



SONGS OF ANIMAL LIFE

Poems by
Mary Howitt

To

Margaret Howard Spalding

Prize for

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Reading -

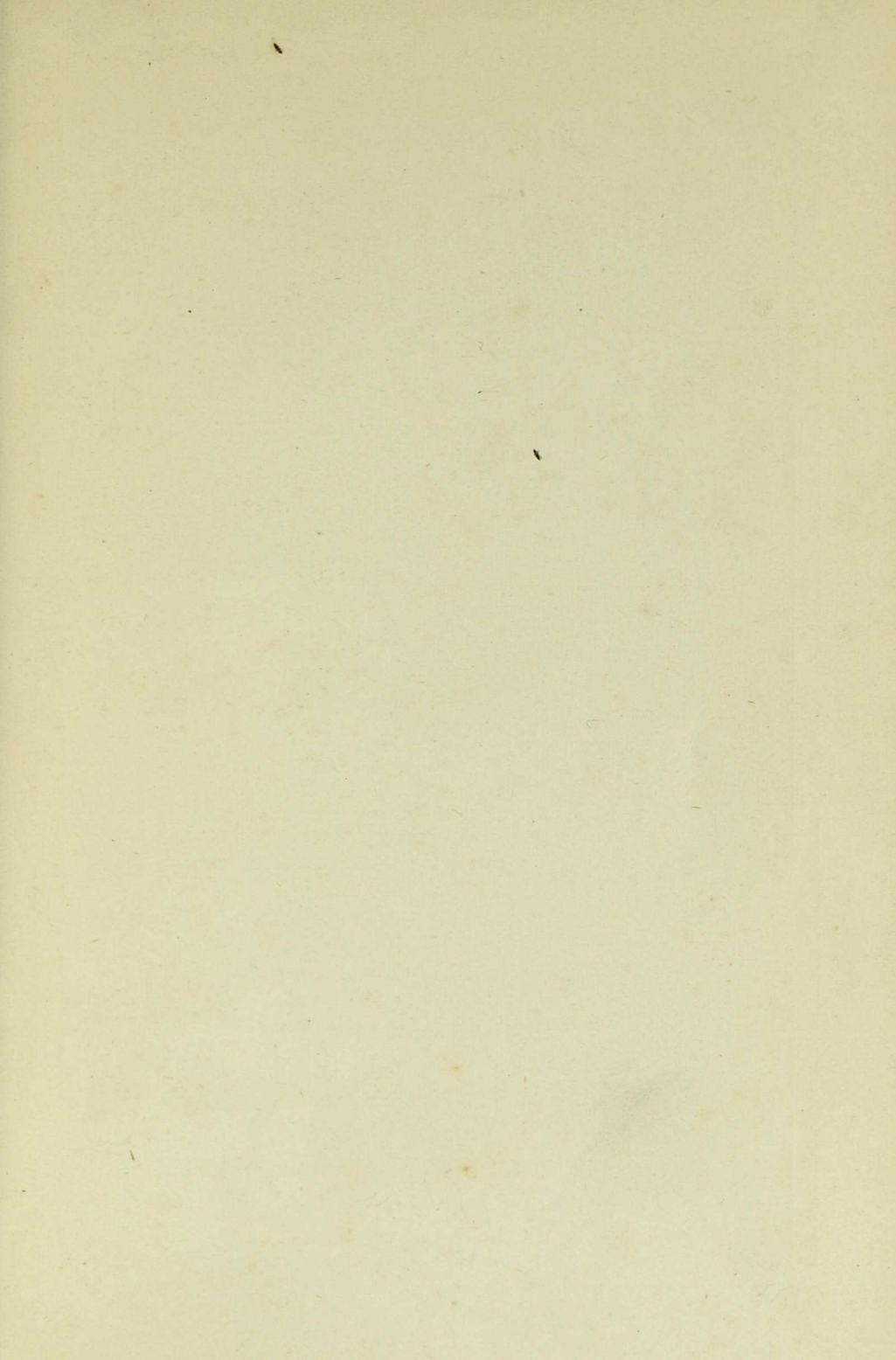
Arithmetic.

Midsummer - 1881.

With love from

F. E. Albert.

SONGS OF ANIMAL LIFE.





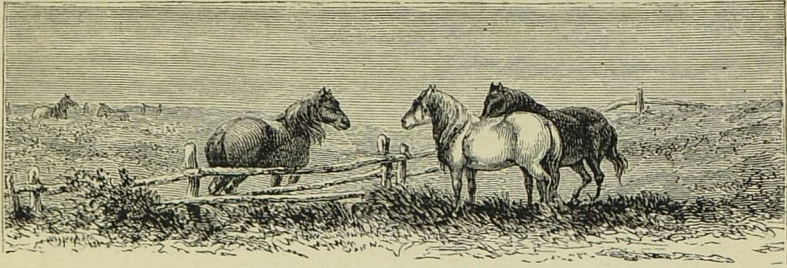
SONGS OF
ANIMAL LIFE.

Poems by *Mary Howitt.*

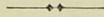
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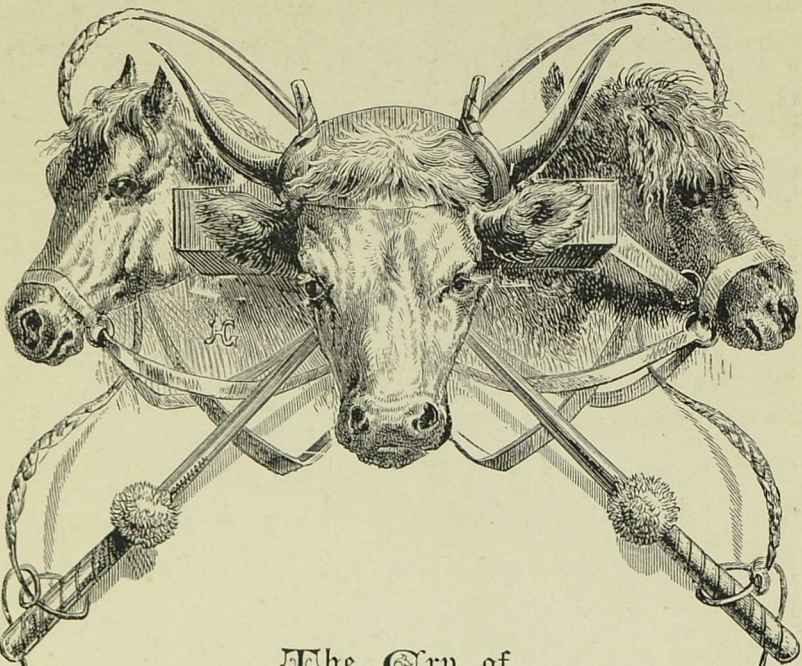
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The Cry of
the Suffering Creatures.

Oh! that they had pity,
the men we serve so truly!
Oh! that they had kindness,
the men we love so well!
They call us dull and stupid,
and vicious and unruly,
And think not we can suffer,
but only would rebel.

They brand us, and they beat us; they spill our blood like
water;

We die that they may live, ten thousand in a day!
Oh! that they had mercy! for in their dens of slaughter
They afflict us and affright us, and do far worse than
slay.

We are made to be their servants—we know it, and com-
plain not;

We bow our necks with meekness the galling yoke to bear.
Their heaviest toil we lighten, the meanest we disdain not;
In all their sweat and labour we take a willing share.

We know that God intended for us but servile stations,
To toil to bear man's burdens, to watch beside his door;
They are of earth the masters, we are their poor relations,
Who grudge them not their greatness, but help to make
it more.

And in return we ask but, that they would kindly use us
For the purposes of service, for that for which we're made;
That they would teach their children to love and not abuse
us,
So each might face the other, and neither be afraid.

We have a sense they know not, or else have dulled by
learning,—

They call it instinct only, a thing of rule and plan ;
But oft, when reason fails them, our clear, direct discerning,
And the love that is within us, have saved the life of man.



If they would but love us, would learn our strength and
weakness,

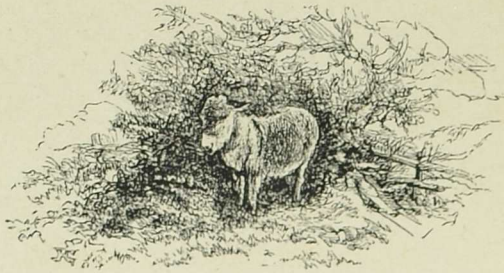
If only with our sufferings their hearts could sympathize,
Then they would know what truth is, what patience is and
meekness,

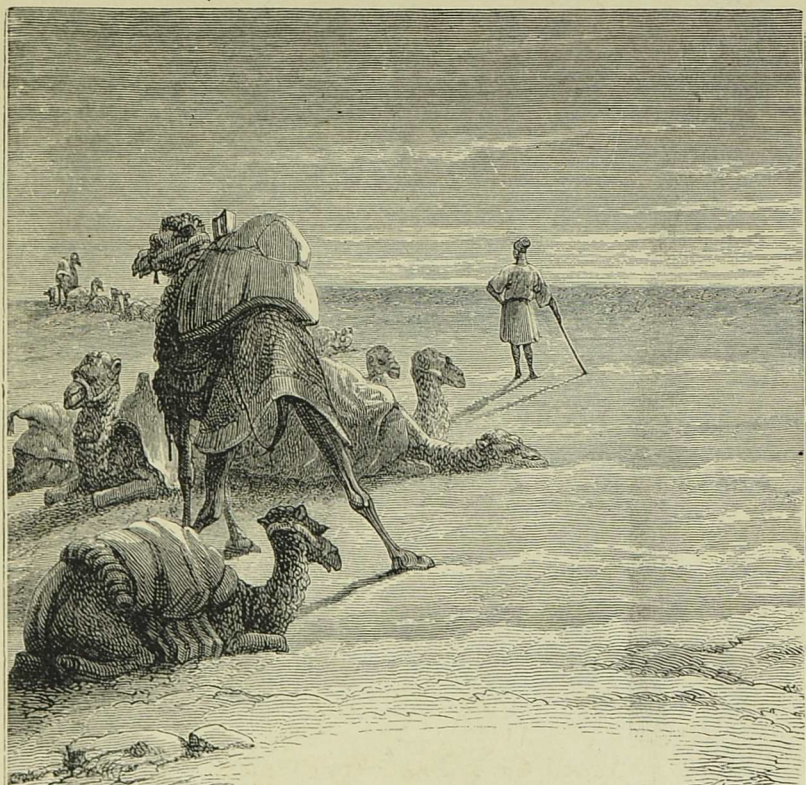
And read our heart's devotion in the softness of our eyes !

If they would but teach their children to treat the subject
creatures

As humble friends, as servants who strive their love to
win,

Then would they see how joyous, how kindly are our natures,
And a second day of Eden would on the earth begin !





The Camel.

CAMEL! thou art good and mild,
Mightst be guided by a child ;
Thou wast made for usefulness,
Man to comfort and to bless :
Thou dost clothe him ; thou dost feed ;
Thou dost lend to him thy speed.
And through wilds of trackless sand,
In the hot Arabian land,

Where no rock its shadow throws ;
Where no pleasant water flows ;
Where the hot air is not stirred
By the wing of singing bird,
There thou go'st, untired and meek,
Day by day, and week by week,
Bearing freight of precious things,—
Silks for merchants, gold for kings ;
Pearls of Ormuz, riches rare,
Damascene and Indian ware ;
Bale on bale, and heap on heap,
Freighted like a costly ship !

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

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

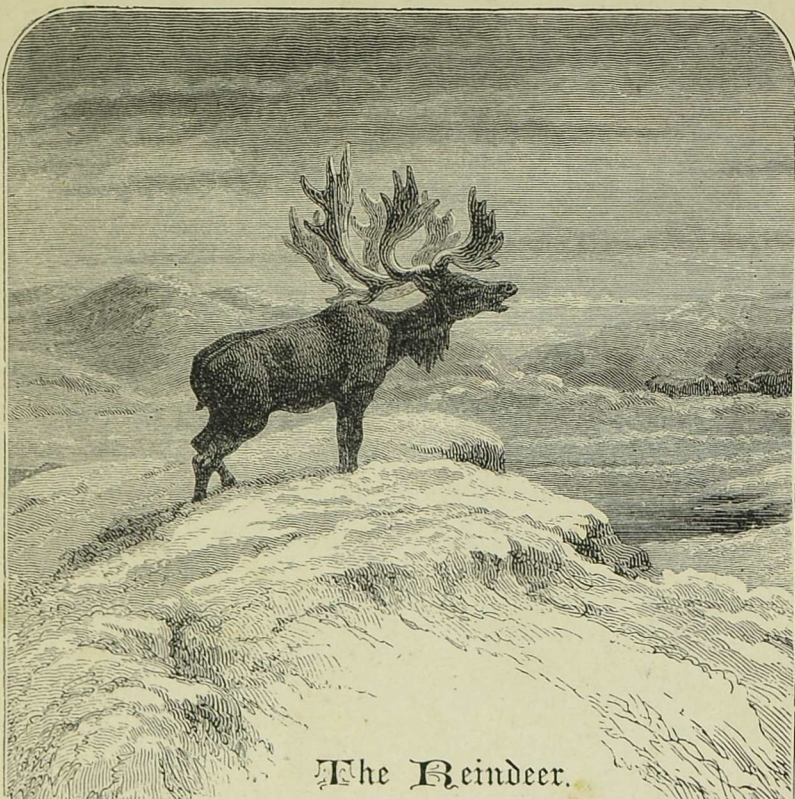


And when week by week is gone,
And the traveller journeys on
Feebly ; when his strength is fled,
And his hope and heart seem dead,
Camel ! thou dost turn thine eye
On him kindly, soothingly,

As if cheeringly to say,—
“Journey on for this one day !
Do not let thy heart despond ;
There is water yet beyond !
I can scent it in the air
Do not let thy heart despair !”
And thou guid’st the traveller there.

Camel ! thou art good and mild,
Mightst be guided by a child ;
Thou wast made for usefulness—
Man to comfort and to bless ;
And these desert wastes must be
Untracked regions but for thee !





The Reindeer.

REINDEER! not in fields like ours,
Full of grass and bright with flowers;
Not in pasture-dales where glide
Never-frozen rivers wide;
Not on hills where verdure bright
Clothes them to the topmost height,
Is thy dwelling; nor dost thou
Feed beneath the orange-bough;

Nor doth olive, nor doth vine,
Bud or bloom in land of thine.
Thou wast made to fend and fare
In a region bleak and bare ;
In a dreary land of snow,
Where green weeds can scarcely grow !
Where the skies are gray and drear ;
Where 'tis night for half the year ;
Reindeer ! where, unless for thee,
Human dweller could not be !

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

And in love God sped thee forth
To thy home, the barren North,
Where he bade the rocks produce
Bitter lichens for thy use.

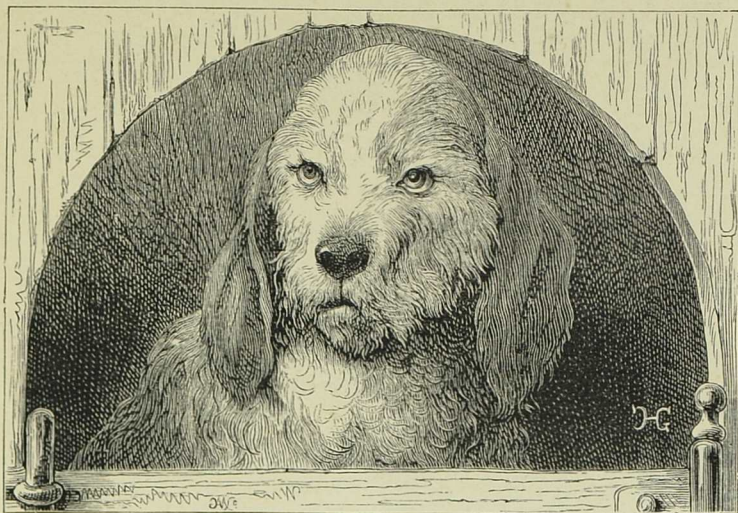
What the camel is, thou art,—
Strong of frame, and strong in heart '
Peaceful; steadfast to fulfil;
Serving man with right good will;



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:
O'er the burning sand he goes,
Thou upon the Arctic snows;—
Gifted each alike, yet meant
For lands and labours different!

