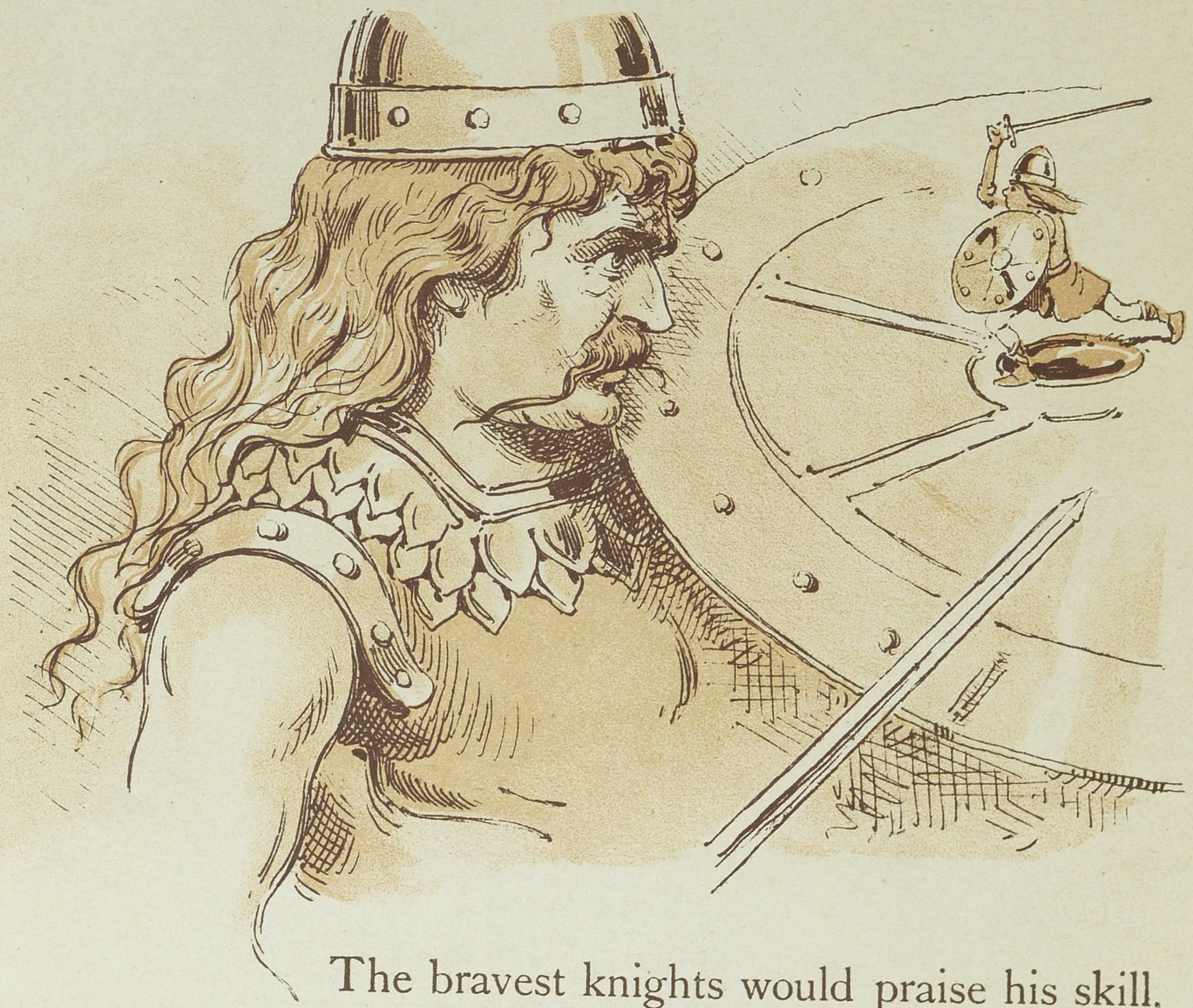
And when his parents joy he saw,
Who thought their son was dead,
Tom Thumb his troubles soon forgot,
With loving arms outspread.

His mother raised him in her arms,
And near the fireside,
She placed him in a walnut shell,
Within the hearth-place wide.

Tom Thumb was happy for a time,
But as the days went by,
Of Arthur's pleasant King and Court,
He oft would think and sigh.

At length he started forth from home,
And in a sylvan bower
Of sweet wild flowers on his way,
Withstood an April shower.

