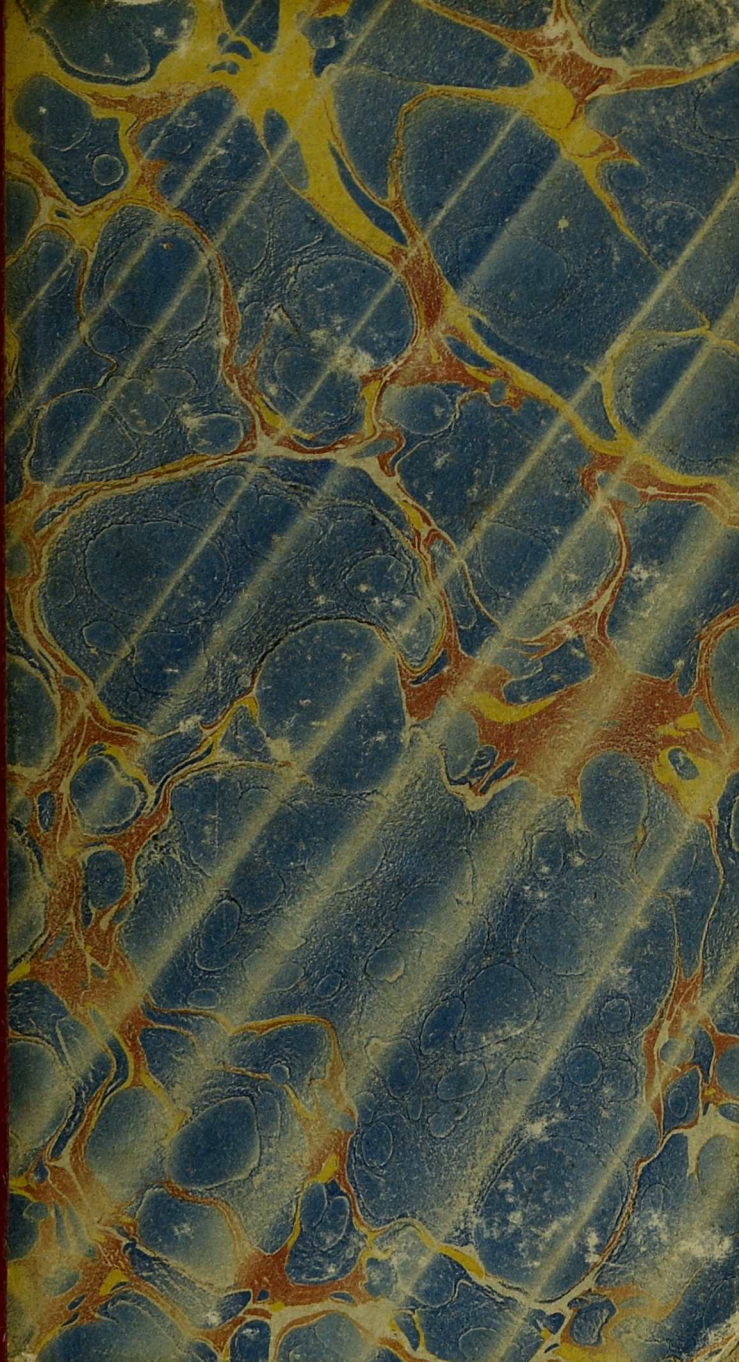

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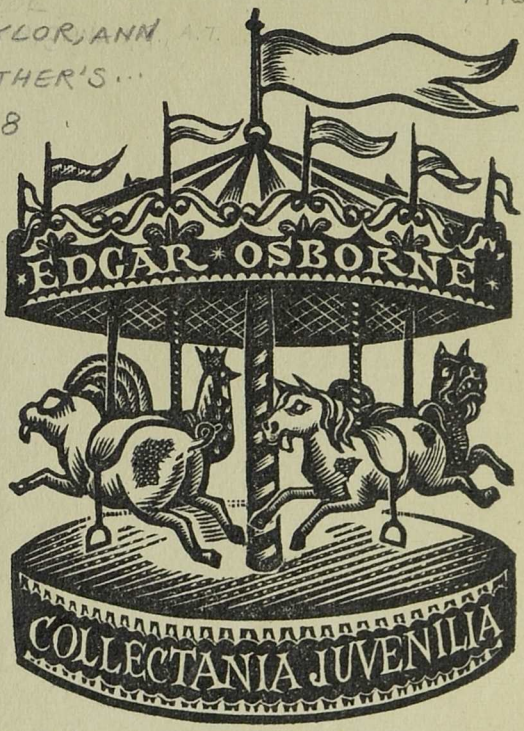

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MABEL OSBORNE

FRONTISPIECE TO MOTHER'S FABLES.

The conceited young Owl.

see Page 55

THE

MOTHER'S FABLES,

IN VERSE.

DESIGNED,

THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF AMUSEMENT,

TO CONVEY TO

THE MINDS OF CHILDREN

SOME USEFUL PRECEPTS OF VIRTUE AND BENEVOLENCE.

"Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

London:

PRINTED FOR DARTON, HARVEY, AND DARTON,
GRACECHURCH-STREET.

1818.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The difficulty of bringing home to the understandings of children the moral of a fable, must have been observed by all who have attended to the impression which such compositions usually make on young minds. It is obvious, that their attention and curiosity end with the fable; and the application which follows is irksome to them; its intention, therefore, is lost.

The plan of the author, in the following little volume, is, so to prepare the young reader, that he may, without difficulty, apply the fables himself; for which purpose, each of them is preceded by an introduction, explaining the occasion on which it was delivered, and pointing out the fault intended to be exposed and corrected.