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



The Dog.



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

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

As a faithful friend to share it;
To be with him night or day,

Ever ready when he calleth ;
When he biddeth, to obey.

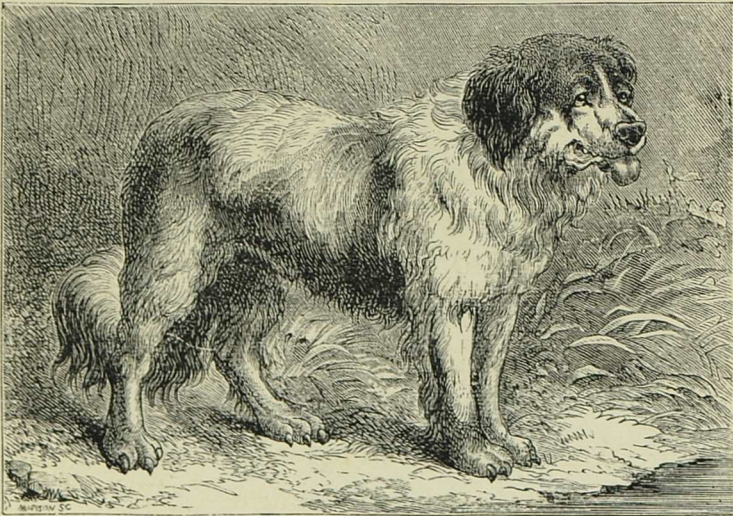
To obey with will instinctive,
Which can neither fail nor swerve ;
Asking for his faithful duty
Only love and leave to serve.



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

Of the Dog in ancient story
Many a pleasant tale is told :

As when young Tobias journeyed
To Ecbatane of old,
By the angel Raphael guided ;
Went the faithful Dog and good,
Bounding through the Tigris meadows,
Whilst they fished within the flood ;



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

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

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

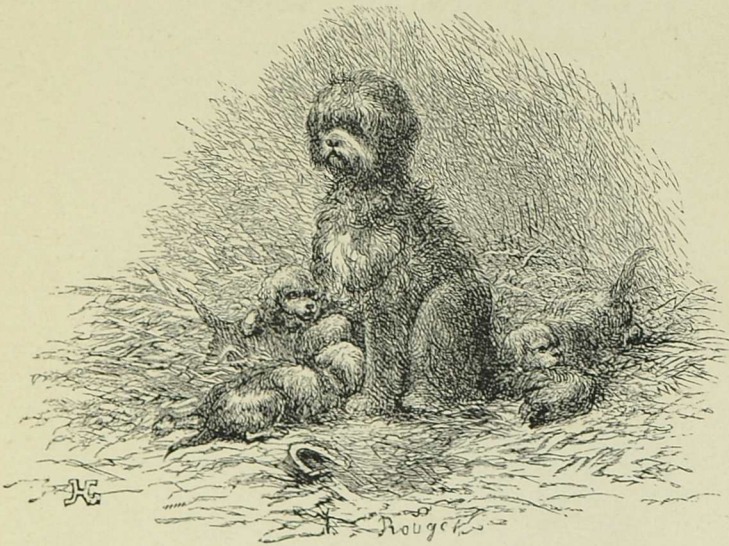
Saw she not the two men coming,
Young Tobias and his guide,
Hurrying on with their good tidings,
And the Dog was at their side!

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

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

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

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



To his Dog, who, having lost him,
Never owned his loss supplied ;

And who now, o'erjoyed to find him,
Lay down at his feet and died.

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

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

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





Little Lamb
and
Little Child.

TO L. E. S.

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

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

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





The Lion.

L

ION, thou art girt with might !
King by uncontested right ;
Strength, and majesty, and pride
Are in thee personified !
Slavish doubt or timid fear
Never came thy spirit near ;

What it is to fly, or bow
To a mightier than thou,
Never has been known to thee,
Creature terrible and free !

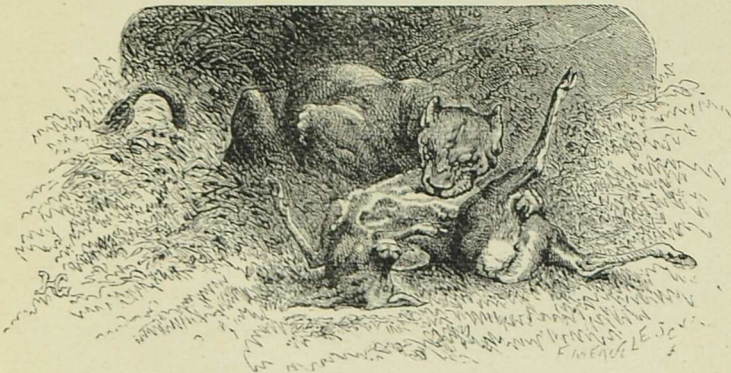
Power the Mightiest gave the lion
Sinews like to bands of iron ;
Gave him force which never failed ;
Gave a heart that never quailed.
Triple-mail'd coat of steel,
Plates of brass from head to heel,
Less defensive were in wearing
Than the lion's heart of daring ;
Nor could towers of strength impart
Trust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

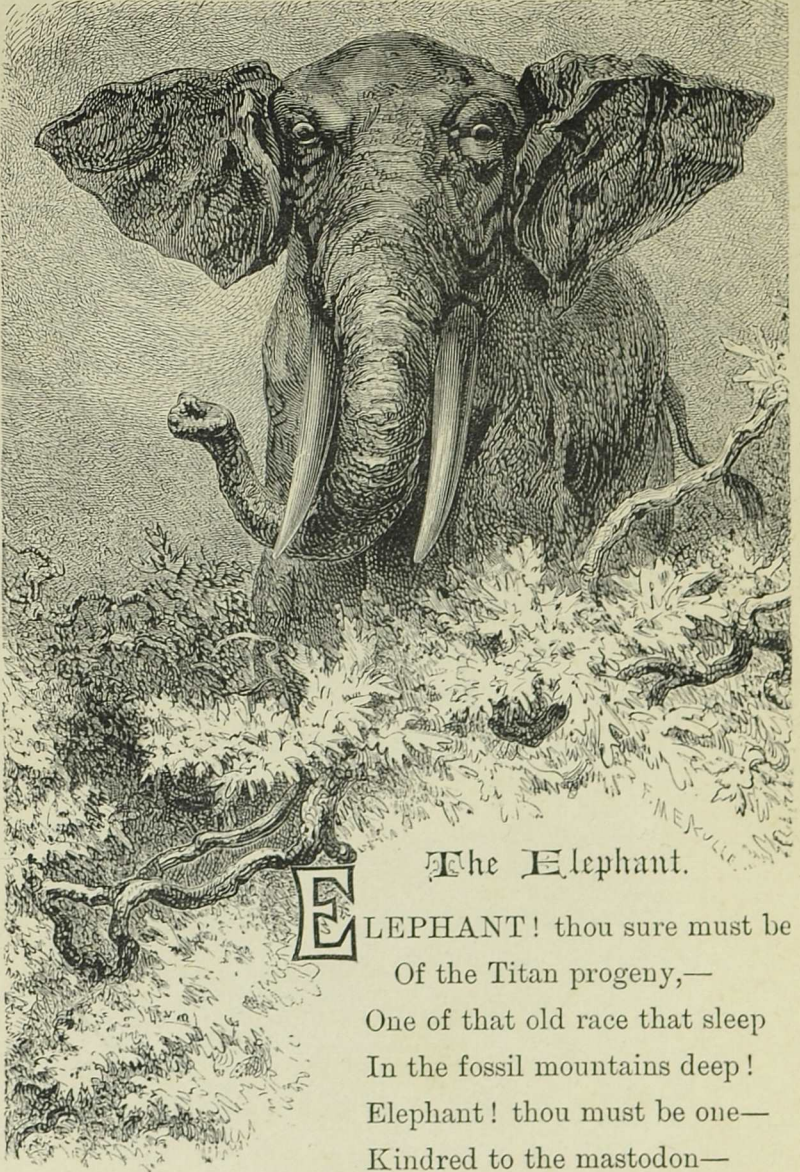
What are things to match with him ?
Serpents old, and strong, and grim ;
Seas upon a desert shore ;
Mountain-wildernesses hoar ;
Night and storm, and earthquakes dire ;
Thawless frost and raging fire—
All that's strong, and stern and dark,
All that doth not miss its mark,

All that makes man's nature tremble,
Doth the desert-king resemble !

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

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





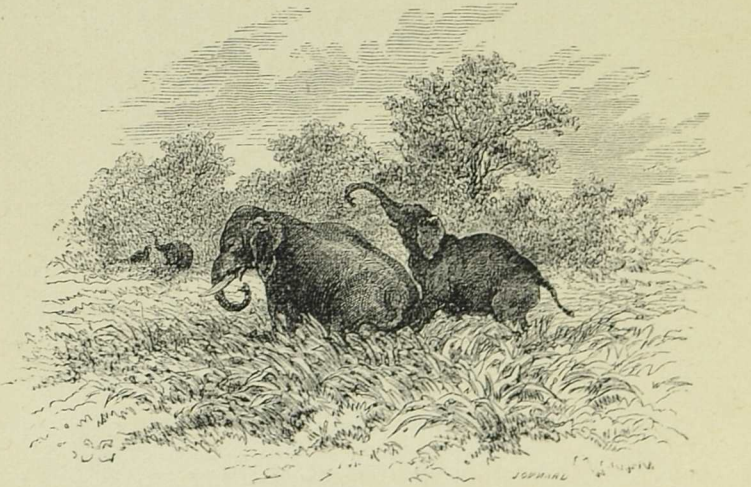
The Elephant.

ELEPHANT! 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 megalonyx ;
With the mammoth hadst command
O'er the old-world forest-land.
Thou those giant ferns didst see,
Taller than the tallest tree ;
And with upturned trunk didst browse
On the reed-palm's lowest boughs ;
And didst see, upcurled from light,
The ever-sleeping ammonite ;
And those dragon-worms at play
In the waters old and gray !

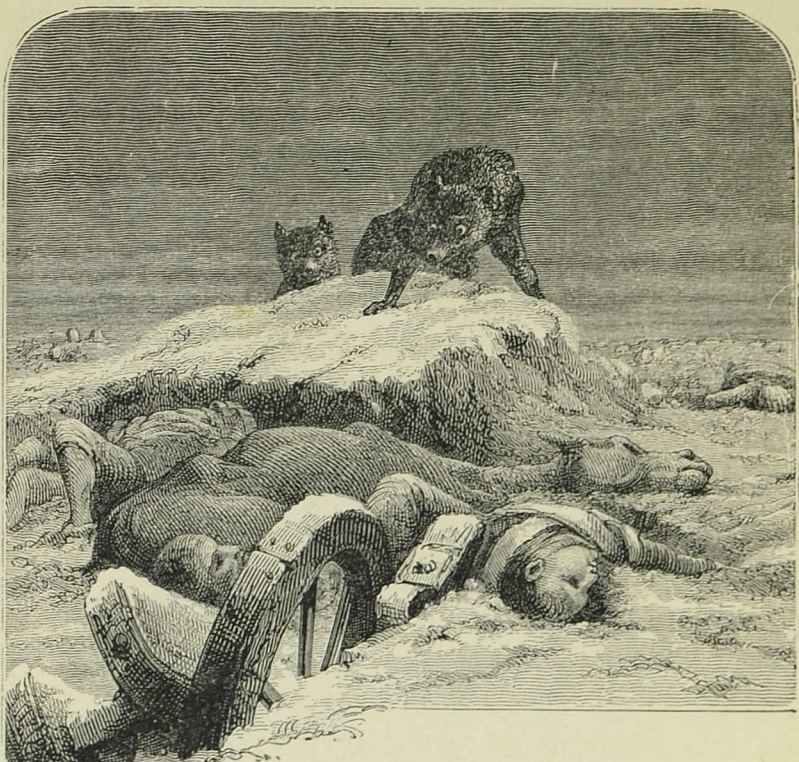
Tell me, creature ! in what place
Thou, the Noah of thy race,
Wast preserved when Death was sent
Like a raging element,
Like a whirlwind passing by,
In the twinkling of an eye,
Leaving mother Earth forlorn
Of her mighty eldest-born ;
Turning all her life to stone
With one universal groan !

In what cavern drear and dark,
Elephant! hadst thou thine ark?
Dost thou in thy memory hold
Record of that tale untold?
If thou dost, I pray thee tell—
It were worth the knowing well.



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

Thou art solemn, wise, and good ;
Livest not on streaming blood.
Thou, and all thine ancient clan,
Walked the world ere grief began,
Preying not on one another,
Nourished by the general mother,
Who gave forests thick and tall,
Food and shelter for you all.
Elephant ! if thou hadst been,
Like the tiger fierce and keen,
Like the lion of the brake,
Or the deadly rattlesnake,
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 Wolf.

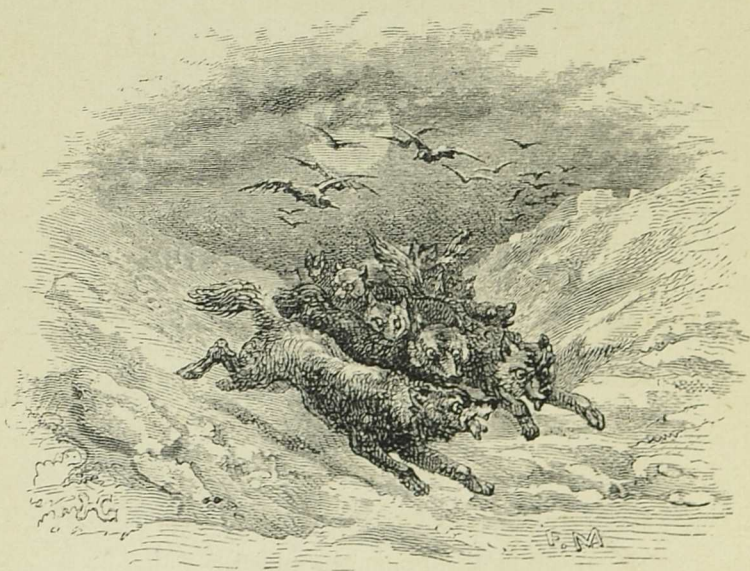
THINK of the lamb in the fields of May,
Cropping the dewy flowers for play ;
Think of the sunshine warm and clear ;
Of the bending corn in golden ear ;
Of little children singing low
Through flowery meadows as they go ;
Of cooing doves, and the hum of bees
In the lime-trees' yellow racemes ;

Of the pebbly waters gliding by,
Of the wood-birds' 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 splintered, hoar and old,
Jagged with woods of storm-beat pines,
Where a cold moon gleams, a cold sun shines !
And all through this dismal land we'll go
In a dog-drawn sledge, o'er frozen snow,
On either hand the ice-rocks frore,
And a waste of trackless snow before !

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

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

Oh, the horrible Wolves ! methinks I hear
The sound of their barking drawing near ;



Down from their dismal caves they drive,
And leave behind them nought alive.