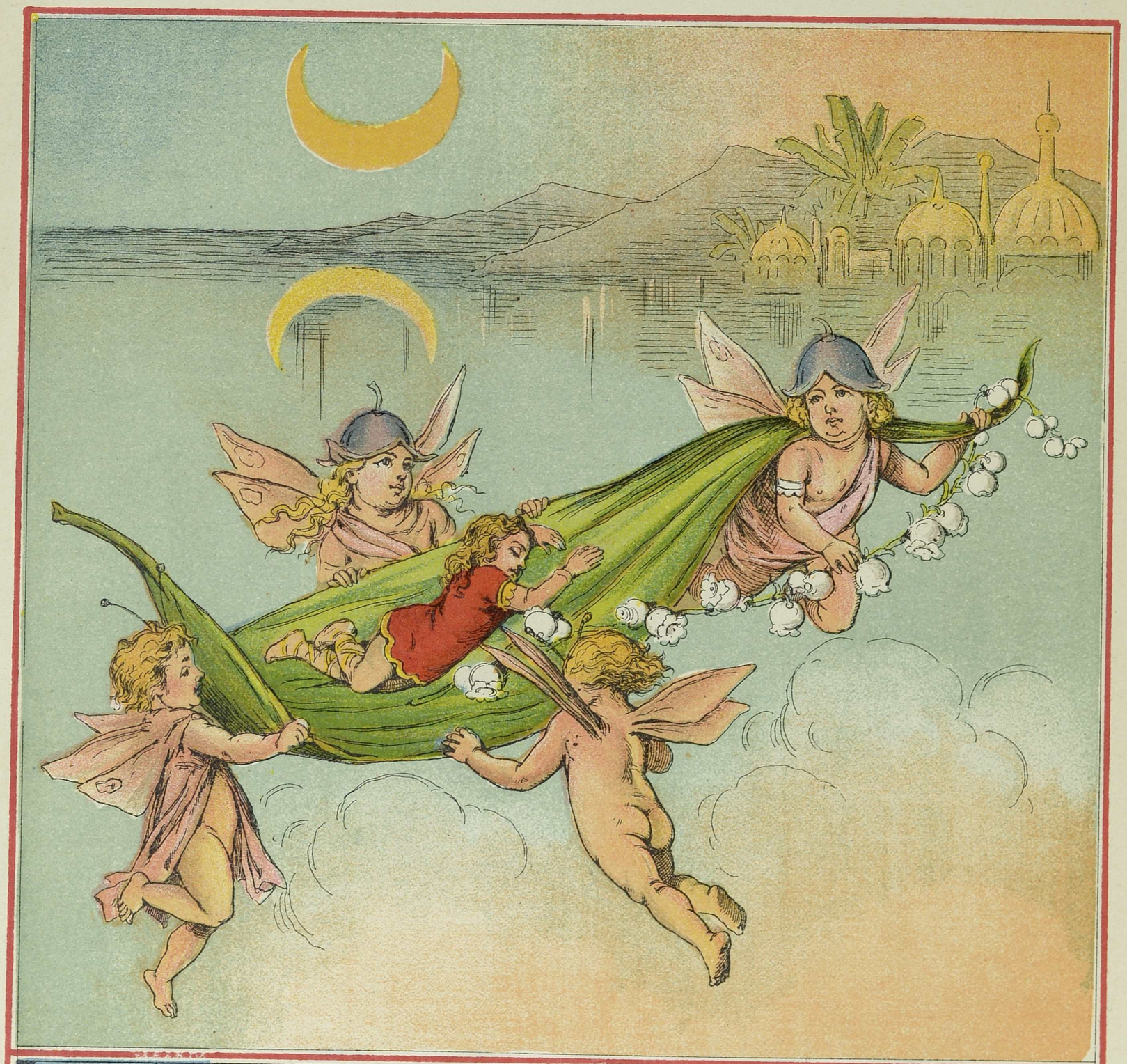
And now at court the merriest wight,
At banquets, tilts, and ball,
Tom Thumb was welcomed everywhere,
In prowess matching all.



The bravest knights would praise his skill,
And through the land his name
Was sounded out both far and wide,
With loud and just acclaim.

But glory cannot always last,
And this no man would doubt,
So Tom fell sick, and then the truth
Full sad, at length, found out.