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THE

MOTHER'S FABLES.

1.

THE MIMIC.

MAMMA, I lisp like Lucy Price;—
O! I can take her off so nice:
And nurse, who speaks so odd, you know,
You'd be surpris'd, I mock her so:
And then I say, *vhat*, *vhen*, and *vhy*,
Like Mrs. Scott, so vulgarly;
For, all the while, she cannot tell
But that I'm really speaking well.
But Charles and Rose, they laugh'd outright,
When she was here the other night!

Indeed, my love!—I'm hurt to see
Your cruel trick of mimicry;
I fear you quite forget to do
The same as you'd be done unto;
And when infirmities are mock'd,
I must confess I'm really shock'd.
'Tis so unkind, it makes me fear
There's something bad at heart, my dear.
'Twould give me pain, I can't express,
To think it more than thoughtlessness.
Poor nurse!—you ought to recollect
Her age and kindness with respect;
And Mrs. Scott, when she was young,
Was never taught her mother-tongue,
As you have been,—and yet I know
She'd be too good to treat you so.
'Tis not too late, my dear, to mend,
Or else you'll never have a friend;
And t'would be paying dear for fun,
To be dislik'd by any one.
Perhaps, Sophia never heard
The fable of the Mocking Bird.

The Mocking Bird.

The Mocking Bird *.

THEY tell us that the mocking bird
Sings like the nightingale;
And in the summer nights is heard
In many a pleasant vale.

Yet, not contented with her song,
All other sounds she mocks;
Now growls, to drive the sheep along;
Now screams, to cheat the fox.

There's not a note in all the wood,
But she is sure to hit;
A raven's croak, in murky mood;
A cuckoo or tom-tit.

But (every mimic finds the same)
For all she was so witty,
A single friend she could not name;
She'd neither love nor pity!

* The mocking-bird is possessed, not only of its own natural notes, which are musical and solemn, but it can assume the tone of every other animal in the wood, from the wolf to the raven, and appears to sport itself with leading them astray.

At first she felt too light and vain,
  To think or care about it;
But when in trouble and in pain,
  'Twas sad to do without it.

For, once, a raven heard her try
  To imitate his croaking,
And snapp'd her wing, in passing by,
  To cure her of her joking.

Then many a bitter wail she made,
  And call'd her friends to see;
But no one even turn'd his head,
  For not a friend had she.

At length, she scrambled to her nest,
  Half fainting with exertion;
And many a thing she sat and guess'd,
  T' account for such desertion.

Poor wretched me, what have I done,
  So innocent and merry?
I never rail'd at any one,
  Nor wrong'd him of a berry!

Ah me!—my silly, silly wit,
  Is why I'm thus forsaken;
I thought I was admir'd for it,
  But how I was mistaken!

2.

THE FALSE ALARM.

WHAT dismal screams are those I hear?
Why, Sophy,—is there danger near?
Mamma, I'm scratch'd—my frock is torn,
I've been entangled with a thorn;
In such a place!—you do not know,
The nasty thorns have prick'd me so!
And am I put in this alarm,
Because a hoyden scratch'd her arm?
By such a loud and fearful scream,
I thought you'd fallen in the stream;
And tremble even now, with fear!—
You ought to be asham'd, my dear.
You know, you shriek'd the other day,
When Charles but pinch'd you in his play;
So that our neighbours kindly sent,
To learn the dreadful accident.
Come, dry your tears, and, when you're able,
Attend, and profit by a fable.

The Elephant and Fly.

THE roaring of an elephant was heard one summer day,
So loud and long, that every one was startled with dismay;
And all his friends assembled in the thickest of the wood,
To ask what was the matter, and to help him, if they cou'd.

Oh! sure, they cried, he has become the cruel hunter's spoil,
And now he roars indignantly within their artful toil;
Or has, at last, his callous hide receiv'd the fatal dart,
Which floods some dreary cavern with the life-blood from his heart?

Then fast they hurried onward, though they all were fill'd with fear,
For every one had little doubt that danger must be near;

Yet not a single elephant would cowardly retreat,
Though fearful that a pitfall-wide would open at his feet.

Still would they not forsake their friend, but trotted thro' the wood,
O'er brake, and brier, and bog, and pool, as nimbly as they could;
But when, at last, they found him out, no hunters could they see;
No pitfall had betray'd his steps, and not a wound had he.

His eye was dim and sorrowful, his head was low declin'd,
And, therefore, they conclude at once, there's something on his mind;
And, with a look most pitiful, partaking of his grief,
Enquire if they can sooth him, or administer relief.

Rejoic'd was he to see his friends, and said that they should know
The cause he had for discontent, and why he bellow'd so;

And then he gave a peevish grunt, and look'd so very sad,
That every one prepar'd himself to hear of something bad.

My friends, he cried, I laid me down by yonder river's brink,
And in my dream, I thought myself just stooping down to drink;
But at the very moment, as I panted for the spring,
The largest fly you ever saw awoke me with his sting!

They stamp'd with indignation, and their bosoms burn'd with rage,
And every one seem'd half inclin'd a civil war to wage;
But feeling that beneath them, they departed with a sneer,
And vow'd they'd never mind him, if he roar'd for half a year!

3.

THE SELF-CONCEITED LITTLE MAN.

If I were king, and I could rule,
I'd not go back again to school.
Mamma, I've read my books all through,
And now I must have something new;
I know them almost all by heart,
And think that's plenty, for my part.
Sometimes I make the scholars stare,
For I know more than any there.
To hear some read, you'd think 'twas Dutch,
And even master don't know much!
I only wish I might have gone
To Eaton school, with cousin John;
For here, as far as I can see,
There's nothing more that's fit for me.