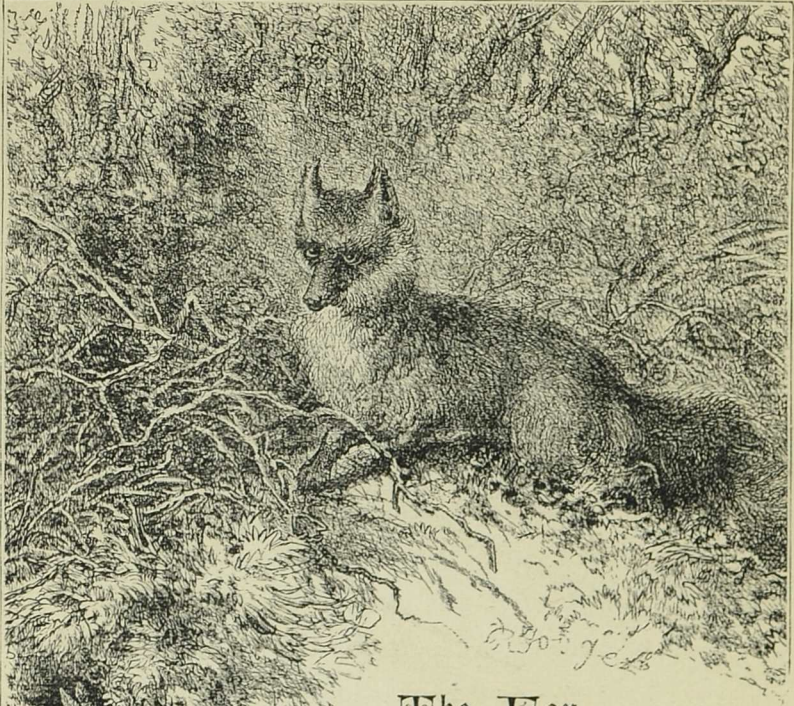
Down from their caves they come by day,
Savage as mad dogs for their prey ;
Down on the tracks where the hunters roam,
Down to the peasant's hut they come.
The peasant is waked from his pine-branch bed
By the direst, fiercest sound of dread,—
A snuffing scent, a scratching sound,
Like a dog that rendeth up the ground ;
Up from his bed he springs in fear,
For he knows that the cruel Wolf is near.
A moment's pause—a moment more—
And he hears them snuffing 'neath his door.
Beneath his door he hears them mining,
Snuffing, snarling, scratching, whining !
Horrible sight ! no more he sees—
With terror his very senses freeze ;
Horrible sounds ! he hears no more—
The wild Wolves bound across his floor,
And the next moment lap his gore !
And ere the day comes o'er the hill
The Wolves are gone, the place is still,
And to none that dreadful death is known
Save to some ermine-hunter lone,
Who in that death foresees his own !



Or think thee now of a battle-field,
Where lie the wounded with the killed ;
Hundreds of mangled men they lie—
A horrible mass of agony !
The night comes down,—and in they bound,
The ravening Wolves from the mountains round ;

All day long have they come from far,
Snuffing that bloody field of war ;
But the rolling drum, and the trumpet's bray,
And the strife of men through the livelong day,
For 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 these cruel foes,
And hear them lap up the blood that flows !
Oh, shame, that ever it hath been said
That bloody war is a glorious trade,
And that soldiers die upon glory's bed !
Let us hence, let us hence ! for horrible war,
Than the merciless Wolf is more merciless far !





The Fox.

IN the rugged copse, in the ferny brake,
The cunning red Fox his den doth make ;
In the ancient turf of the baron's land,
Where the gnarléd oaks of the forest stand ;
In the widow's garden lone and bare ;
On the hills which the poor man tills with
care :

There ages ago he made his den,
And there he abideth, in spite of men.

'Tis a dismal place, for all the floor
With the bones of his prey is covered o'er ;
'Tis darksome and lone, you can hardly trace
The farthest nook of the dreary place ;
And there he skulks like a creature of ill,
And comes out when midnight is dark and still :



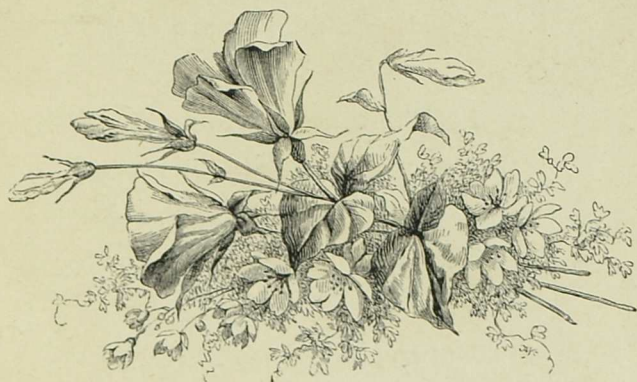
When the dismal owl, with his staring eye,
Sends forth from the ruin his screeching cry,
And the bat on his black leathern wings goes by ;

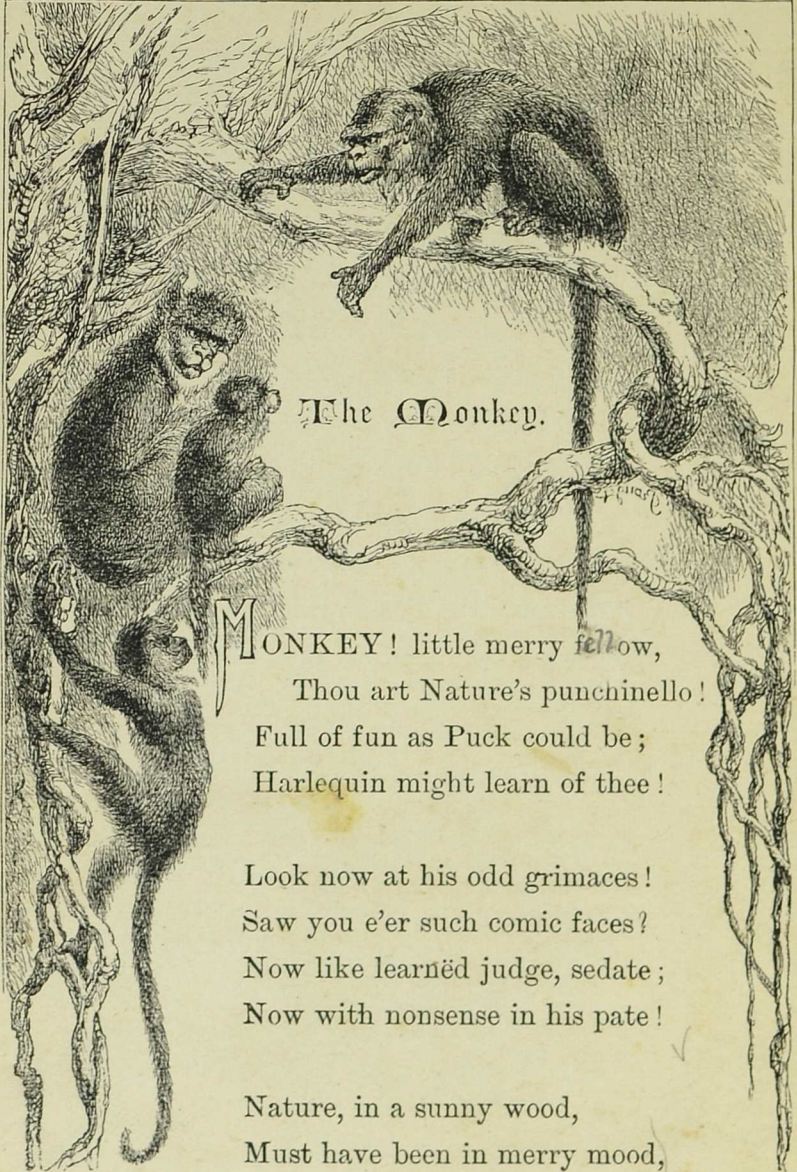
Then out comes the Fox with his thievish mind,
Looking this way and that way, before and behind ;
Then running along, thinking but of the theft
Of the one little hen the poor widow has left ;
And he boldly and carelessly passes her shed,
For he knows very well she is sleeping in bed,
And that she has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

At times he steals down to the depth of the wood,
And seizes the partridge in midst of her brood ;
And the little gray rabbit, and young timid hare ;
And the tall, stately pheasant, so gentle and fair ;



And he buries them deep in some secret spot,
Where he knows man or hound can discover them not.
But vengeance comes down on the thief at length ;
For they hunt him out of his place of strength,
And Man and the Fox are at desperate strife,
And the creature runs, and runs for his life :
And following close is the snuffing hound,
And hills and hollows they compass round,
Till at length he is seized, a caitiff stout,
And the wild dogs bark, and the hunters shout ;
Then they cut off his tail and wave it on high,
Saying, " Here fell the Fox so thievish and sly !
Thus may all the oppressors of poor men die ! "





The Monkey.

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

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

Nature, in a sunny wood,
Must have been in merry mood,

And with laughter fit to burst,
Monkey! when she made you first.

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

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

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

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

And could you keep down your mirth
When the floods were on the earth,—

When, from all your drowning kin,
Good old Noah took you in?

In the very ark, no doubt,
You went rollicking about ;
Never keeping in your mind
Drown'd Monkeys left behind !

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

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

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

Look now at him. Slyly peep :
He pretends to be asleep ;—

Fast asleep upon his bed,
With his arm beneath his head.



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

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

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

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





The Squirrel.

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

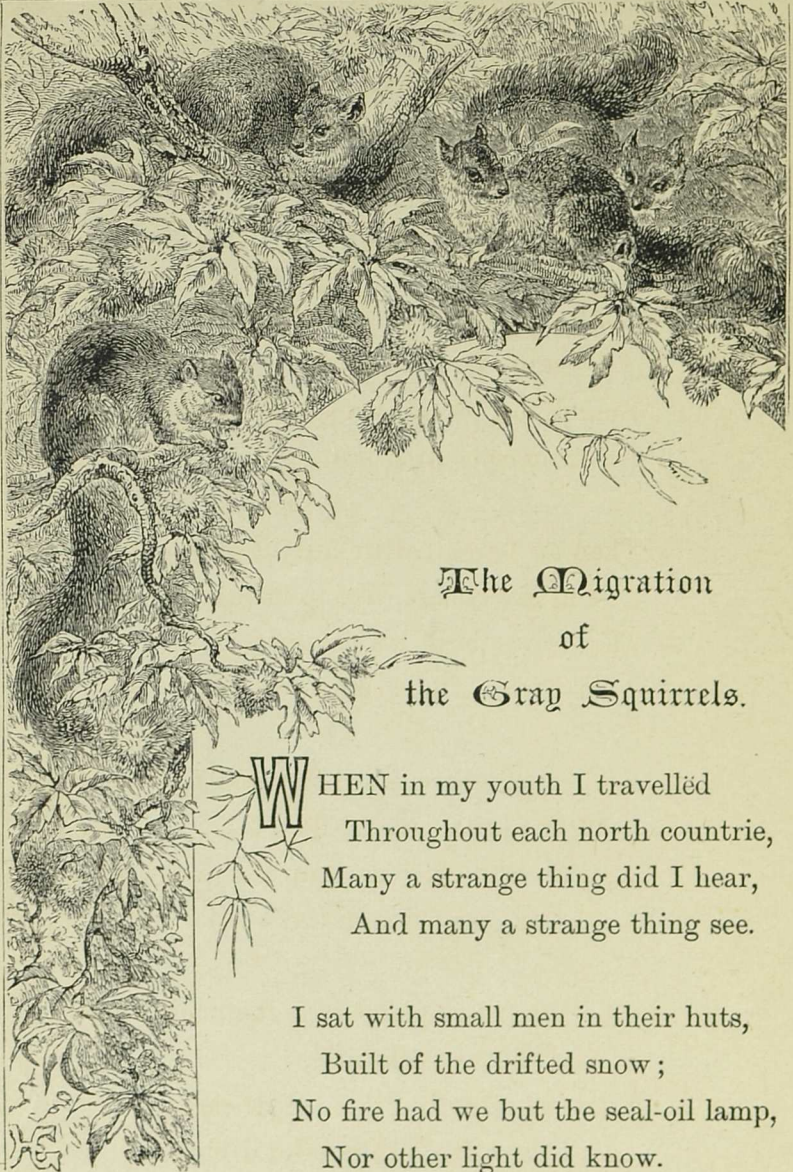
In the joy of his nature he frisks with a bound
To the topmost twigs, and then down to the ground ;
Then up again like a winged thing,
And from tree to tree with a vaulting spring ;
Then he sits up aloft, and looks waggish and queer,
As if he would say, " Ay, follow me here ! "



And then he grows pettish, and stamps his foot ;
And then independently cracks his nut :
And thus he lives the long summer thorough,
Without a care or a thought of sorrow.

But, small as he is, he knows he may want,
In the bleak winter weather, when food is scant :
So he finds a hole in an old tree's core,
And there makes his nest and lays up his store ;
Then when cold winter comes and the trees are bare,
When the white snow is falling and keen is the air,
He heeds it not, as he sits by himself
In his warm little nest, with his nuts on his shelf.
O wise little squirrel ! no wonder that he,
In the green summer woods, is as blithe as can be !





The Migration
of
the Gray Squirrels.

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

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

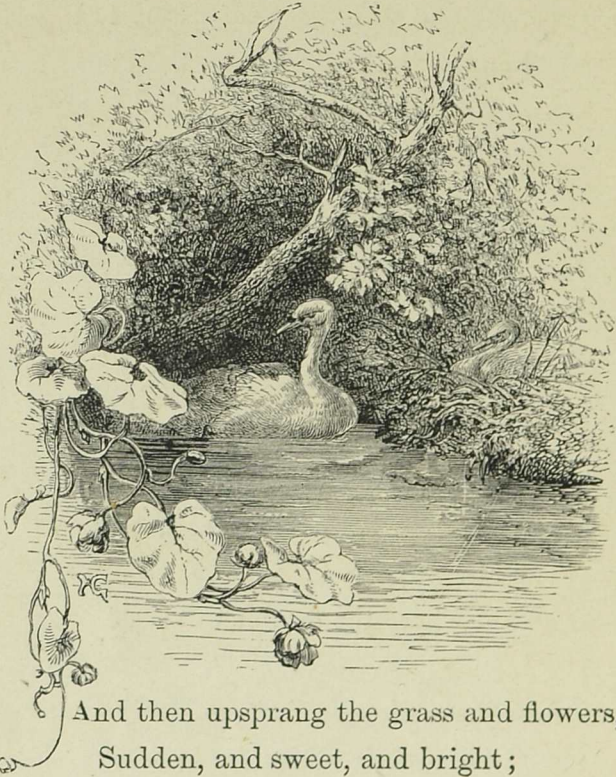
For far and wide the plains were lost
For months in the winter dark ;
And we heard the growl of the hungry bear,
And the blue fox's bark.

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

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

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

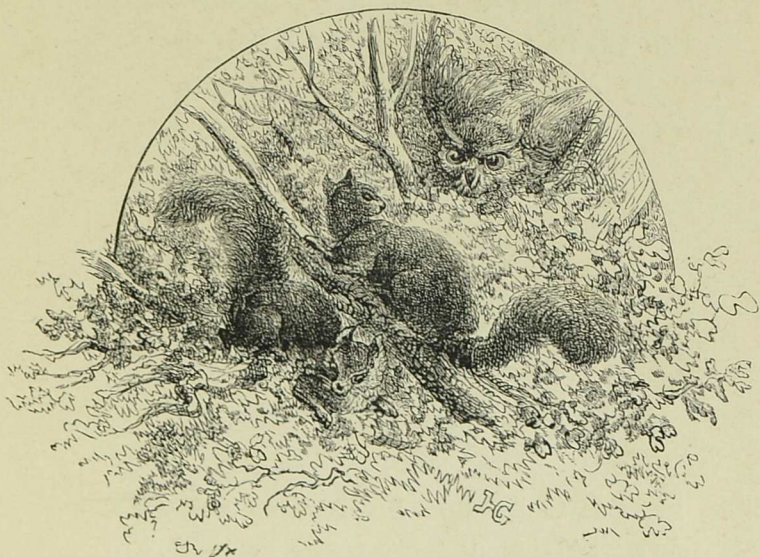
And the frosty plains like diamonds shone,
And the icy rocks also,
Like emeralds and like beryls clear,
Till the soft south wind did blow.