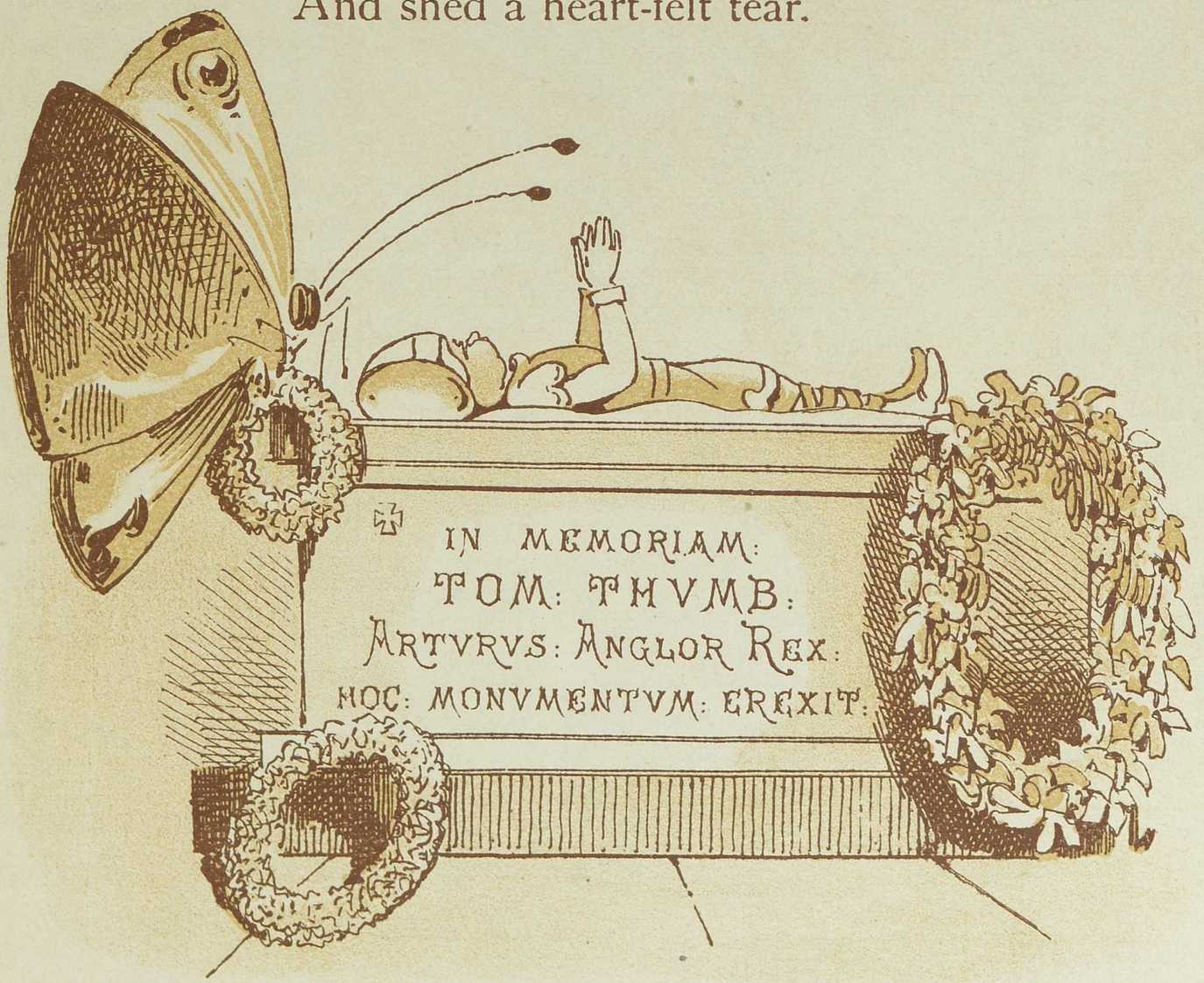
Instead of gallant roystering,
He lay upon his bed;
King Arthur's Doctor tried his art,
But every hope soon fled.



And thus from earth he passed away, while as the stories tell, His spirit was by fairies borne in Elfin-land to dwell.

King Arthur and his noble knights,
Mourned Tom's unhappy fate;
And for some forty days or more,
The Court seemed desolate.

A tomb was built of marble grey,
And thither, year by year,
Came many to bemoan Tom Thumb,
And shed a heart-felt tear.