Well, Edward, then I do suppose
Your education here must close,
Since you're beyond your master's reach,
And nothing's left for him to teach.
But, Edward,—if you did but know,
'Tis ignorance persuades you so!

For else you never could pretend,
To be almost too wise to mend.
What if you've read your lessons through,
Is nothing good but what is new?
O! Edward, hide that foolish face,
And from a fable learn your place.

The Partridge and her Young.

THE corn was chang'd to yellow red,
The winds of autumn wav'd its head;
A field there was, where thick it stood,
And shelter'd many a feather'd brood.

While round about the sky-lark sung,
A partridge there had rear'd her young;
And being of her children vain,
She lov'd to see them in her train.

They now could make their pinions sound,
And flutter'd fast along the ground;
And strove to fly, or swiftly rac'd,
Or thro' the corn each other chas'd.

The Partridge & her Young.

The eldest, stronger than the rest,
Was often straying from the nest;
For birds of spirit could not bear,
So much, he said, of mother's care.

He soon disdain'd, in self-conceit,
To ramble only in the wheat;
The field he knew at every turn,
And nothing fresh was left to learn.

He now should like to try the air,
And join the cheerful parties there;
He sure had strength enough to fly,
And wings to bear him thro' the sky.

He flaps them oft, and longs to find
His little brothers left behind;
And thinks within himself, that he
A monstrous clever bird must be!

One day, upon a rising ground,
With all the nestlings gather'd round,
He bade them see to what a height
He's able now to take a flight.

And then, a yard or two he flies,
Exciting wonder and surprise;
His little breast with triumph glows,
At every foot he higher goes.

At length, assisted by the breeze,
He's borne aloft above the trees,
With eager joy he struggles long,
And beats his pinions fast and strong.

The breeze is brisk, as brisk can be,—
But now it sinks, and so does he;
Now, round and round he flutters fast,
And tumbles over-head at last.

The others, who with wondering eyes,
Had watch'd their brother in the skies,
Now reach the place, where, almost dying,
He mourns his self-conceit in flying.

For my presumption, now you see
What sad misfortune's come on me;
Do you my pride and folly shun,
And be content awhile, to run.

O! do not even fly in play,
Until our mother says you may;
She would not keep us to the nest,
Unless she knew that it was best.

Tell her, I promise, if I live,
And she my folly will forgive,
To be content, and not to try,
Till she has taught me how to fly.

4.

A VAIN LITTLE GIRL.

MAMMA, I thought the other day,
'Twas strange Miss Audley did not play;
It seems to me a foolish thing,
She does not even learn to sing!
Dear me! how awkward she must feel;
She can't, you know, be thought genteel:
'Tis well enough for poor Miss Waters,
But not for better people's daughters.

My dear, I really blush to see
Your ignorance and vanity!
Miss Audley's father is a man
Who goes upon a better plan,
And seeks those lessons to impart,
That form the mind, and mend the heart.
To make her good, is his intent,
Without much show and ornament.
Indeed, I see myself, with pain,
It often makes young people vain;
And fonder of a little show,
Than all the things they ought to know:

And really, I'm concern'd to hear
Miss Waters treated so, my dear;
She has a useful education,
Becoming to her proper station;
And is a child that I admire,
Much more than some a great deal higher.
I only wish that you may be
But half as excellent as she;
And then, I should but little care,
To find you could not play an air.

The Grasshopper and the Silkworm.

A GRASSHOPPER, so pert and vain,
To her companions would complain,
How ungenteel were they;
'Tis only she that sweetly sings,
For all the rest are poor dull things,
Who neither sing nor play!

She ridicul'd the Bee, her neighbour,
For his incessant toil and labour,
For ever on the wing!

By far too busy in his shop,
To learn the fashionable hop;
Poor common, vulgar thing!

There's Spider, with his look of gloom,
Sits like a weaver at his loom,
With manners just as low;
Now, if he'd come and learn of me,
Soon all the fashion he should be,
And quite the garden beau.

Yet, do not say I love to rail,
For as to honest neighbour Snail,
I quite admire her knack;
For if she ever likes to roam,
Poor dear, instead of leaving home,
She brings it on her back!