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

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

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



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

Then did they chatter in angry mood,
And one and all decree,

Into the forests of rich stone-pine
Over hill and dale to flee.

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

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

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

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

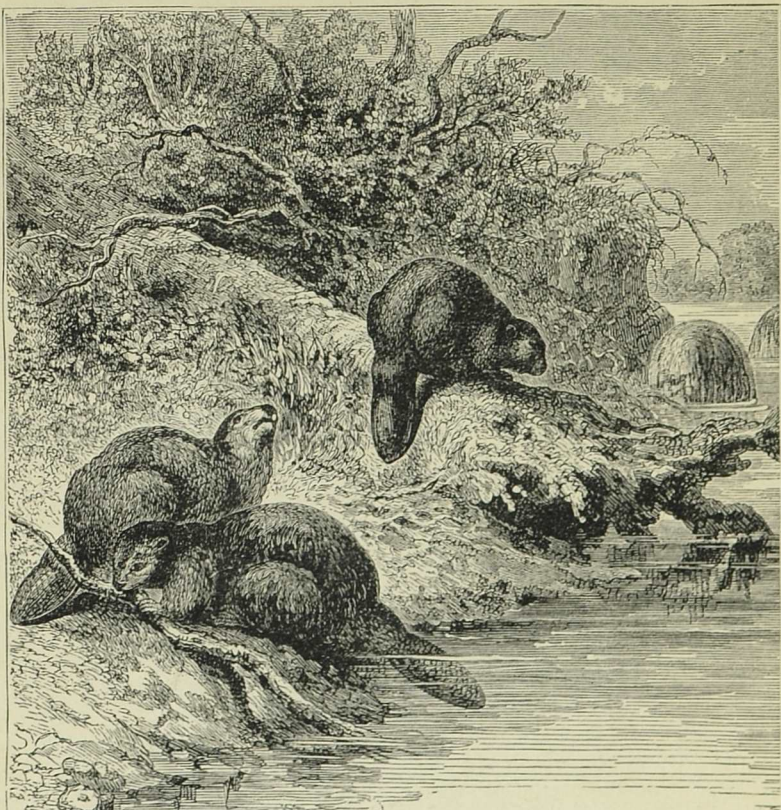
Never was there a lovelier sight
Than that Gray Squirrels' fleet ;
And with anxious eyes I watched to see
What fortune it would meet.

Soon had they reached the rough mid-stream,
And ever and anon
I grieved to behold some small barque wrecked,
And its little steersman gone.

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

W. H.





The Beaver.

GG

FAR in the north, if thou sail with me,
A wonderful creature I'll show to thee,—
As gentle and mild as a lamb at play,
Skipping about in the month of May;
Yet wise as any old learned sage
Who sits turning over a musty page!

Come down to this lonely river's bank !
See ! driven-in stake and riven plank ;
A mighty work before thee stands,
That would do no shame to human hands—
A well-built dam to stem the tide
Of this northern river so strong and wide ;
Look ! the woven bough of many a tree,
And a wall of fairest masonry.
The waters cannot o'erpass this bound,
For a hundred keen eyes watch it round ;
And the skill that raised can keep it good
Against the peril of storm and flood.

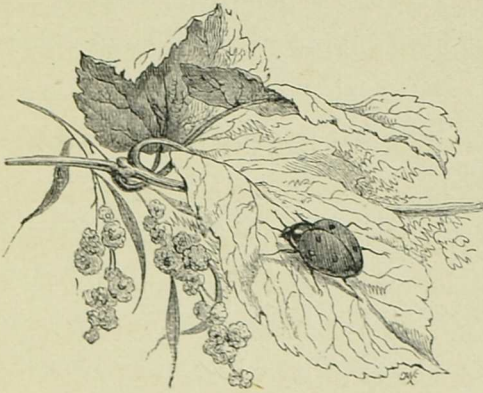
And yonder the peaceable creatures dwell,
Secure in their watery citadel !
They know no sorrow, have done no sin ;
Happy they live 'mongst kith and kin—
As happy as living things can be,
Each in the midst of his family !
Ay, there they live ; and the hunter wild,
Seeing their social natures mild,
Seeing how they are kind and good,
Hath felt his stubborn soul subdued ;



And the very sight of the young at play
Hath put his hunter's heart away ;
And a mood of pity bath o'er him crept,
As he thought of his own dear babes, and wept.

I know ye are but the Beavers small,
Living at peace in your own mud-wall ;
I know that ye have no books to teach
The lore that lies within your reach.
I know that thousands of years ago
Ye knew as much as now ye know ;

And on the banks of streams that sprung
Forth when the earth itself was young,
Your wondrous works were formed as true ;
For the All-Wise instructed you !
But man ! how hath he pondered on,
Through the long term of ages gone ;
And many a cunning book hath writ,
Of learning deep and subtle wit ;
Hath compassed sea, hath compassed land,
Hath built up towers and temples grand,
Hath travelled far for hidden lore,
And learned what was not known of yore ;—
Yet, after all, though wise he be,
He hath no better skill than ye !





The Hedgehog.

THOU poor little English porcupine,
What a harassed and weary life is thine
And thou art a creature meek and mild,
That wouldst not harm a sleeping child.

Thou scarce canst stir from thy tree-root,
But thy foes are up in hot pursuit ;
Thou mightst be an asp, or hornéd snake,
Thou poor little martyr of the brake !

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



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

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

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

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

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

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





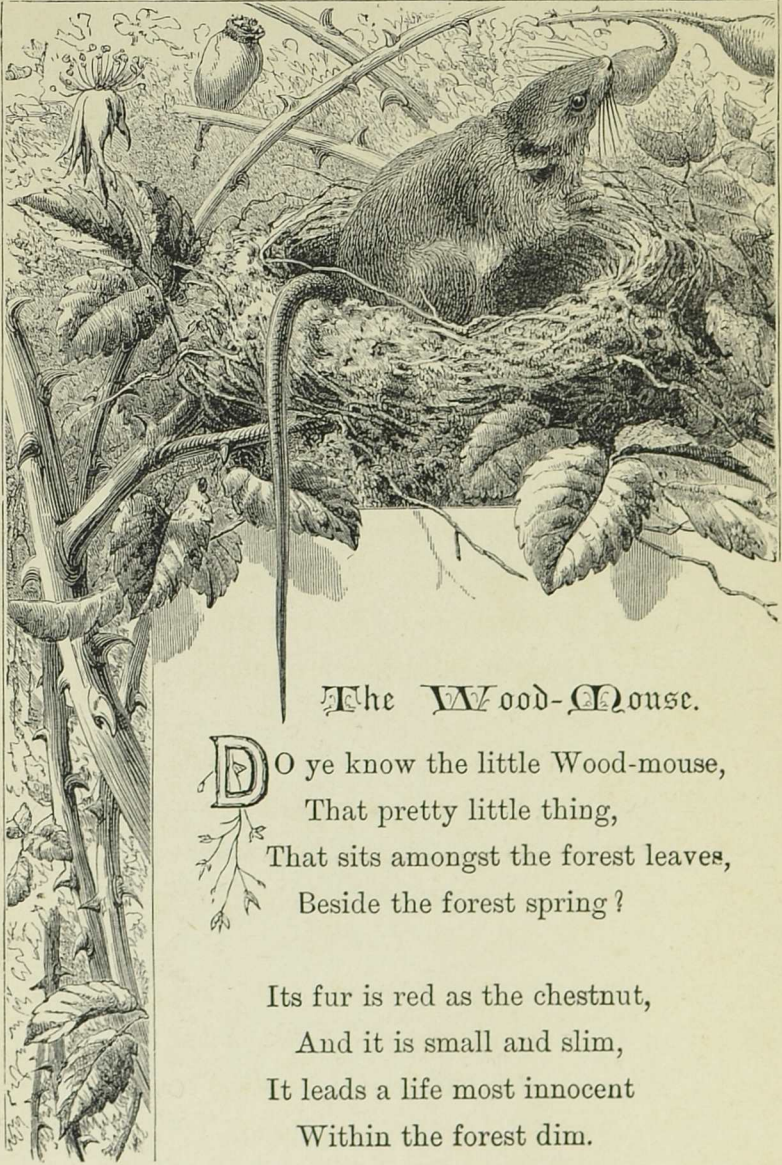
The Water-Bat.

COME into the meadows, this bright summer-day ;
The people are merrily making the hay :
There's a blithe sound of pastoral life everywhere ;
And the gay lark is carolling up in the air.
I know in the wood where the columbine grows,
And the climbing clematis and pink apple-rose ;

I know where the buglos grows blue as the sky,
And the deep crimson vetch like a wild vine runs high.
But I'll show you a sight you love better than these,—
A little field-stream overshadowed with trees,
Where the water is clear as a free mountain-rill,
And now it runs rippling, and now it is still ;
Where the crown'd butomus is gracefully growing,
Where the long purple spikes of the loose-strife are blowing,
And the rich plumy crests of the meadow-sweet seem
Like foam which the current has left on the stream ;
There I'll show you the brown Water-Rat at his play—
You will see nothing blither this blithe summer-day ;
And the snowy-flowered arrow-head thick growing here :
Ah, pity it is man has taught him to fear !
But look at him now, how he sitteth afloat
On the broad water-lily leaf, as in a boat !
See the antics he plays ! how he dives in the stream,
To and fro—now he chases that dancing sunbeam !
Now he stands for a moment, as if half-perplexed
In his frolicsome heart to know what to do next.
Ha ! see now that dragon-fly sets him astir,
And he launches away like a brave mariner !
See there, up the stream, how he merrily rows,
And the tall, fragrant calamus bows as he goes !

And now he is lost at the foot of the tree ;—
'Tis his home, and a snug little home it must be !
'Tis thus that the Water-Rat liveth all day,
In these small pleasures wearing the summer away.
And when cold winter comes, and the water-plants die,
And his little brook yields him no longer supply,
Down into his burrow he cosily creeps,
And quietly through the long winter-time sleeps.
Thus in summer his table by Nature is spread ;
And old mother Earth makes in winter his bed.





The Wood-Mouse.

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

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

'Tis a timid gentle creature,
And seldom comes in sight ;
It has a long and wiry tail,
And eyes both black and bright.

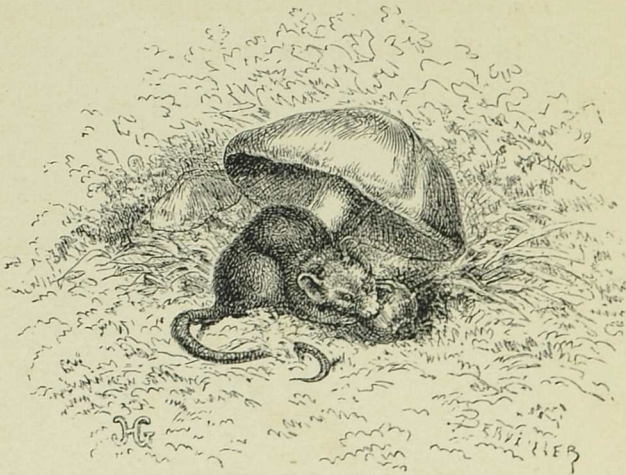
It makes its nest of soft dry moss,
In a hole so deep and strong ;
And there it sleeps, secure and warm,
The dreary winter long.

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

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

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

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



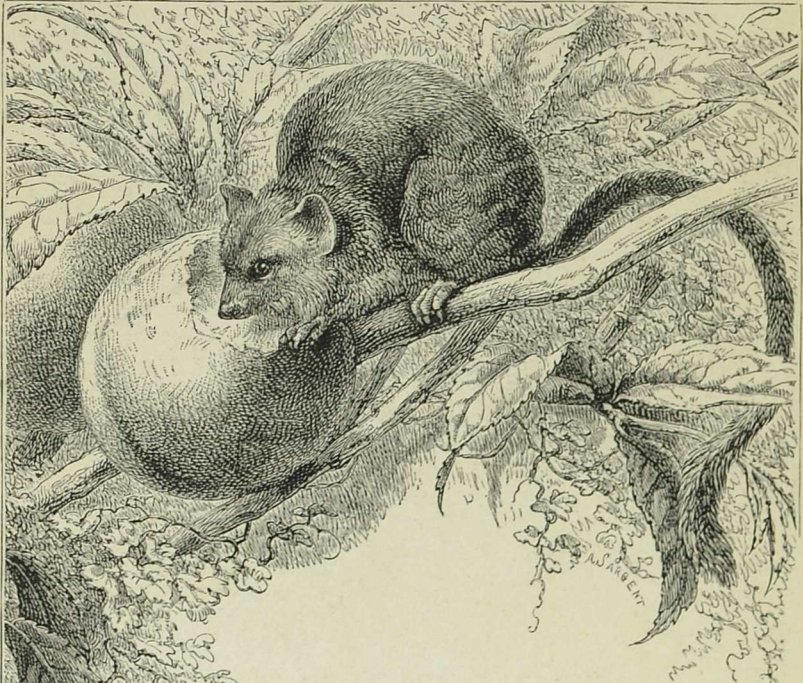
I saw him sit and his dinner eat,
All under the forest-tree—
His dinner of chestnut ripe and red,
And he ate it heartily.

I wish you could have seen him there :
It did my spirit good,

To see the small thing God had made
Thus eating in the wood.

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

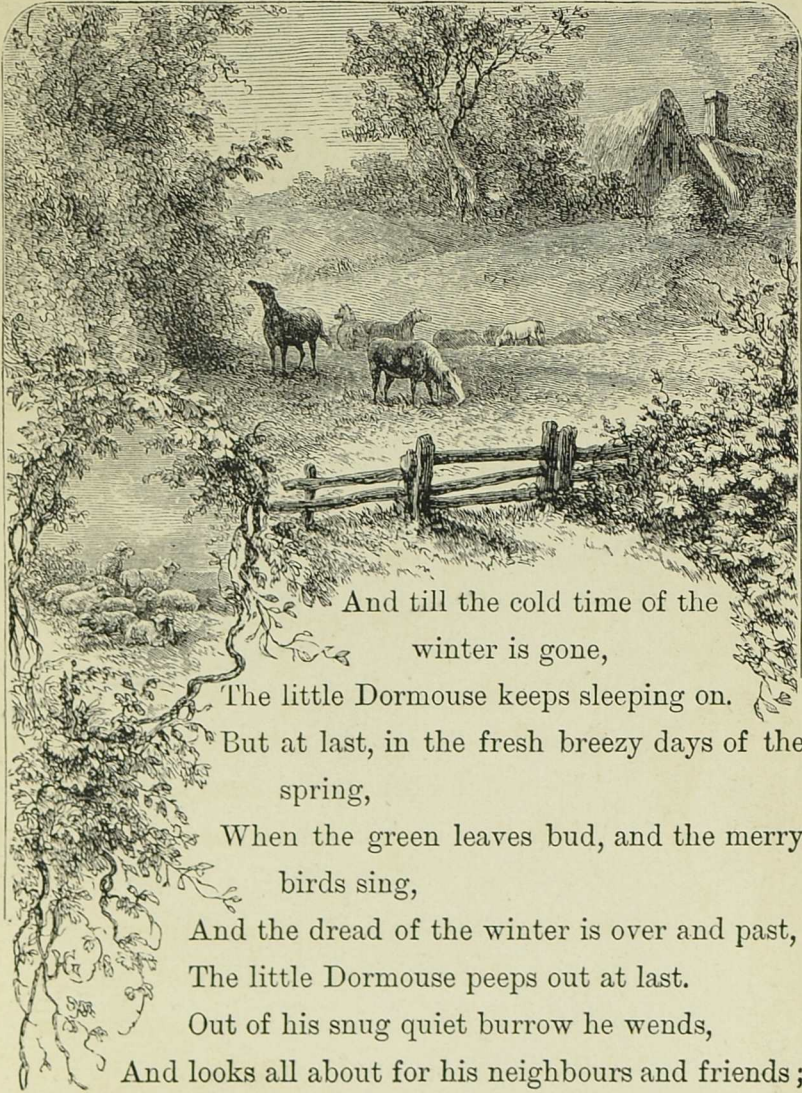




The Dormouse.