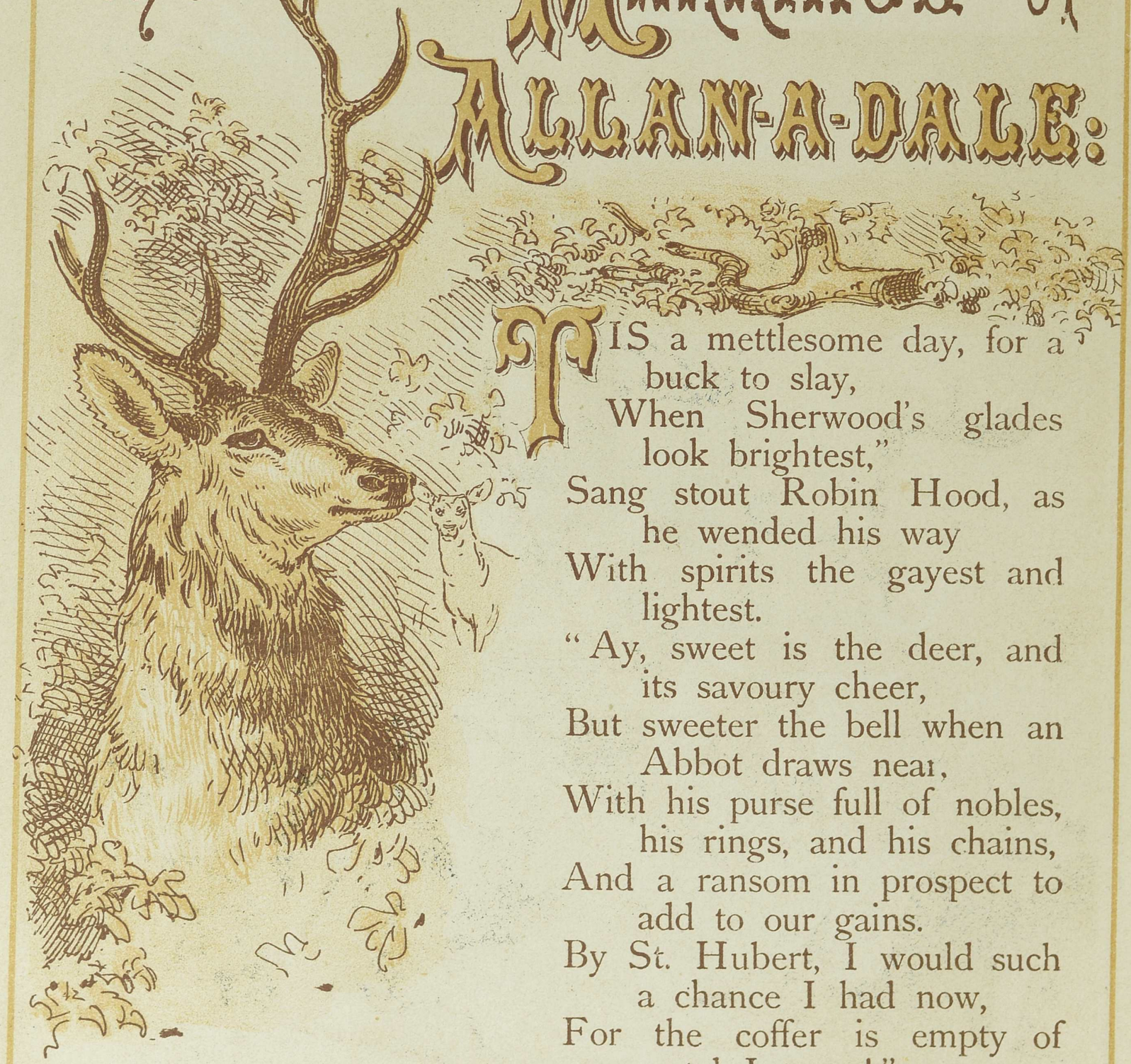


was one of Robin Hood's friends. Robin Hood was a real person. He was the Earl of Huntingdon, who, having been unjustly banished, took refuge in Sherwood forest, and drew round him a large number of outlaws. They used to rob the rich Priests and proud Barons who came through the wood, but they never harmed the poor. Robin gave them part of whatever he took from the rich. For in the days of King Richard I., and King John, no man could get justice done to him, and the poor were cruelly treated by the Barons.

Robin did many kind actions, of which this to Allan-a-Dale is one.

The MARRIAGE
of ALLAN-A-DALE:

the Marriage of Allan-a-Dale:

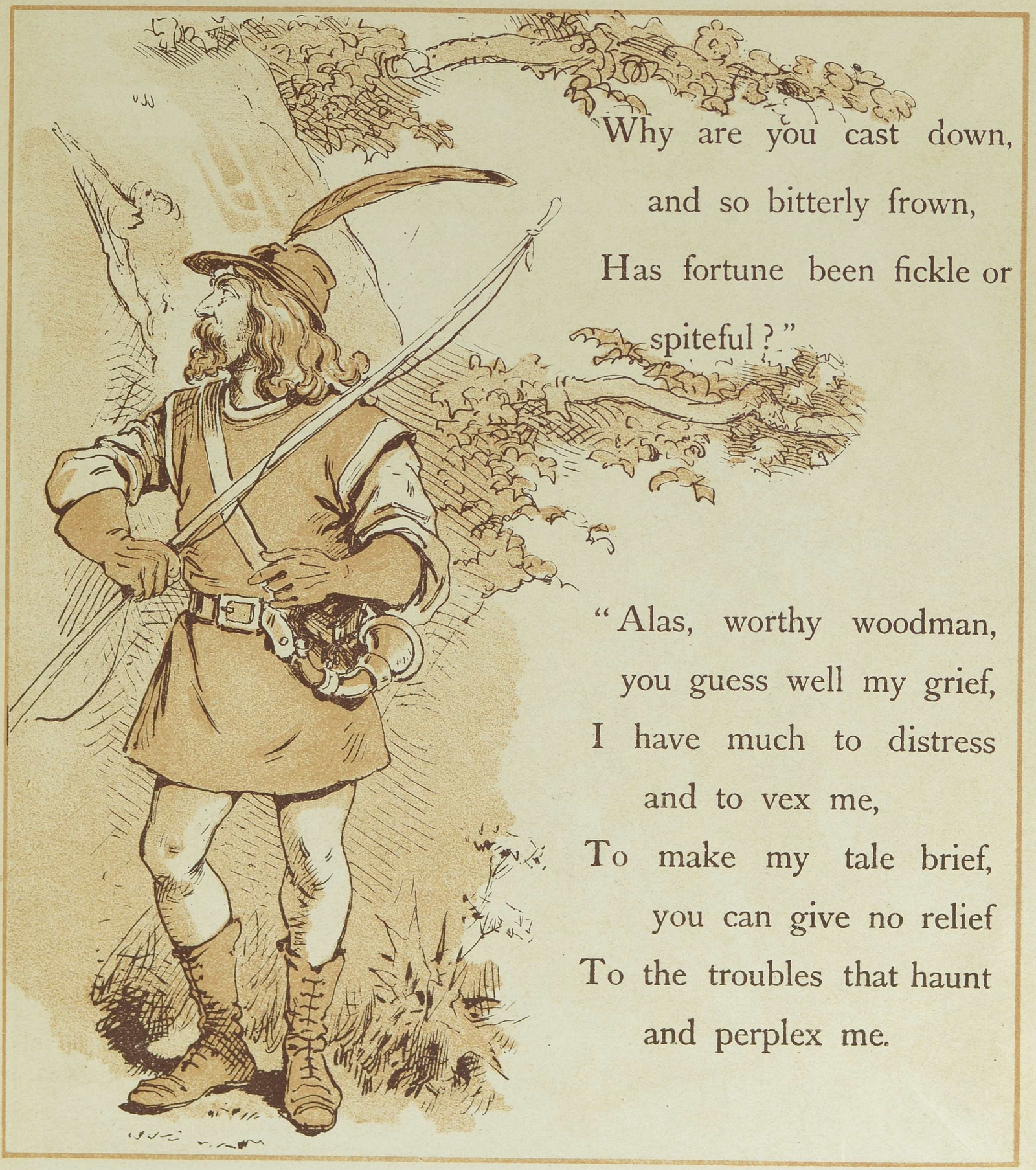


"TIS a mettlesome day, for a buck to slay,
When Sherwood's glades look brightest,"
Sang stout Robin Hood, as he wended his way
With spirits the gayest and lightest.
"Ay, sweet is the deer, and its savoury cheer,
But sweeter the bell when an Abbot draws near,
With his purse full of nobles, his rings, and his chains,
And a ransom in prospect to add to our gains.
By St. Hubert, I would such a chance I had now,
For the coffer is empty of metal I trow!"

A GLADE in SHERWOOD:

Not an Abbot, or Friar, nor Bishop, or Prior
Met Robin that day in the Forest,
But a yoeman drew nigh, with
a tear in his eye,
And a look that seemed
one of the sorest.

Quoth Robin, "Good fellow,
while summer is mellow,
And nature around looks
delightful,



"Why are you cast down,
and so bitterly frown,
Has fortune been fickle or
spiteful?"

"Alas, worthy woodman,
you guess well my grief,
I have much to distress
and to vex me,
To make my tale brief,
you can give no relief
To the troubles that haunt
and perplex me.

"I woo'd a fair maiden, who 'trothed in return;
The mother is timid, the father is stern;
To-day she will marry against her own will,
But she loves her poor Allan most faithfully
still."

"Say you so," cried bold Robin, "your friend
I will be,
I will stop this queer wedding, and, mind you,

Be ready at hand, when I give you command,
And a wife I will certainly find you !"

The Outlaw then took off his jerkin of green,
And sent for a tatter'd and worn gaberdine,
Took a staff in his hand, put a patch on his face,
And trudg'd off to town at a forester's pace.

He arrived just in time, for he heard the last
chime
Ring merrily out from the steeple;
And enter'd the church with a shuffle and
lurch
As a beggar might do 'midst fine people.

The bridegroom, ungainly, had taken his place,
The bride she hung back with a sorrowful face,
The guests were all dress'd in true holiday trim,
The parson was looking both solemn and prim :
He opened his book, and the service began,
When, "Stop!" exclaimed Robin, "I'll show
you some fun !"