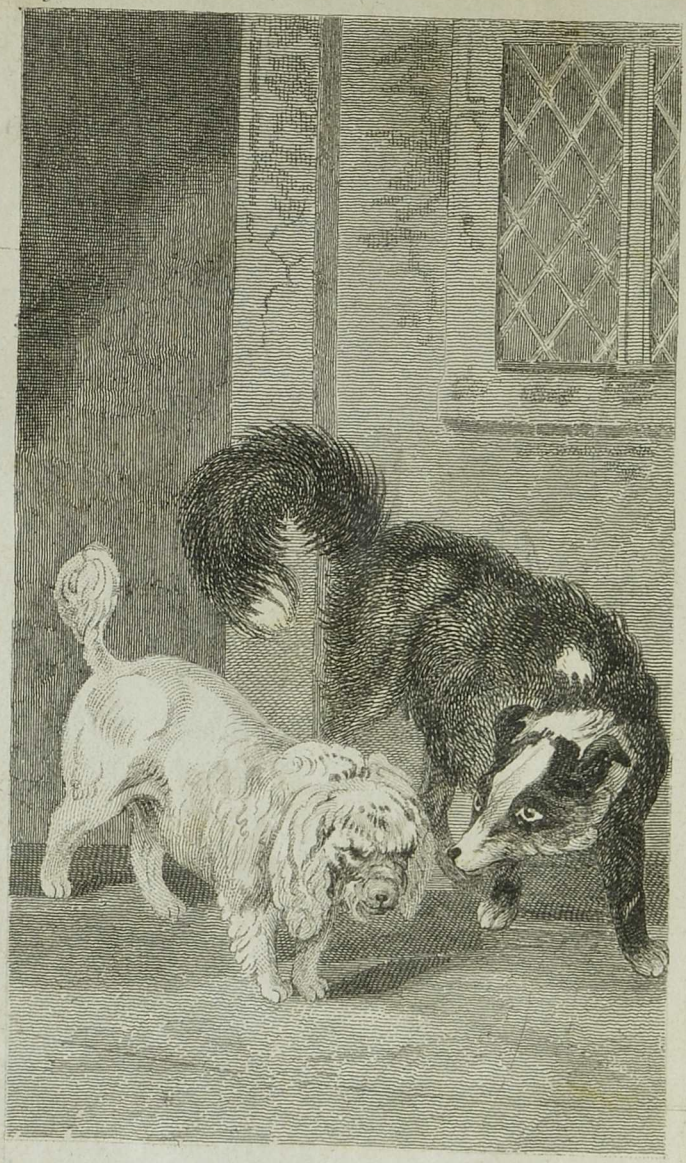
Thus prated on, this pert Grasshopper,
Until a Silkworm deign'd to stop her,
And just left off to say:
So, madam, we then have no taste,
Because our lives we will not waste,
And throw our time away!

You lady of accomplishment,
Who think that life is wisely spent
To learn a fiddler's skill;
When those light limbs have lost their spring,
And you can neither dance nor sing,
You'll find you've chosen ill.

5.

ROSE IS LAZY.

O! Rose, for shame! what, just awake!
Why not your sister's walk partake?
She's been, she says, a lovely way,
And looks so rosy and so gay!
Your maid has call'd you, but I find,
You did not care, and would not mind!
I'm not surpris'd you're weak and faint,
But who will pity your complaint?
Yawning and listless all the day,
You've hardly spirits for your play;
But do not wonder at disease,
After such lazy fits as these.



Shock & Doctor Chanticleer.

Besides, my dear, it is a crime
To waste a moment of our time.
But come, a lesson you shall hear,
From Shock and Doctor Chanticleer.

Shock and Doctor Chanticleer.

A LAP-DOG on a cushion lay,
And there he slumber'd all the day;
From early morn, 'till closing night,
To slumber there was his delight.
Yet, far from quiet rest was he;
He had one mortal enemy;
Hard by, a noisy dunghill cock,
Disturb'd the peace of pamper'd Shock.
If now he sinks to short repose,
He's soon awaken'd from his doze,
For Chanticleer, with sudden screams,
Disturbs his sleep, and spoils his dreams.
At length, his patience being gone,
He put a look of courage on:
And, though he felt the labour hard,
Resolv'd to travel to the yard,

To find his foe, and to protest,
He could not bear such broken rest.
But when he reach'd the garden gate,
Poor Shock was in a dismal state;
Another step he could not stir!
But met the friendly kitchen cur,
Who begg'd to know, from what disaster,
His cousin Shock could move no faster.

Poor cousin Shock with pain replied,
Alas! I thought I should have died!
I cannot tell you my complaint,
But constantly I'm sick and faint;
And feel so dreadfully oppress'd,
I fear there's water in my chest.

The cur had got a tender heart,
And in his sorrows took a part;
Some ugly symptoms made him fear
He needed Doctor Chanticleer:
One who, said he, has studied hard,
And lectures gratis in the yard;
Chief wrangler, once, at Barn-door college,
And fam'd for equal skill and knowledge.
He's moderate too,—I paid my fees
In broken bread and rinds of cheese.

What, Chanticleer! cried Shock,—not I,
There's nothing else I would not try;
But really, cousin, I'm too weak
To hear that barb'rous fellow speak;
Such nerves as mine, that scarce can bear
The whistle of a key-hole air,
Would suffer so, that he could never
Cure me, if he were twice as clever!
Indeed, I've ground for what I say,
'Tis he that scares my sleep away;
Till, every time I hear him crowing,
I feel as if my life were going.

Why I was once as bad as you,
Replied the cur, and weaker too;
By day or night I could not rest,
With just that fullness in my chest;
And now you'd not have seen me here,
Except for Doctor Chanticleer.
He seem'd to understand my case,
The moment that he saw my face;
And said, I was advancing far
In what they term a plethora.
Good living, and the kitchen air,
Are more, said he, than you can bear;
To-morrow, when you hear me crow,
About the time of morning glow,

You must not mind a little pain,
But rise, and hie you to the lane;
Then up the hill, and underneath
The shrubbery walk, to Rushmere-heath,
And where nine elms are in a ring,
You'll find, at last, a wholesome spring;
A water this, of wondrous power,
Drank fasting, at an early hour.

'Twas but a simple remedy,
And so I thought it wise to try;
And after once or twice attending,
I felt convinc'd that I was mending.
No longer dainty, I could eat
A crust of bread, as well as meat;
And now my looks are quite enough,
To recommend this Doctor's stuff.

Alas! cried Shock, my case is hard,
You see, I scarce can reach the yard;
And yet I think 'twould do me good
To taste the spring at Nine-elm wood.

Well, cried his kind, obliging friend,
To-morrow morning I'll attend,
And do as much as in me lies,
At early dawn, to make you rise.