THE little Dormouse is tawny red ;
He makes against winter a nice snug bed :
He makes his bed in a mossy bank,
Where the plants in the summer grow tall and
rank.

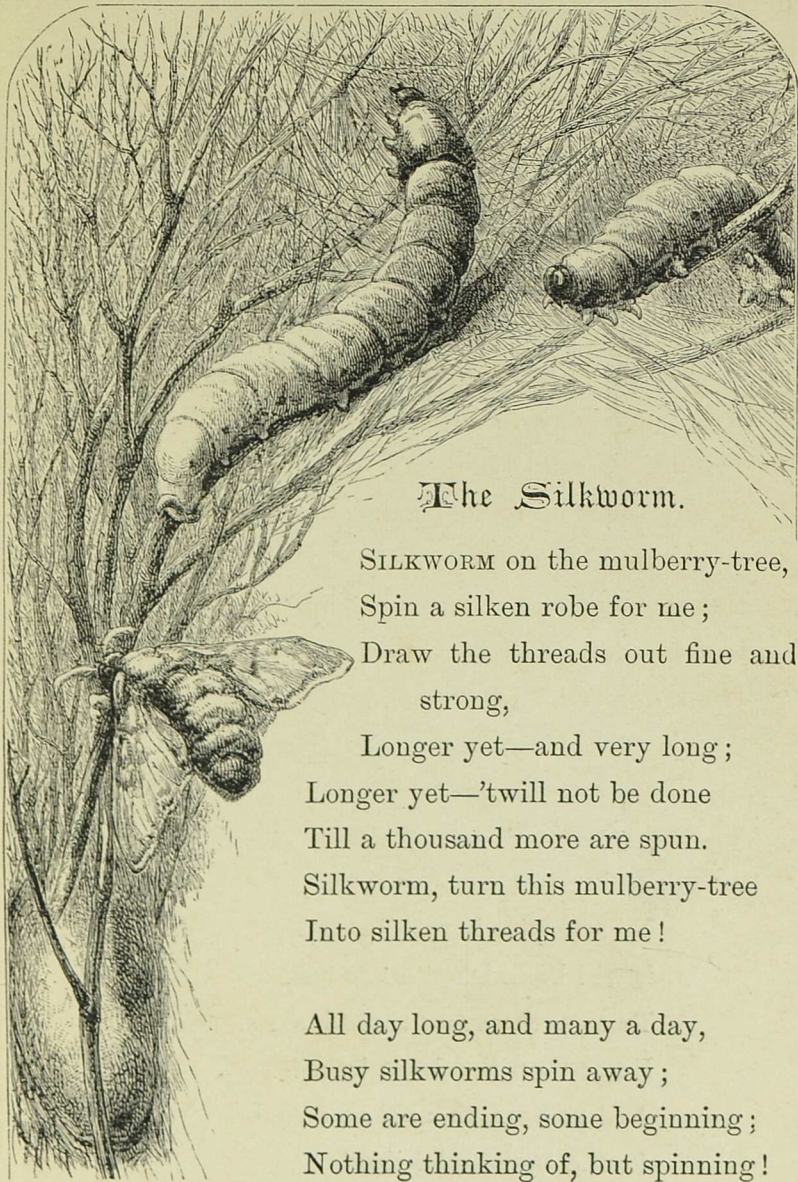
Away from the daylight, far underground,
His sleep through the winter is quiet and sound ;
And when all above him it freezes and snows,
What is it to him, for he nought of it knows ?



And till the cold time of the
winter is gone,
The little Dormouse keeps sleeping on.
But at last, in the fresh breezy days of the
spring,
When the green leaves bud, and the merry
birds sing,
And the dread of the winter is over and past,
The little Dormouse peeps out at last.
Out of his snug quiet burrow he wends,
And looks all about for his neighbours and friends ;

Then he says, as he sits at the foot of a larch,—
“’Tis a beautiful day, for the first day of March !
The violet is blowing, the blue sky is clear ;
The lark is upspringing—his carol I hear ;
And in the green fields are the lamb and the foal ;
I am glad I’m not sleeping now down in my hole !”
Then away he runs, in his merry mood,
Over the fields and into the wood,
To find any grain there may chance to be,
Or any small berry that hangs on the tree.
So from early morning till late at night
Has the poor little creature his own delight,
Looking down to the earth and up to the sky,
Thinking, “Oh ! what a happy Dormouse am I !”



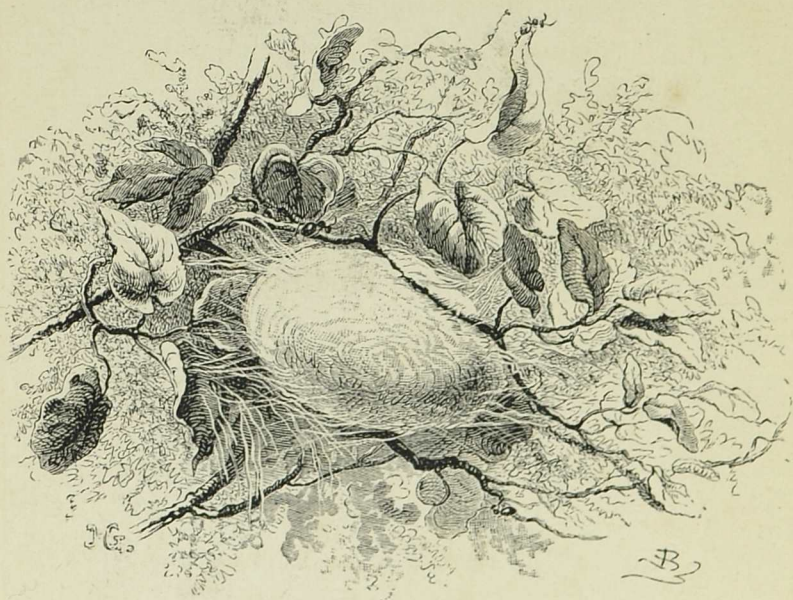


The Silkworm.

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

All day long, and many a day,
Busy silkworms spin away ;
Some are ending, some beginning ;
Nothing thinking of, but spinning !

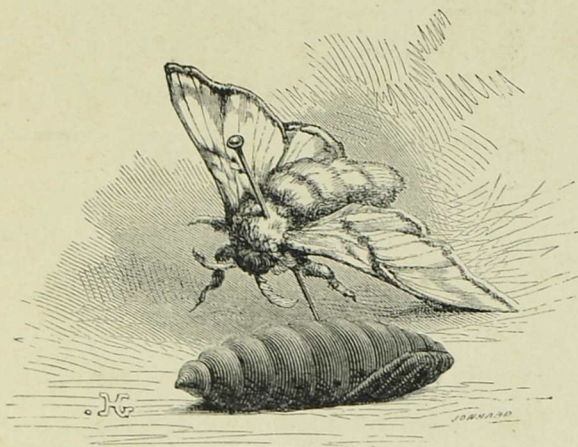
Well for them ! Like silver light,
All the threads are smooth and bright ;
Pure as day the silk must be,
Woven from the mulberry-tree !

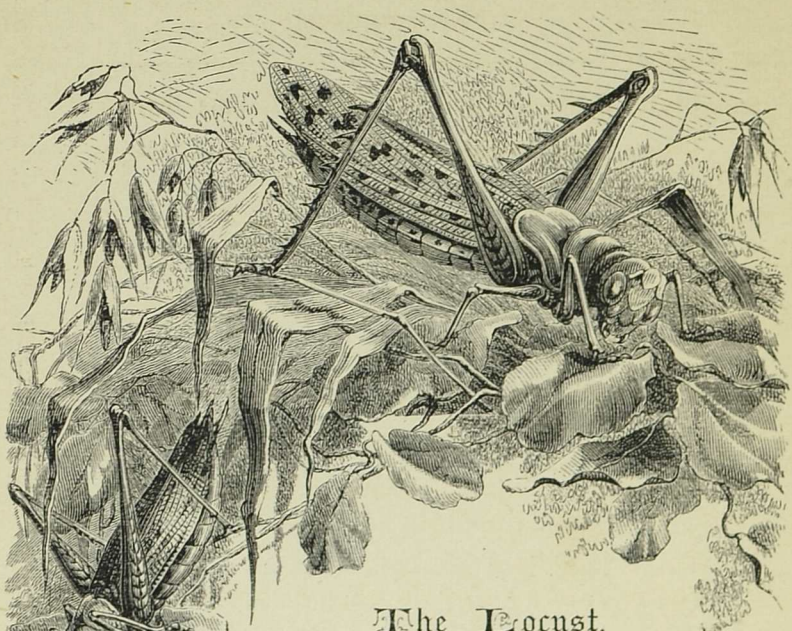


Ye are spinning well and fast ;
'Twill be finished all at last.
Twenty thousand threads are drawn,
Finer than the finest lawn !
And as long, this silken twine,
As the equinoctial line !

What a change ! The mulberry-tree
Turneth into silk for me !

Spinning ever ! now 'tis done ;
Silken threads enough are spun !
Spinning, they will spin no more—
All their little lives are o'er !
Pile them up—a costly heap !—
Each in his coffin gone to sleep !
Silkworm on the mulberry-tree,
Thou hast spun and died for me !





The Locust.



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

He comes with famine and fear along,
An army a million million strong ;
The Goth and the Vandal, and dwarfish Hun,
With their swarming people wild and dun,

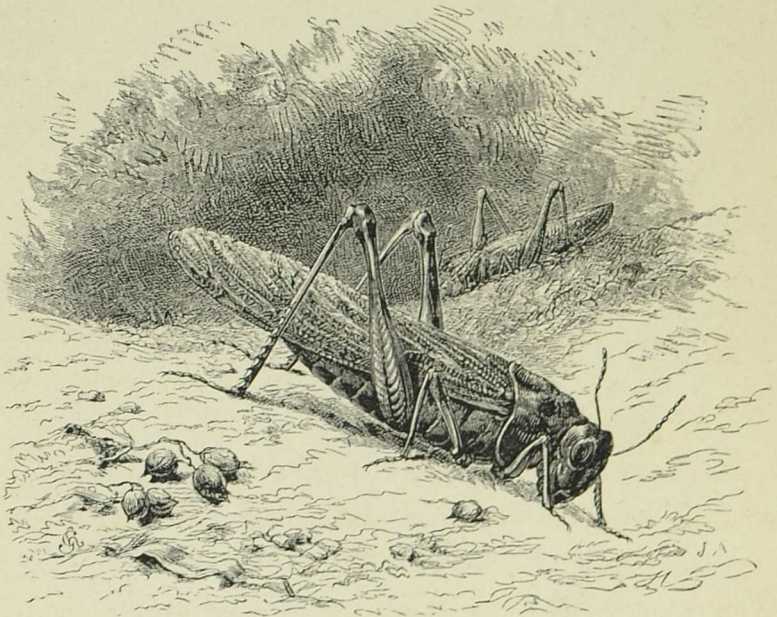
Brought not the dread that the Locust brings,
When is heard the rush of their myriad wings.

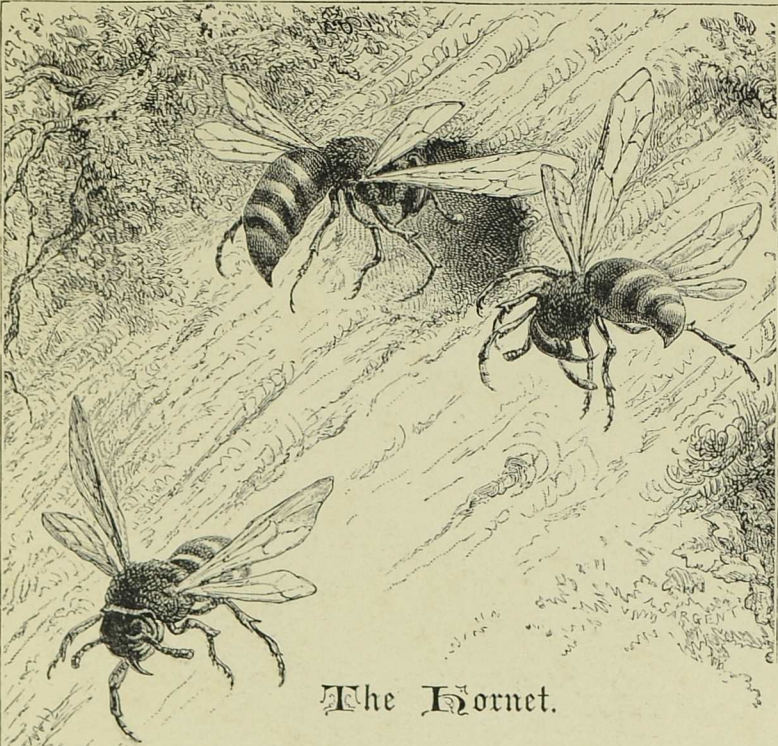
From the deserts of burning sand they speed,
Where the lions roam and the serpents breed,
Far over the sea away, away !
And they darken the sun at noon of day.
Like Eden the land before they find,
But they leave it a desolate waste behind.

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

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

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





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

So! so!—Don't be so angry! Why do you come at me,
 With a swoop and with a hum,—is't a crime to look at ye?
 See where the testy fellow goes whiz into the hole,
 And brings out from the hollow tree his fellows in a shoal.
 Hark! what an awful, hollow boom! How fierce they
 come! I'd rather
 Just quietly step back, and stand from them a little further.

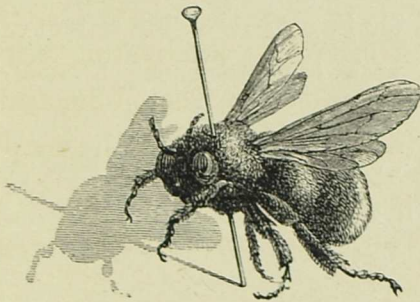


There, now, the Hornet host is retreating to its den,
 And so, good Mr. Sentinel—lo! here I am again!
 Well! how the little angry wretch doth stamp and raise his
 head,
 And flirt his wings, and seem to say, “Come here—I’ll
 sting you dead!”

No, thank you, fierce Sir Hornet,—that's not at all inviting :
But what a pair of shears the fellow has for biting !
What a pair of monstrous shears to carry at his head !
If wasp or fly come in their gripe, that moment he is dead !
There! bite in two the whip-lash, as we poke it at your
chin !

See, how he bites! but it is tough, and again he hurries in.
Ho! ho! we soon shall have the whole vindictive race,
With a hurry and a scurry, all flying in our face.
To potter in a Hornet's nest, is a proverb old and good,
So it's just as well to take the hint, and retreat into the
wood.

Now here behind this hazel-bush we safely may look out,
And see what all the colony of Hornets is about.
Why, what a furious troop it is! how fierce they seem to be,
As they fly now in the sunshine, now in shadow of the tree!



And yet they're noble insects—their bodies red and yellow,
And large almost as little birds, how richly toned and
mellow.