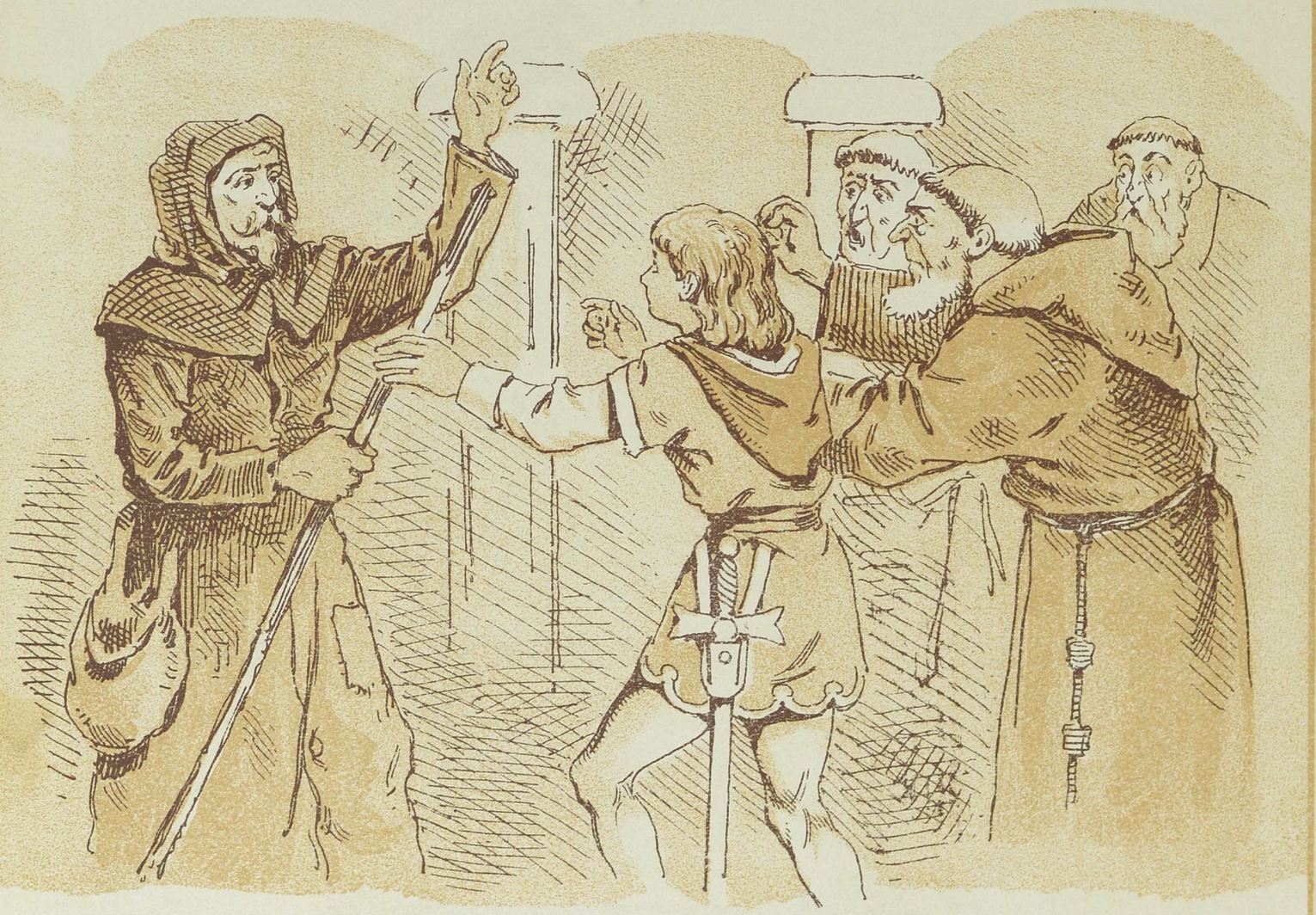
A STRANGE ARRIVAL:

ROBIN HOOD'S JEST:

All look'd at the beggar, who, stepping forth, eager,
Clear'd the way with a bound to the railing,
And said he, "Worthy Priest, let me tell you, at least,
Your words are, thus far, unavailing.

"The bride is unwilling, you plainly can see,
To mate with a
scarecrow, or worse
if there be,
A right proper man
I can find for
the maid,
So the wedding need
not for a husband
be stay'd!"

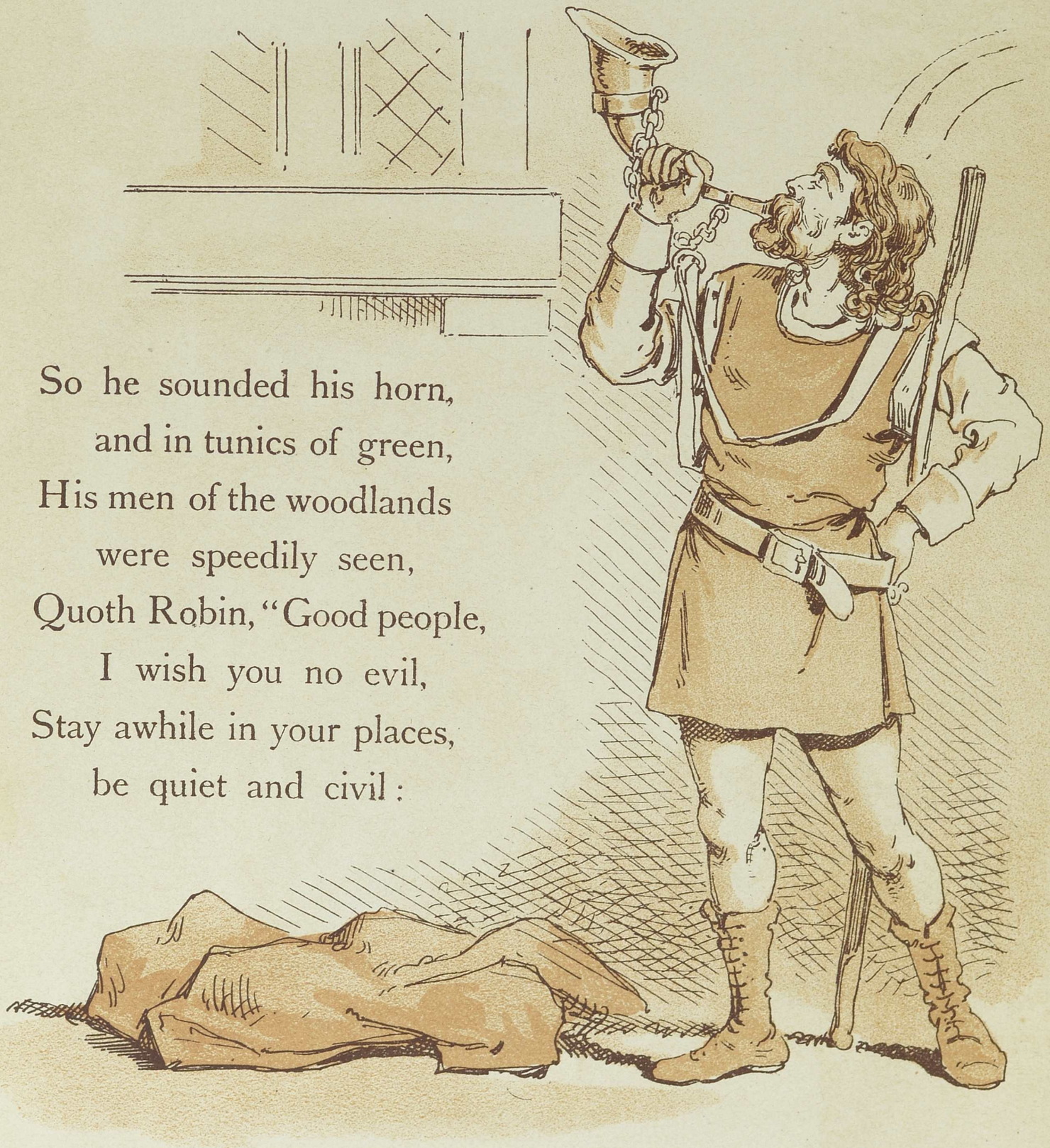
All look'd quite aghast, some took courage at
last,
And pressed on the beggar most hotly,