He kept his word, and Shock and he
Went every morn in company.
'Tis true the air was keen ;—'tis true,
That underfoot 'twas wet with dew ;
That when his thirst he came to slake;
It was so cold it made him shake ;
And if his cousin had not laugh'd,
He might, perhaps, have left his draught ;
But finding soon that he was better,
He thought himself the Doctor's debtor ;
And, like a dog of sense and feeling,
Resolv'd to own his skill in healing;
To fee him handsomely, and dwell
Upon the wonders of his well.

The Doctor shook his head, and smil'd,
To see his patient so beguil'd:
My friend, he cried, I'm glad to hear
You've had the sense to persevere;
But that is no uncommon spring;
You wonder,—but 'tis no such thing.
The charm that in the water lies,
Is, that it gives you exercise ;
You owe the cure of your diseases,
To early hours, and morning breezes!

6.

CHARITY WITHOUT CHARITY.

MAMMA, I've spent my money now,
And need not fear to tell you how:
I am not like some girls and boys,
Who waste it all in cakes and toys;
No, no,—'tis different with me,
I've laid it out in charity.
As soon as aunt has heard about it,
She will not leave me long without it;
I'm very sure, she'll give me more
Than ever she has done before.

Sophy, is that the reason, pray,
That makes you love to give away?
If so, the action you have done
Is far from a praiseworthy one.
The Bible bids us give, and then
Not hope for any thing again:
'Tis good the poor to clothe and feed,
But such a motive spoils the deed;
And God, who understands your thought,
Sets all your goodness down for nought.
I think, to you may be applied
The fable of the Honey-guide.

*The Honey-guide**.

COME, while a boasting bird
  Spreads his own praise;
Like it was never heard,
  Mark what he says.

When you, in forest wide,
  Seek the sweet food,
I am your Honey-guide,
  Through the thick wood.

Hunters, that follow me,
  Watch for my cry;
After the Honey-bee
  Always I fly.

* The Indicator, or Honey-guide, is a native of Africa. It has received its name from the Dutch settlers, on account of its discovering wild-honey, which is its favourite food. The morning and evening are its times of feeding, when it is heard calling, in a shrill tone, *cheer*, *cheer*, which the hunters carefully attend to as a summons, and usually reward it with a small share of the spoil.

What I might eat alone,
Then I resign!
Pray, who has ever shown
Goodness like mine.

Stop, stop, a Parrot cries,
Listen to me;
Where the real motive lies,
First let us see.

If you for man endure,
Labour and toil,
You have forgotten, sure,
Who shares the spoil.

7.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT.

WHAT! have not you a word to say,
About your visit yesterday?—
Well,—by your silence, I conclude,
You thought the little party rude;

And did not wish to say a word,
About the quarrelling you heard.

'Tis strange that children, when they meet,
Are so delighted with the treat,
And yet, can take such little care
In playing, to be kind and fair.
The proud command the rest about;
The fretful tease; the sulky pout;
The greedy scramble for the cake,
For fear the others should partake;
The passionate are quickly fir'd,
And then, they quarrel till they're tir'd!
The squabble that last night fell out,
Reminds me of Grimalkin's rout;
Which, as you both behav'd so well,
I'll now, for your amusement, tell.

Cats and Dogs.

'Twas on a moon-light, Grimalkin's rout
Display'd a fine set out;
For puss had thought it good,
Among the neighbourhood,
Her cards to send about;

And cat and dog of ton, that liv'd around,
Had each a card, and courteous welcome found.
Happy, happy how they fare!
None but the ton!
None but the ton!
None but the ton, that night, were there!

Grimalkin foremost shone,
With whiskers long and thin;
And softly purr'd at every one,
As cat or dog was usher'd in.
And now, together, in a social crowd,
Some whisper, some talk loud,
Of this cat's ermine fur;
The beauty of that cur,
Who holds his tail so proud:
Here puppies, mix'd with kittens, well agree,
Those bark *bons mots*,—these mew the repartee.
Sometimes they ey'd
Their friends aside;
Sir Sandy's waistcoat—Mrs. Tabby's spot:
Miss Sleek appears,—
What taper ears!
I wonder where that dainty skin she got!
See now they play,
And frisk away;

In a race,
How they chase,
In the dark,
Mew and bark;
And now, agree to sing a roundelay.
Soft in feline, canine measure,
Soon their hearts were sooth'd to pleasure;
Peace 'tween cat and dog they sung;
Ever broken, now renew'd;
The chorus through the great hall rung;
And loud by every cat was mew'd.
Four Turnspits bark, the supper to announce,
And scrambling in they all together bounce.
All is nice,
Birds and mice;
Each as he took,
Extoll'd the cook.
Madam will you
Just taste the larks?
The answer mew,
He gently barks:
Wit flies around, and compliments are paid;
And peace and harmony the whole pervade.
The feasting part was nearly done,
When all seem'd less and less in fun;

Threat'ning scowls,
Mutter'd growls,
The little remnant brews.
Talons are stirr'd;
Hisses are heard;
And louder, louder mews.

The grumbling noise begins to swell;
Soon the quarrel breaks outright;
Now they bite,
Scratch and fight;
Cats they squall'd;
Dogs were maul'd;
And discord rose, which none can tell.
With tooth and claw,
With nail and paw,
They fierce assail:
Kittens squeak;
Puppies weak,
Scratch'd ears bewail.
More clam'rous yet the tumult grows;
The warring trumpet shriller blows;
Barks and wawlings;
Cries of whelps,
Mews and yelps;
Frightful, frightful squallings.