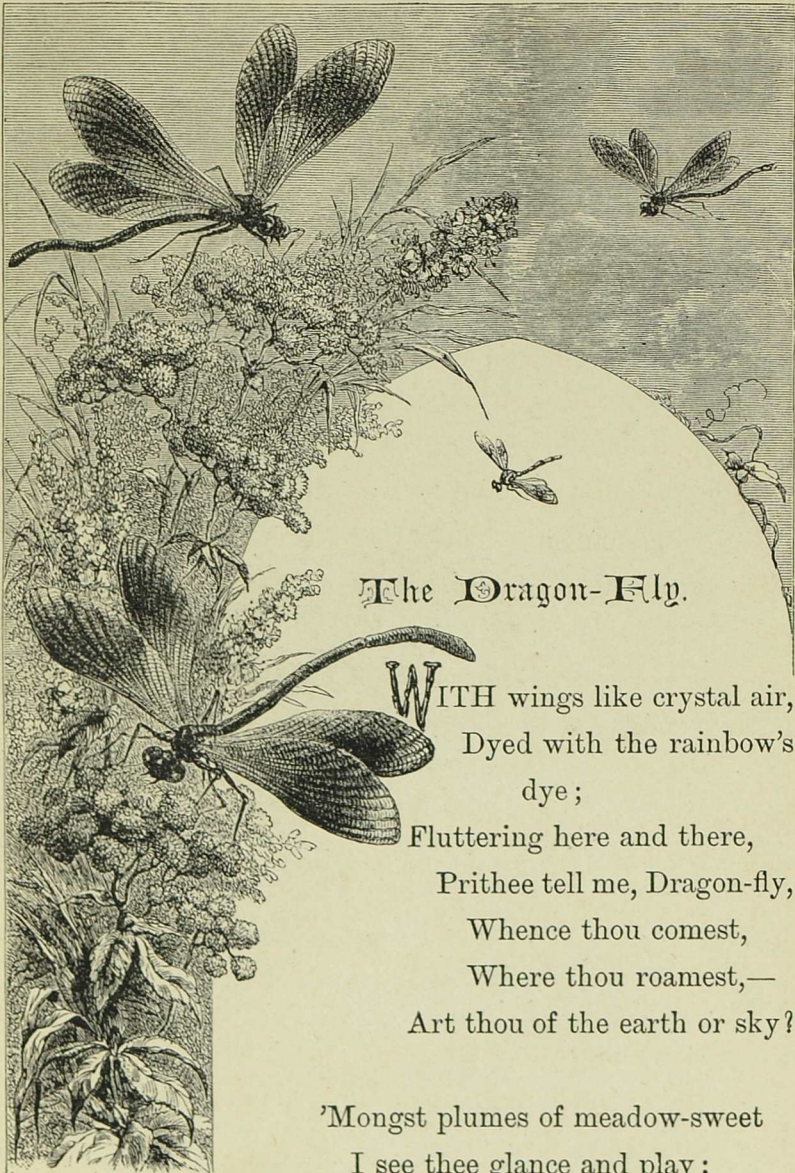
And these old woods, so full of trees, all hollow and decayed,
Must be a perfect paradise, for the Hornet legions made.
Secure from village lads, and from gardeners' watchful eyes,
They may build their paper-nests, and issue for supplies
To orchards or to gardens, for plum, and peach, and pear,—
With wasp, fly, ant, and earwig, they'll have a giant's share.
And you, stout Mr. Sentinel, there standing at the door,
Though Homer said in his time, "The Hornet's soul all
o'er,"—

You're not so *very* spiritual, but soon some sunny morning
I may find you in a green-gage, and give you little warn-
ing;

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 deceives,—
"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!

W. H.



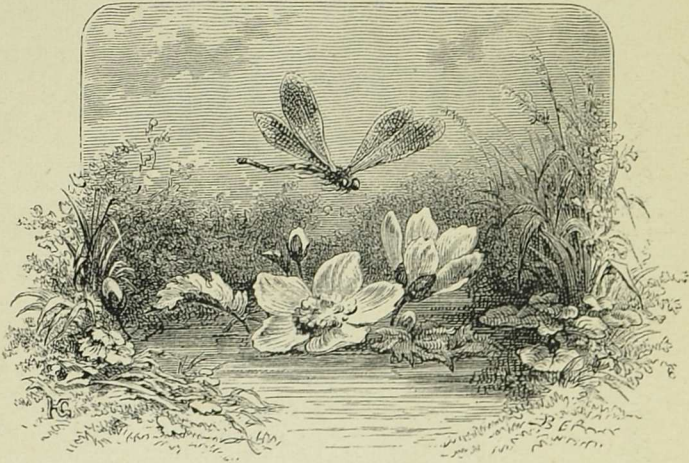
The Dragon-Fly.

WITH wings like crystal air,
Dyed with the rainbow's
dye ;

Fluttering here and there,
Prithee tell me, Dragon-fly,
Whence thou comest,
Where thou roamest,—
Art thou of the earth or sky ?

'Mongst plumes of meadow-sweet
I see thee glance and play ;

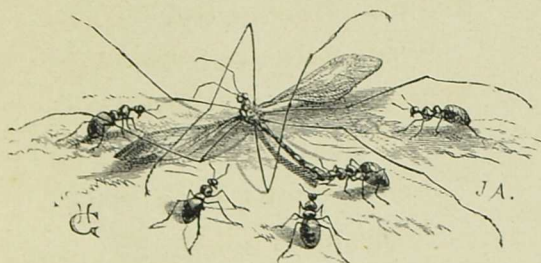
Or light with airy feet
Upon a nodding spray ;
Or sailing slow,
I see thee go
In sunshine far away.

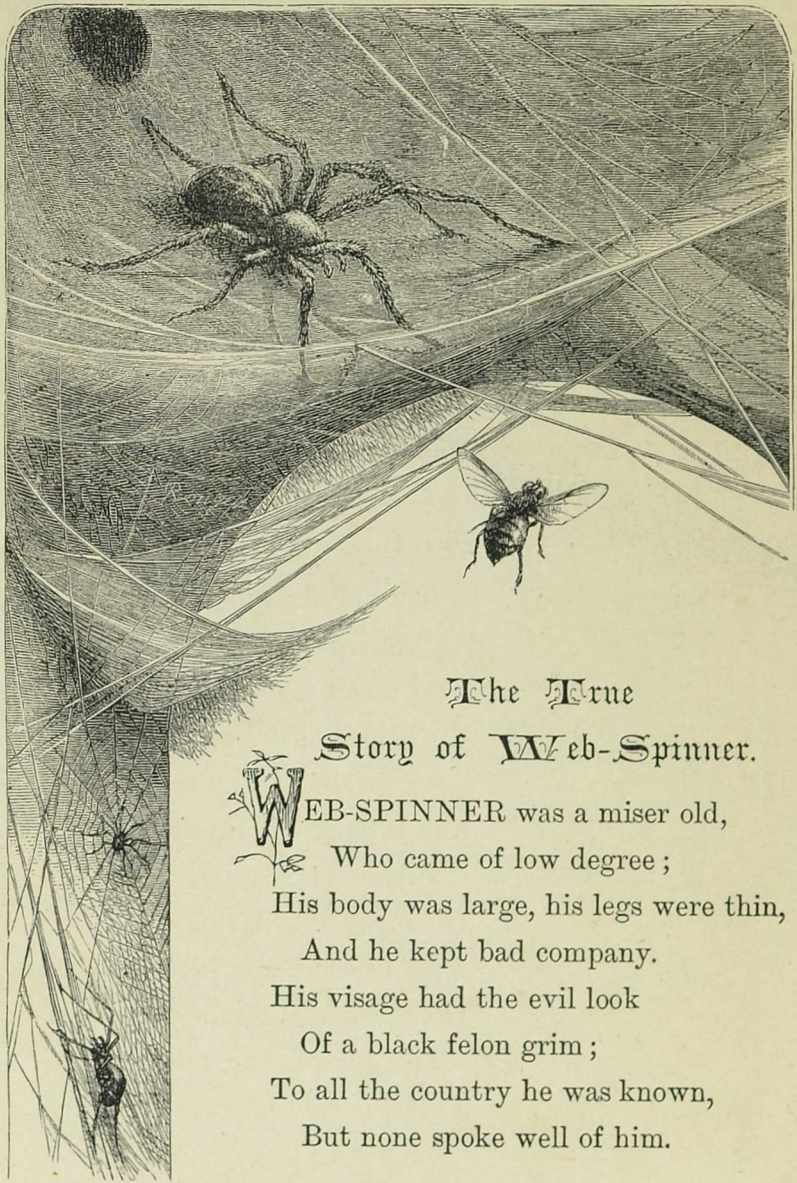


Tell me, prithee, Dragon-fly,
What and whence thou art?
Whether of the earth or sky,
Or of flowers a part?
And who together,
This fine weather,
Put thee, glorious as thou art?

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

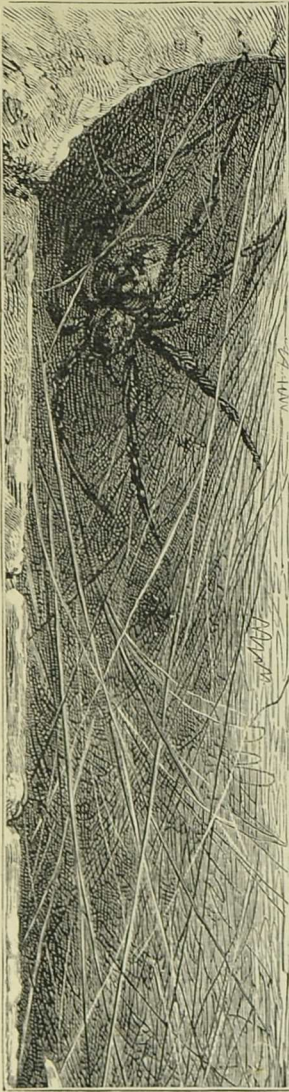
Save for the Eternal Thought,
Bright shape, thou hadst not been :
He from dull matter wrought
Thy purple and thy green ;
And made thee take,
E'en for my sake,
Thy beauty and thy sheen !





The True
Story of Web-Spinner.

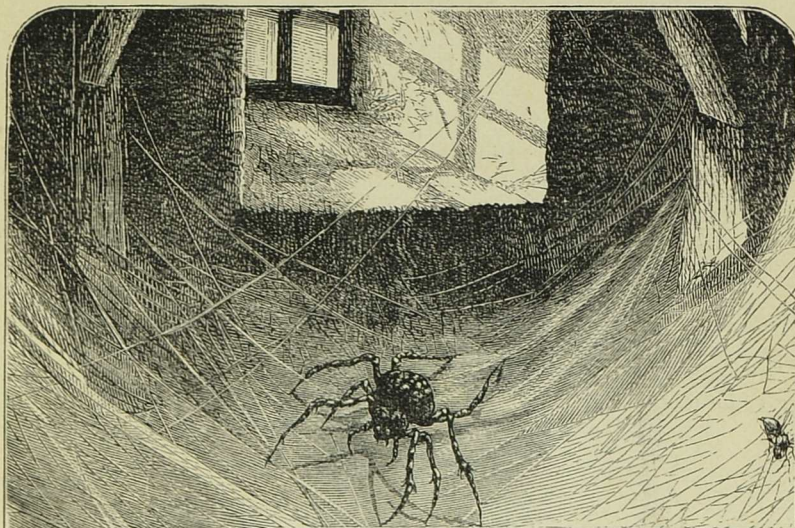
WEB-SPINNER was a miser old,
Who came of low degree ;
His body was large, his legs were thin,
And he kept bad company.
His visage had the evil look
Of a black felon grim ;
To all the country he was known,
But none spoke well of him.



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



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

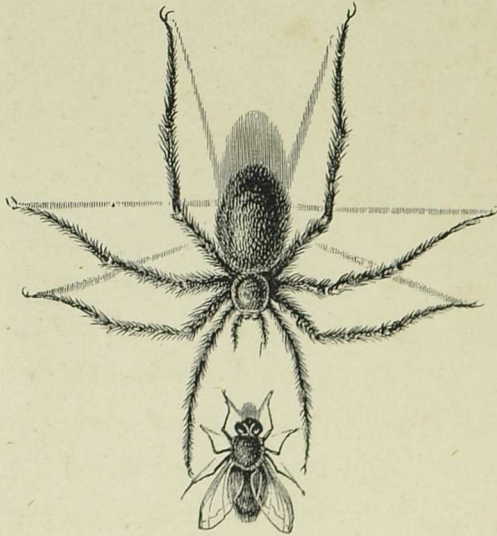


The sport was dull, the day was hot,
The sun was sinking down,
When wearily the baron rode
Into the dusty town.

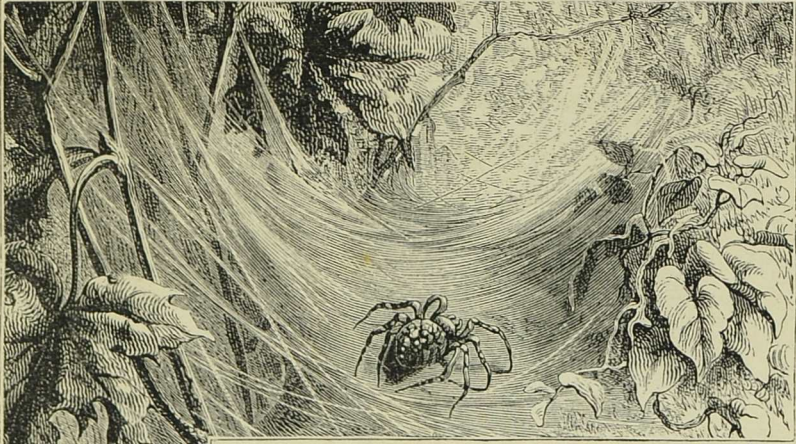
Says he, "I'll ask a lodging
At the first house I come to ;"
With that the gate of Web-Spinner
Came suddenly in view.

Loud was the knock the baron gave,—
Down came the churl with glee :
Says Bluebottle, " Good sir, to-night
I ask your courtesy ;

I'm wearied with a long day's chase,
My friends are far behind."
"You may need them all," said Web-Spinner,
"It runneth in my mind."



"A baron am I," said Bluebottle ;
"From a foreign land I come."
"I thought as much," said Web-Spinner,
"For wise men stay at home !"
Says the baron, "Churl, what meaneth this?
I defy you, villain base !"