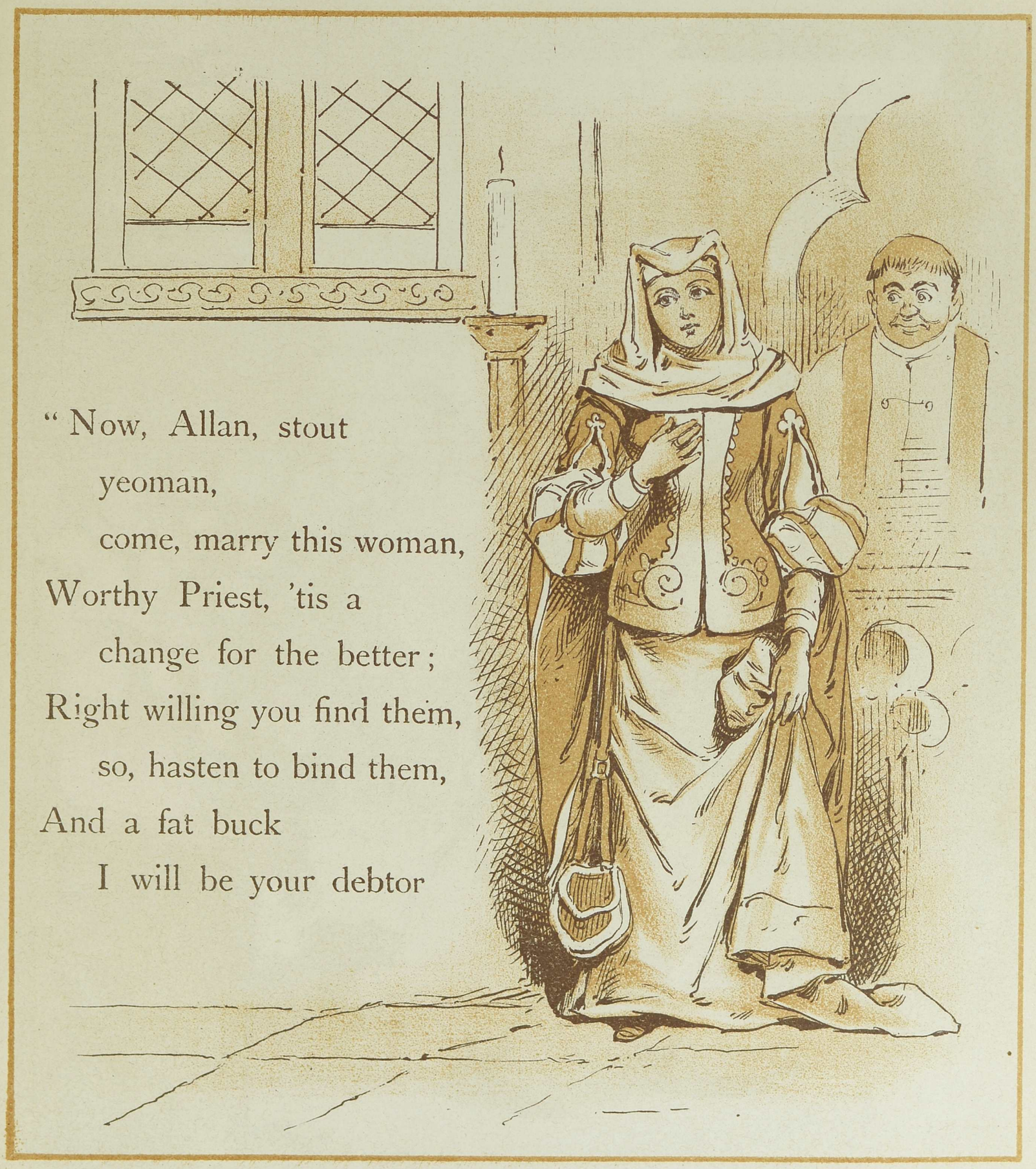
But he wav'd them aside, and then smilingly
cried,
" My garb may appear to you motley.