Alarm'd, at length, the cook arose,
A kitchen broom she brandish'd round;
And down the stairs
Her vengeance bears,
On every cat and dog she found:
Her broad red arm, with muscles strong,
Dealt heavy blows among the throng;
In haste they fled;
Not one remain'd;
But silence reign'd;
And cook return'd in peace to bed.

This famous rout,
Thus turning out,
Produc'd a proverb sad and true;
For when 'tis found in private life,
That friend and friend, or man and wife,
Thus bark, and scold, and scratch, and mew,
'Tis said to be,
Like cat and dog, that they agree.

8.

CHARLES WISHES FOR A LONG LIFE.

CHARLES had been leaning on the church-yard stile,
And looking at a new-made grave the while.
At length he spoke, tho' long he musing stood;
Mamma, I wish I'd been before the flood;
How fine, to live five hundred years or more,
Nor be an old man even at fourscore!

And why that wish, my love, his mother cried,
For even then, you know, you must have died;
And who can tell, but such a long delay,
Had made you less inclin'd to go away!
No, rather think, that if your death is near,
'Tis wise to be prepar'd at once, my dear;
And then, whene'er it come, you need to dread
That church-yard grave as little as your bed.
I think you'd like to hear a pretty fable,
About an oak;—I'll tell you, if I'm able.

The young Oak.

A SILLY young oak, as you'll presently hear,
One day, took upon him to say, with a sneer,
An acorn was I from a Druid's old tree,
How many long ages may I hope to see!

On you I shall mark the destruction of time,
Decaying with age, while I'm yet in my prime;
My limbs I shall spread, more majestic shall grow,
Whilst you and your children are all lying low.

And what, cries an Ash, if you throw your broad shade,
Where prone on the earth in decay I am laid?
You are mortal as we, and must wither and die,
Though not quite so soon, yet as surely, as I.

The green dress of summer no more shall you wear;
Your root shall be knotted; your boughs thin and bare;

Nor then, little birds in your shadow shall play,
To carol sweet songs in the fine summer day.

But only the bat in your gloom shall delight;
Or the owl, sailing home to your shelter at night:
Your trunk rough and hollow, your branches unsound,
If you stand, it shall be but to cumber the ground.

9.

SOPHIA COMPLAINS OF THE FROGS.

Last evening, by the river's side we stray'd,
Where swarming frogs their croaking chorus made;
And Sophy cried, this noise I can't endure,
Mamma, I wish there were no frogs, I'm sure;
Such miserable things had better die,
Than always make this melancholy cry.

No, Sophy, no, you must not think them sad;
They make that croaking noise because they're glad.

The Frog's Song.

See that old frog, with little ones around,
You think her croaking has a dismal sound,
But there I'm sure my little girl is wrong;
I'll tell you now the meaning of her song.

The Frog's Song.

NONE, none are so happy as we are, my daughters:
How pleasant to sit by these cold flowing waters,
Or all day among the green rushes to hide,
Or under some mossy old stone to abide!

When the sun is gone down, and the stars are
come out,
Then, pleasant it is to be hopping about;
We sing merry songs, and we like our own tune,
And dance as we sing in the light of the moon!
None, none, are so happy as we are, my daughters,
For ours are the rushes, and ours the blue waters!

10.

THE MISTAKE.

MAMMA, there's Rachel making hay,
Altho' 'tis such a sultry day!
For my part, I can scarcely stir,
And how much worse it is for her,
All day beneath the burning sun;
It really ought not to be done.

'Tis proper, Sophy, to be sure,
To pity and relieve the poor;
But do not waste your pity here,
Work is not hard to her, my dear;
It makes her healthy, strong, and gay,
And is as pleasant as your play.
We've each our task; and they may boast
The happiest life, who do the most.
None need our pity half so much
As idlers,—always pity such.

The Lily of the Valley.

WRAPT up in her elegant stole,
  A Lily, a delicate lady,
Sat under a green parasol,
  Enjoying the covert so shady.

One morning, she said to the Bee,
  Friend, really I cannot but wonder
Your labour incessant to see,
  Without any shade to be under.

You know 'tis genteeler by far,
  At home to be softly reposing,
'Till rises the evening star,
  And to spend the broad daylight in dosing.

From morning till evening employ'd,
  You have been hardly treated by nature!
By you, not an hour is enjoy'd!
  O, what an unfortunate creature!

Said the Bee, you have nothing to do,
  But let me assure you, Miss Lily,
To think none are happy but you,
  Is really exceedingly silly.

Tho' I do not repose in the shade,
I feel a more exquisite pleasure
In viewing the cells I have made,
And storing them well with my treasure.

I'm happier far, on the whole,
For all you may sneer at my labour,
Than you, with your green parasol,
And all your perfume, pretty neighbour!

11.

SOPHIA IS DISOBEDIENT.

MAMMA, I wish so much to play
With Fanny Singleton, to-day:
She'll think it very cross, I know,
If really I must never go;
And as for what was told to you,
I'm almost sure it is not true.
She press'd me so to call to-day,
That I could scarcely keep away;

So I half promis'd that I would
Go in the evening, if I could.
I'm certain that you need not mind,
She's so agreeable, and so kind.

Sophy, you have a naughty way
Of arguing, when you should obey;
My motive now, you may not see,
But dutiful you ought to be;
And should not think, a child like you
Can judge of what your parents do.
I have important reasons why
Your play with Fanny I deny;
I told you so, and yet you say
You've promis'd her to call to-day!
I'm really griev'd, my love, to find
That what *I* think you do not mind.