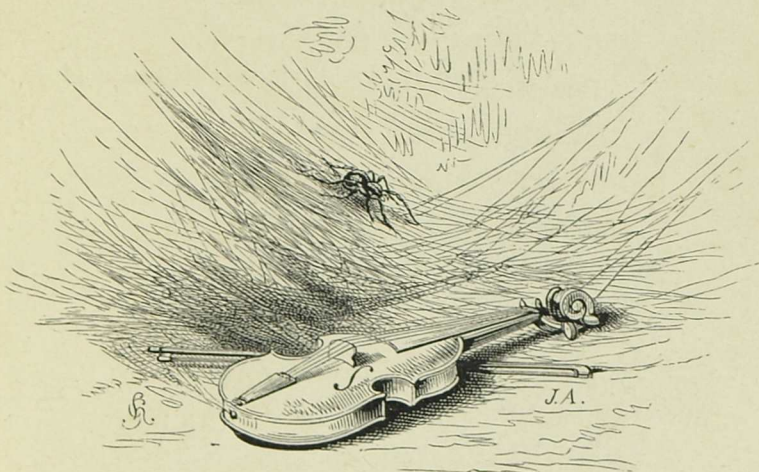


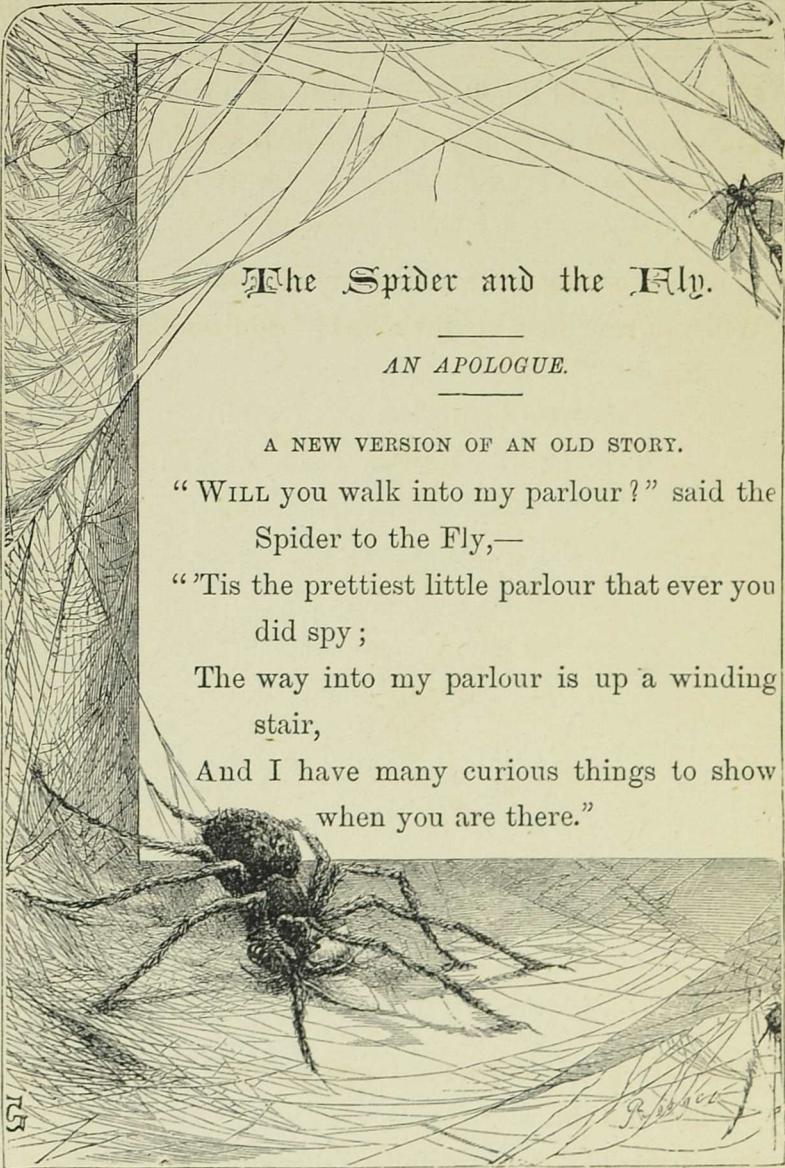
And he wished the while with all his heart
 He were safely from the place.
 Web-Spinner ran and locked the door,
 And a loud laugh laughèd he ;
 With that each one on the other sprang,
 And they wrestled furiously.
 The baron was a man of might,
 A swordsman of renown ;
 But the miser had the stronger arm,
 And kept the baron down ;
 Then out he took a little cord
 From a pocket at his side,
 And with many a crafty, cruel knot
 His hands and feet he tied ;



And bound him down unto the floor,
And said in savage jest,
“ There’s heavy work in store for you,
So, baron, take your rest !”
Then up and down his house he went,
Arranging dish and platter,
With a dull and heavy countenance,
As if nothing were the matter.
At length he seized on Bluebottle,
That strong and burly man,
And with many and many a desperate tug
To hoist him up began :
And step by step, and step by step,
He went, with heavy tread ;
But ere he reached the garret door
Poor Bluebottle was dead !
Now all this while a magistrate,
Who lived in the house hard by,
Had watched Web-Spinner’s evil deeds
Through a window privily ;
So in he bursts, through bolts and bars,
With a loud and thundering sound,
And vows to burn the house with fire,
And level it with the ground ;

But the wicked churl, who all his life
Had looked for such a day,
Passed through a trap-door in the wall,
And took himself away.
But where he went no man could tell ;
'Twas said that under-ground
He died a miserable death,
But his body ne'er was found.
They pulled his house down, stick and stone ;
“ For a caitiff vile as he,”
Said they, “ within our quiet town
Shall not a dweller be !”





The Spider and the Fly.

AN APOLOGUE.

A NEW VERSION OF AN OLD STORY.

“WILL you walk into my parlour?” said the
Spider to the Fly,—

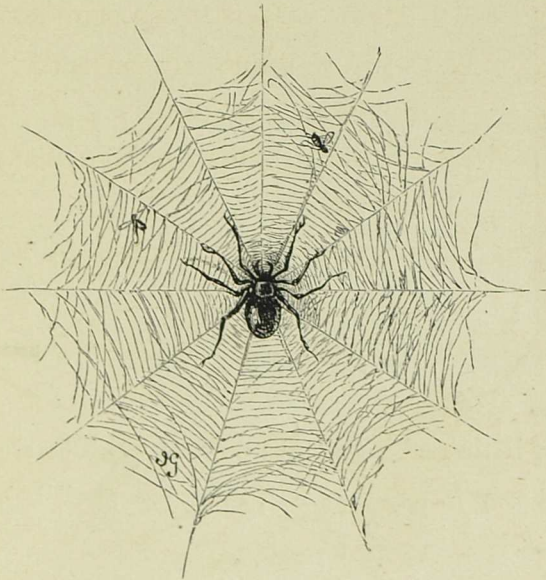
“’Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you
did spy ;

The way into my parlour is up a winding
stair,

And I have many curious things to show
when you are there.”

“ Oh no, no,” said the little Fly ; “ to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down
again.”

“ I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high ;
Will you rest upon my little bed ? ” said the Spider to the
Fly.



“ There are pretty curtains drawn around ; the sheets are
fine and thin ;
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in ! ”

“Oh no, no,” said the little Fly; “for I’ve often heard it said,
They never, never wake again who sleep upon your bed!”

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, “Dear friend, what
can I do

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

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

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

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

“Sweet creature!” said the Spider, “you’re witty and you’re
wise;

How handsomé are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are
your eyes!

I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour-shelf,—

If you’ll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold your-
self.”

“I thank you, gentle sir,” she said, “for what you’re pleased
to say,

And bidding you good-morning now, I’ll call another day.”

The Spider turned him round about, and went into his
den,

For well he knew the silly Fly would soon come back
again :

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

Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing,—
“Come hither, hither, pretty Fly with the pearl and silver
wing ;

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

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

Alas, alas ! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by ;

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

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

Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing !

At last

Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.

He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out again !

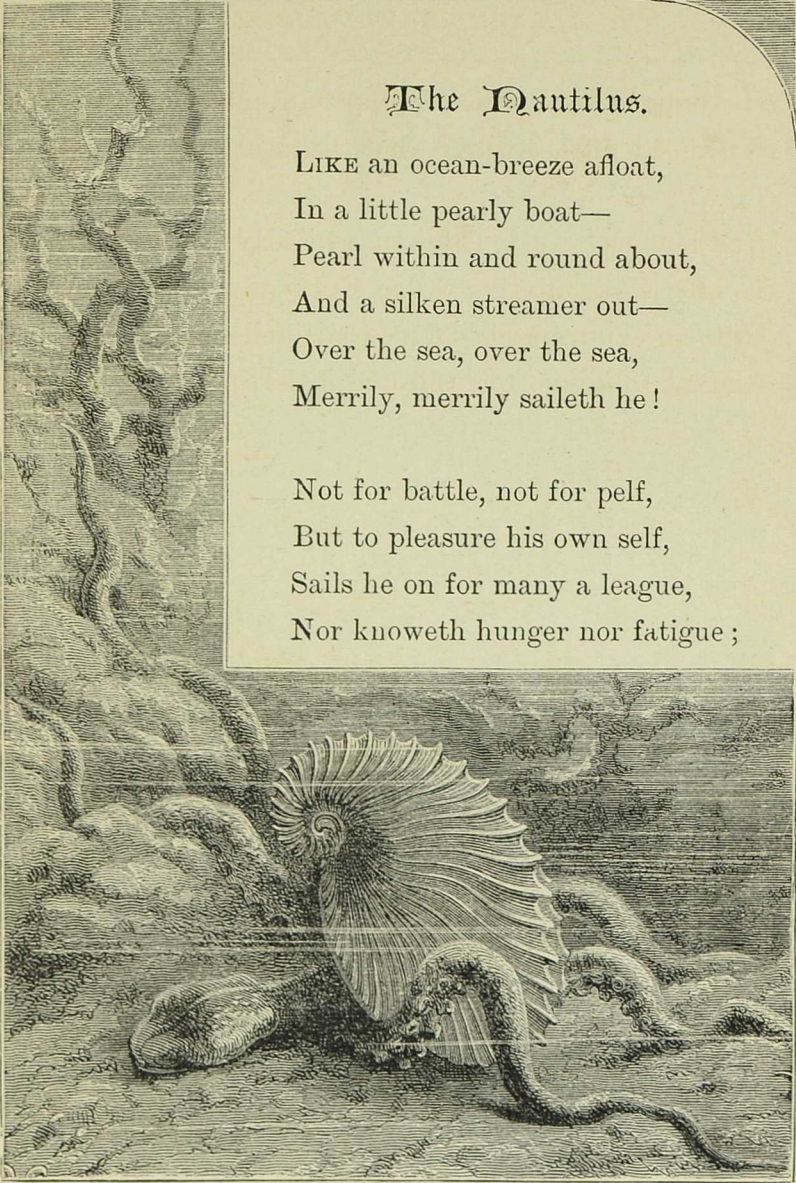
And now, dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words, I pray you, ne'er give heed:
Unto an evil counsellor close heart and ear and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale of the Spider and the Fly.



The Nautilus.

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

Not for battle, not for pelf,
But to pleasure his own self,
Sails he on for many a league,
Nor knoweth hunger nor fatigue;



Past many a rock, past many a shore,
Nor shifts a sail, nor lifts an oar :
Oh ! the joy of sailing thus,
Like a brave old Nautilus !

Much doth know the Northern whaler ;
More the great Pacific sailor ;
And Phœnicians, old and gray,
In old times knew more than they ;
But, O daring voyager small,
More thou knowest than they all !

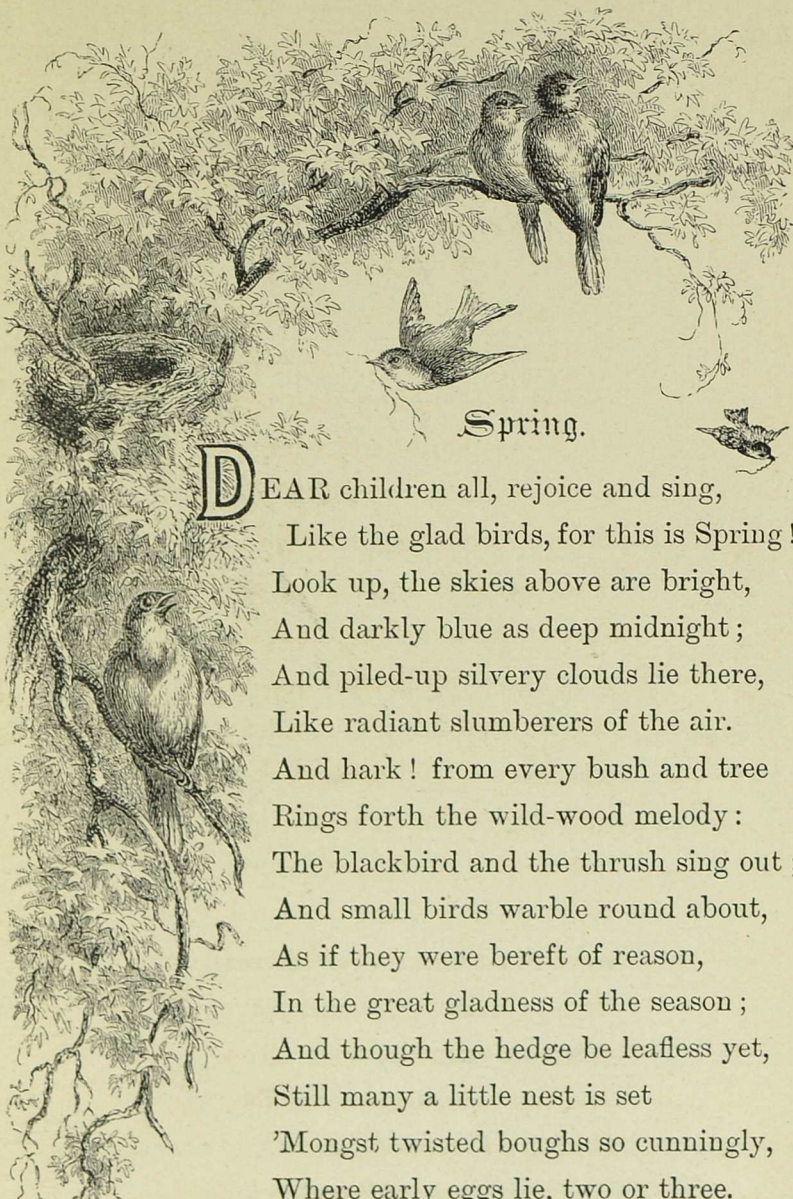
Thou didst laugh at sun and breeze,
On the new-created seas :
Thou wast with the dragon broods
In the old sea-solitudes,
Sailing in the new-made light
With the stony ammonite !
Didst survive the awful shock
That turned the ocean-bed to rock ;
And changed its myriad living swarms
To the marble's veined forms—
Fossil-scrolls that tell of change
Sudden, terrible, and strange !

Thou wast there!—thy little boat,
Airy voyager, kept afloat
O'er the waters wild and dismal,
O'er the yawning gulfs abysmal ;



Amid wreck and overturning,
Rock-imbedding, heaving, burning—
'Mid the tumult and the stir,
Thou, most ancient mariner !
In that pearly boat of thine,
Sat'st upon the troubled brine !

Then thou saw'st the settling ocean
Calming from its wild commotion,
And, less mighty than the first,
Forth a new creation burst !
Saw'st each crested billow rife
With ten thousand forms of life ;
Saw'st the budding sea-weed grow
In the tranquil depths below,
And within the ocean-mines
Hourly branching corallines.
Thou didst know the sea, ere man
His first timid voyage began—
All the world hadst sailed about
Ere he America found out ;
Ere Ulysses and his men
Sailed for Ithaca again ;
Ere among the isles of Greece
Went Jason for the Golden Fleece.
Thou wast sailing o'er the sea,
Brave old voyager ! merrily,
Whilst within the forest grew
The tree which made the first canoe.
Daring circumnavigator,
Would thou wert thine own narrator !



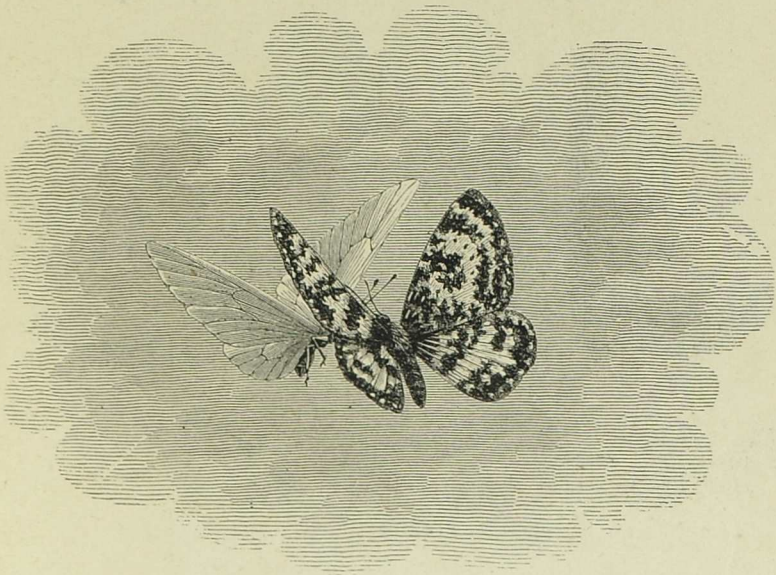
Spring.