"But you see Robin Hood, of merry Sherwood,
Who is not to the world quite a stranger,

So fall back,
I pray,
or your
addlepates may
Be in some tribulation or danger!"



So he sounded his horn,
and in tunics of green,
His men of the woodlands
were speedily seen,
Quoth Robin, "Good people,
I wish you no evil,
Stay awhile in your places,
be quiet and civil:



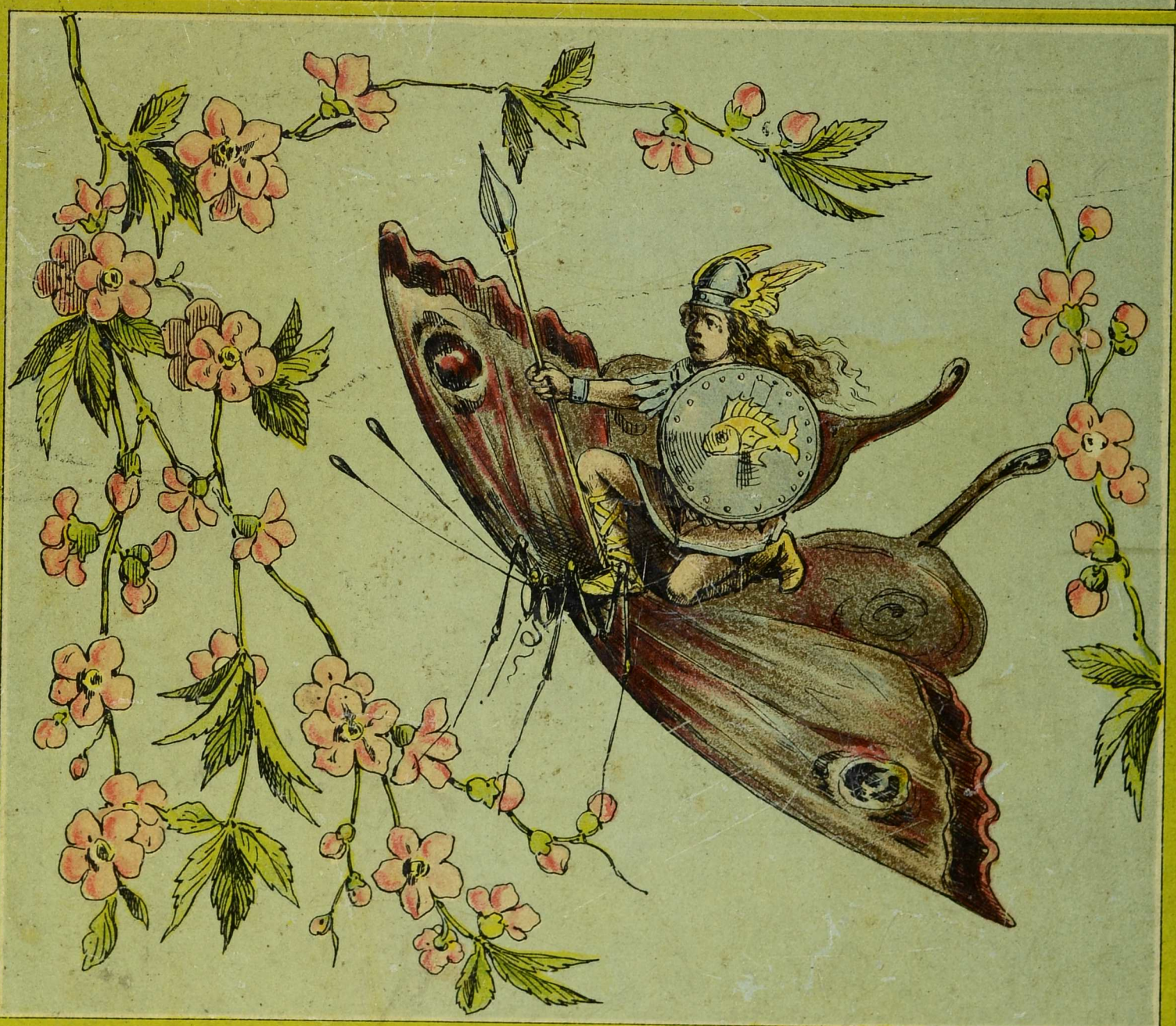
"Now, Allan, stout
yeoman,
come, marry this woman,
Worthy Priest, 'tis a
change for the better;
Right willing you find them,
so, hasten to bind them,
And a fat buck
I will be your debtor

the REJECTED LOVER:

So the marriage took place, with a heartier grace,
Than it had been, if otherwise fated,
And this "lytle geste," one of ROBIN HOOD'S
best,
May well to his praise be related.

FINIS:

The King & the Abbot & other Stories:



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