Indeed, mamma, I'm quite asham'd,
And know 'tis right that I am blam'd;
I did not think about it then,
But will not do the like again:
Forgive me now, and you shall see
How meek and dutiful I'll be.
Thus, Sophy to her mother cried,
And in a fable she replied.

The undutiful Kid.

Mrs. Goat, having visits one morning to pay,
Left word with her daughter, at going away,
To keep in the house, and the hall-door to lock,
And not to regard it, whoever might knock.

For the wolf, in those parts, was accustom'd to prowl,
And had kept her awake all the night with his howl;
But at this, little Miss turn'd away with a pout,
And said, to be sure, I shall keep the wolf out!

The dame went her way, but returning again,
Entreated her daughter to put up the chain.
Dear me, what a trouble, cried little Miss Kid,
However, 'tis safest to do as one's bid.

A few minutes after, came, rat-a-tat-tat,
So she could not be quiet, but cried, Who is that?
For mamma is gone out, and she bade me take care,
And to keep the door shut, lest the wolf should be there.

Lack-a-day! I'm no wolf, cried the stranger,
Miss Kid;
But as I would wish you to do as you're bid,
Pray do not, by any means, open it far,
But, while I am speaking, just set it a-jar.

So silly Miss Kid laid her hand on the chain,
Then felt half afraid, and consider'd again;
For, said she, 'tis a truth that I cannot deny,
My mother is older and wiser than I.

At length she replied, if you're coming this way,
I'll thank you to call, Sir, on some other day;
For, to tell you the truth,—it is silly enough,
But I'm frighten'd a little, your voice is so gruff.

How vex'd was the wolf, (for it was he indeed)
To think that at present he could not succeed;
But he bade her good-morning, and hied to the
wood,
To think of some plan to get in, if he cou'd.

At length, picking up some soft wool that he saw,
He bound it, as well as he could, on his paw;
Then back to the house he return'd, as before,
But only made one little tap at the door.

Who's there, said Miss Kid, tell me who you may be;
Only look at my paw, said the wolf, and you'll see;
But, however, I'll tell you at once who I am,
So he spoke very softly,—I'm little Miss Lamb:

I met Mrs. Goat, and she told me to say,
As you're left quite alone, I was come for the day;
Beside, between friends, I've a secret or two,
Which I am quite impatient to whisper to you.

Now this was the thing of all others, he guess'd,
To prevail with Miss Kid; for it must be confess'd,
That few other things could have tempted her so;
(Like some silly children whom you and I know.)

So she drew up the latch, that her friend might come in,
But how great her dismay when she saw his rough chin!
And the sharp row of teeth in his terrible jaw!
And the talons that peep'd through the wool on his claw!

She flung to the door, and shriek'd murder amain!
And well was it now, that she put up the chain;

For though he could reach her, to give her a
scratch,
It kept him away till she fasten'd the latch.

Then, growling along to the forest he went,
And left her, at leisure, her fault to repent;
And soon as her mother came back, she reveal'd
The whole of her folly, and nothing conceal'd.

Her mother was pleas'd that she did not deny,
And add a worse fault, that of telling a lie.
And now she's so careful to do as she's bid,
That no child is better than little Miss Kid.

12.

FALSE COURAGE, AND TRUE COURAGE.

'Tis like a coward or a fool,
For boys to bear affronts at school!
A boy of spirit *I* admire,
Who has some bravery and fire;

I'd rather make a little riot,
Than be so very tame and quiet!

Charles, do not think that courage lies
In noise, and heat, and enterprise;
Nor in revenge, or tit for tat:
Courage is far enough from that!
True spirit would protect the weak;
But for itself is mild and meek;
Is very seldom bold and daring,
And never rough, or over-bearing;
But often finds it most befitting,
To show its courage by submitting.

The Lamb and the Serpent.

A Lamb, in a meadow was frisking about,
When close to the hedge-row a Serpent crept out;
She admir'd his slender and tapering tail,
His glistening eye, and his smooth coat of mail.

These Serpents, she thought, they are beautiful things,
What a pity it is that they should have such stings!
Yet, wishing to see him, she nearer advanc'd,
And he was good-natur'd that day, as it chanc'd.

The Lamb & the Serpent.

My daughter, he cried, come nearer, I pray,
For something I have of importance to say,
About our detestable enemy, man,
Who rules like a tyrant, wherever he can.

How could he be fed, or be cloth'd, but for you?
Who pamper his pride, and his luxury too;
And yet, what reward does he make you, I pray?
You are robb'd of your wool, or are fatted to slay.

At night, it is really a shame to behold,
You are smother'd almost in a comfortless fold!
I often glide by you, and wish you could be
Courageous enough to defy him, like me.

I hate, I detest him, and fill him with fright;
The proudest man trembles when I am in sight:
Then join us, my daughter, you easily can,
And wage open war with your enemy man.

Indeed, Mr. Serpent, she gently replies,
I know, very well, you are thought to be wise;
But yet, I must think, 'twould be foolish and vain,
For me the protection of man to disdain.

By night and by day I am glad of his care;
He watches the fold, that the wolf be not there;
And though it may seem like a prison to you,
Without it, I cannot tell what we should do.

While you, Sir, I fancy, are fasting for weeks,
My food in these sweet pleasant meadows he seeks;
And, thanks to his care, I can safely repose,
Whilst you are unable your eye-lids to close *.

O! Sir, it would never be fit for a lamb,
To quarrel and fight! I am best as I am;
And I think they are wisest, and happiest too,
Who live quiet lives, and submit as I do.

13.

THE VAIN WISH.

I WISH it would be always spring,
That I might hear the black-bird sing;
I love to see the flowers blow,
And hear the cooling waters flow.
But now the spring will soon be fled,
And dreary winter comes instead;
Then let me listen while I may,
To the Cuckoo's simple lay.