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



And hark ! those rooks the trees among,
Feeding their never-silent young ;
A pleasant din it is, that calls
The fancy to ancestral halls.
But hush ! from out that warm wood-side,
I hear a voice that ringeth wide—

Oh, joyful Spring's sweet minstrel, hail!
It is indeed the nightingale,
Loud singing in the morning clear,
As poets ever love to hear!



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



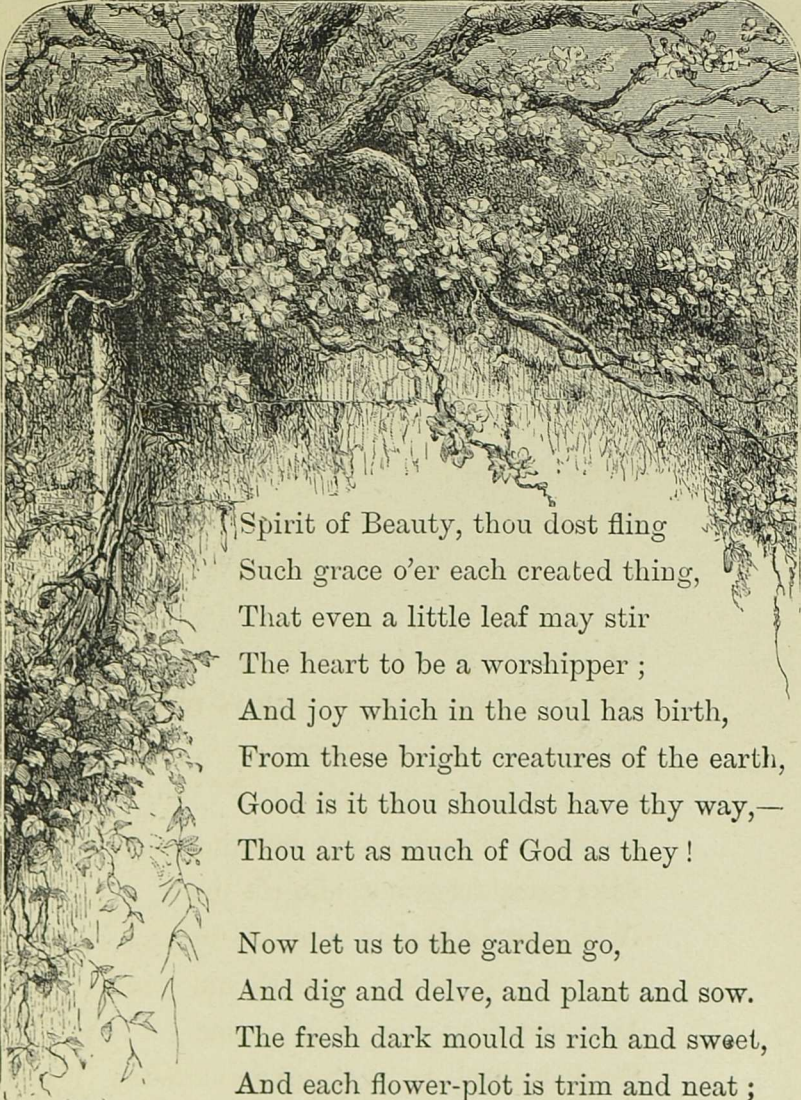
See there! the waving butterfly,
With starting motion fluttering by,
From leaf to leaf, from spray to spray,
A thing whose life is holiday.
The little rabbits, too, are out ;
And leverets skipping all about ;
And squirrels, peeping from their trees,
A-start at every vagrant breeze ;—
For life, in the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

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



Peering their broad green leaves all through,
In odorous thousands, white and blue ;
And the broad dandelion's blaze,
Bright as the sun of summer days ;
And in the woods, beneath the green
Of budding trees, are brightly seen
The nodding blue-bell's graceful flowers—
The hyacinth of this land of ours—
As fair as any flower that blows ;
And here the white stellaria grows,—

Like Una with her gentle grace,
Shining out in a shady place ;
And here on open slopes we see
The lightly-set anemone ;
Here, too, the spotted arum green,
A hooded mystery, is seen ;
And in the turfy meadows shine
White saxifrage and cardamine ;
And acres of the crocus make
A lustre like a purple lake.
And overhead how nobly towers
The chestnut, with its waxen flowers,
And broad green leaves, which wide
expand,
Like to a giant's open hand !
Beside you blooms the hawthorn free ;
And yonder the wild cherry-tree,
The fairy-lady of the wood ;
And there the sycamore's bursting bud,
The Spanish chestnut, and the lime,
Those trees of flowery summer-time.
Look up ! the leaves are fresh and green,
And every branching vein is seen
Through their almost transparent sheen.



Spirit of Beauty, thou dost fling
 Such grace o'er each created thing,
 That even a little leaf may stir
 The heart to be a worshipper ;
 And joy which in the soul has birth,
 From these bright creatures of the earth,
 Good is it thou shouldst have thy way,—
 Thou art as much of God as they !

Now let us to the garden go,
 And dig and delve, and plant and sow.
 The fresh dark mould is rich and sweet,
 And each flower-plot is trim and neat ;

And daffodil and primrose see,
And many-hued anemone,
As full of flower as they can be ;
And here the hyacinth sweetly pale,
Recalling some old Grecian tale ;
And here the mild narcissus too ;
And every flower of every hue
Which the glad season sends, is here ;
The almond, whilst its branch is sere,
With myriad blossoms beautified,
As pink as the sea-shell's inside ;
And, under the warm cottage-eaves,
Amongst its clustered, budding leaves,
Shines out the pear-tree's flowers of snow,
As white as any flowers that grow ;
And budding is the southern vine,
And apricot and nectarine ;
And plum-trees in the garden warm,
And damsons round the cottage farm,
Like snow-showers shed upon the trees,
And, like them, shaken by the breeze.

Dear ones ! 'tis now the time that ye
Sit down with zeal to botany ;

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

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



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-branch'd,
And all their vein'd leaves ;
From little birds that madly sing ;
From insects fluttering on the wing ;
Ay, from the very meanest thing,
My spirit joy receives.



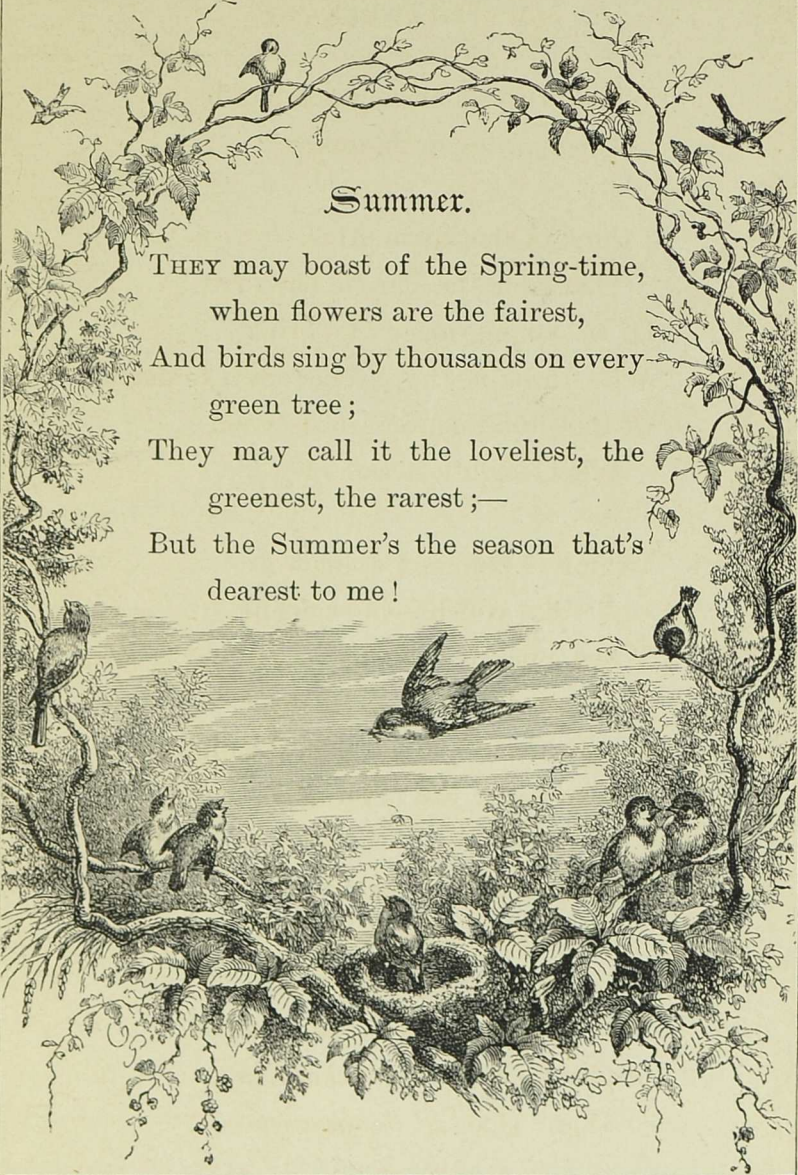
I think of angel-voices
When the birds' songs I hear ;
Of that celestial city, bright
With jacinth, gold, and chrysolite,

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 !*

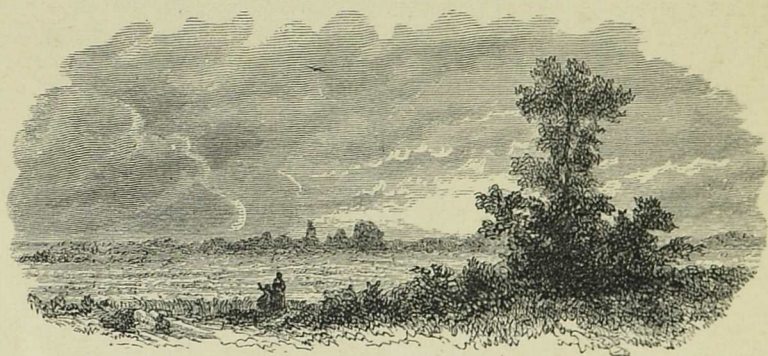


Summer.

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 ;—

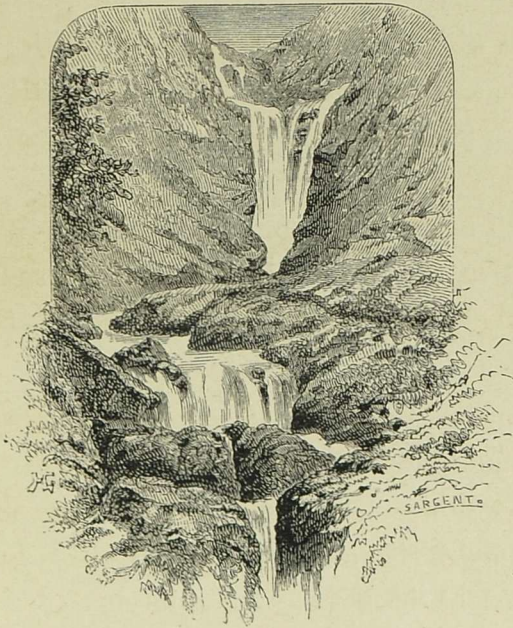
But the Summer's the season that's
dearest to me !



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 greenwood ! 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 !



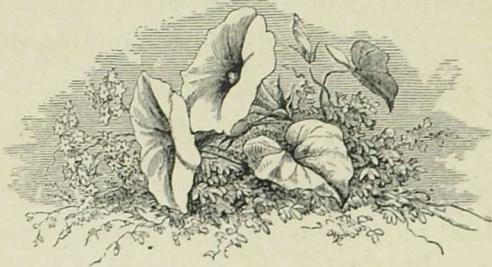
Then the mountains, how fair! to the blue vault of heaven
Towering up in the sunshine, and drinking the light;
While adown their deep chasms, all splintered and riven,
Fall the far-gleaming cataracts, silvery white!

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?

And 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.

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 greenwoods and mountains, for meadows and bowers,
For waters, and fruits, and for flowers the rarest,
And for bright shining butterflies lovely as flowers !

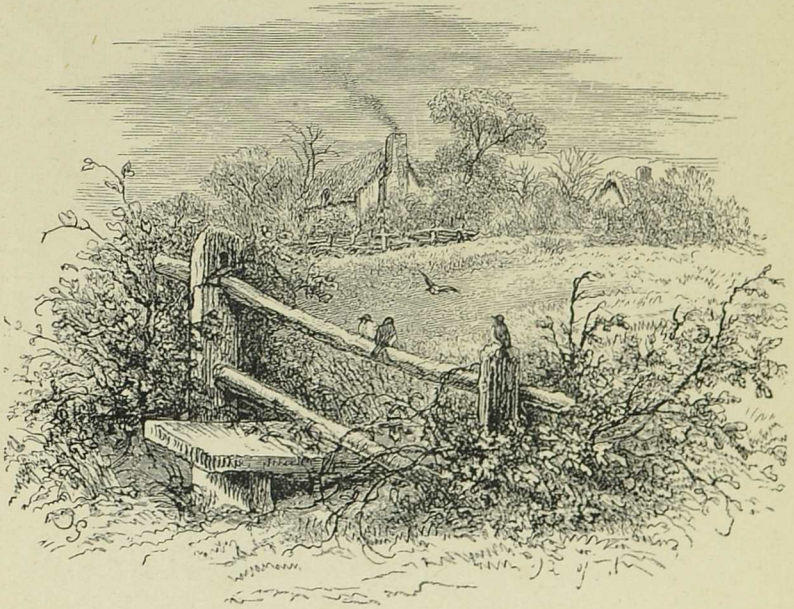




The Months.

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

Wet February next comes by,
With chill damp earth and dripping sky ;



But, heart, cheer up! the days speed on ;
Winds blow, suns shine, and thaws are gone ;
And in the garden may be seen
Upspringing flowers and buddings green.

March—ha! he comes like March of old,
A blustering, cordial friend and bold!
He calls the peasant to his toil,
And trims with him the wholesome soil.



Flocks multiply ; the seed is sown,—
Its increase is of Heaven alone!

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

The winter now is gone and past,
And flowery May advances fast;
Birds sing, rains fall, and sunshine glows,
Till the rich earth with joy o'erflows!
O Lord, who hast so crowned the spring,
We bless Thee for each gracious thing!

Come on, come on! 'tis summer-time,
The golden year is in its prime!
June speeds along 'midst flowers and dews,
Rainbows, clear skies, and sunset hues;
And hark the cuckoo! and the blithe
Low ringing of the early scythe!

The year is full! 'tis bright July,
And God in thunder passeth by!
Far in the fields till close of day
The peasant people make the hay;
And darker grows the forest bough,
And singing birds are silent now.

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



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

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

The summer-time is ended now,
And autumn tinteth every bough ;

The days are bright, the air is still,
October's mists are on the hill;
Down droops the fern, and fades the heather,
And thistle-down floats like a feather.

Dark on the earth November lies;
Cloud, fog, and storm o'ergloom the skies;
The matted leaves lie 'neath our tread,
And hollow winds wail overhead;
Pile up the hearth,—its heartsome blaze
Cheers, like a sun, the darkest days!

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