* The whole Serpent tribe are said to sleep with their eyes open; and they often watch for weeks together for a single meal.

To the Cuckoo.

Cuckoo, Cuckoo, timid bird,
Seldom seen, but ever heard;
Cuckoo, Cuckoo, tell me why—
Foolish thing, you are so shy?

Little birds, within our view,
Are not known so well as you;
For your voice's cheerful sound,
Fills the woodlands all around.

Still to me the song is dear,
For it sings of summer near;
Sweet the notes that seem to bring
All the pretty flowers of spring.

You the violets usher in,
Primrose, and sweet jessamine;
With the cuckoo-flower too—
Bird of spring! 'tis nam'd from you.

There are lords and ladies gay,
Almond, and the scented May;
Roses red and white combine
With the sprightly eglantine.

Lilac too, and daffodil,
And the pretty drooping bell;
Bed-straw, with its sweet perfume—
All at once begin to bloom.

Cuckoo! would that I, like you,
The flowery season could pursue;
Borne away on rapid wing,
Finding thus perpetual spring.

Still the flowery train you meet,
And in leafy woods retreat:
Happy bird! where'er you go
Flowers spring, and waters flow!

Yet, methinks, he seems to sing,
Envy not my roving wing;
Though I stray, as Cuckoos do,
Wintry days are good for you.

14.

ALWAYS SPEAK TRUTH.

How beautiful is truth! and truth is given
To guide all hearts, because it comes from heaven:
The simple lesson of thy earliest youth,
Was to love God, and know that God is truth!
And he requires it, in our inmost part,
Not on our lips alone, but in the heart.
O! let the love of truth pervade your soul,
And every word and action still control;
Though wit the liar's language may adorn,
Yet from the book of life his name is torn.

The Travelled Parrots.

Two Parrots, young and poor,
Once went to take a tour,
And then return'd, their travels to rehearse;
Amid their native wood,
The feather'd audience stood,
Parrots, you know, are willing to converse.

So he who best could chatter,
First introduc'd the matter,
Without regard to falsehood, or to blunders;
He made his story fit
His own conceit and wit,
Embellish'd, now and then, with travellers' wonders

He said, they saw a land
Where birds had the command:
They rul'd both man and beast, and had for ages;
They fear'd no gun or cat,
For all was tit for tat,
And boys and girls were kept to sing in cages.

He said, (and flapp'd his wing,)
A parrot was the king,
Who had a palace made of golden wires:
Prime minister,—the owl;
While other noble fowl
Where high in office,—judges, lords, and 'squires.

And now to turn the story
To his own praise and glory,
He said, he was esteem'd so brave and loyal—
That he had offers fair
To stay and settle there,
And make a match with *Poll*, the Princess Royal.

The Travelled Parrot.

At last, the other bird
Requested to be heard;
And in the modest tone of truth and feeling,
Related to his neighbours
Their perils and their labours,
No stories adding, no distress concealing.

He said he had no notion,
A voyage across the ocean
Was so fatiguing, or so long would last;
He thought they must have died,
But that a ship they spied,
And rested now and then upon the mast.

We staid a little while,
Upon a wooded isle,
Where worms and caterpillars were in season;
But as we could not find
One bird of Parrot-kind,
We did not there continue, for that reason.

At last we reach'd a place,
Where throngs of Parrot-race
Soon flock'd around to cheer our melancholy:
But in that foreign land
They could not understand
A word we said; not even, *pretty Polly*.

We travell'd far and wide,
And many a country tried;
But now, my friends, return'd to you and home:
With pleasure 'tis confest,
I love my own the best,
And from my native woods no more I'll roam.

The whole attentive throng
Approv'd the artless song,
And thank'd the traveller for his pretty story;
While that poor boasting bird,
With ridicule was heard;
He found disgrace, in seeking his own glory.

15.

CHARLES TAUGHT HUMANITY.

Ned and I have fishing been;
See, mamma, this crooked pin!
Here the little worm was stuck;
We have had amazing luck!

Here's such a famous load of fish,
Enough to make a handsome dish.
See how they leap about and frisk!
It seems to make them very brisk:
I like to see them on the shore:
I'll go and fish a little more.

No, Charles, you must not go again,
To take delight in giving pain:
I'm sure, my dear, you have not thought,
How much they suffer for your sport.
Suppose I stick this crooked pin
A little way in Charles's chin;
And then, perhaps, his heart will melt,
At what the worm and fish have felt:
For though the Lord of all has given
To man each creature under heaven,
Freely to take them for our use;
Yet this can offer no excuse,
For those who make an idle sport
Of what was meant for our support;
And if in wantonness we kill,
We act against the Giver's will.

The cruel Cub.

A Cub, who was lying just out of his den,
Mumbled and grumbled, and tasted his hen;
And when he had finish'd his bloody repast,
He made this harangue to his mother at last:

Pray, why must we lead such a troublesome life,
For ever engaging in murder and strife?
By day, I am skulking about in alarm,
And steal like a felon, at night, from the farm.

We bear a sad character, mother, I've heard;
There's nobody gives us (they say) a good word:
Why cannot I be like the innocent lamb,
And not such a blood-thirsty wretch as I am?

To this, the old mother discreetly replied:—
I fear, here is less of compassion than pride;
What, cannot you see any diff'rence, I wonder,
'Twixt getting one's living, and villanous plunder?

The cruel Cub.

We must not find fault with what nature has made;
The whole race of Foxes are butchers by trade;
And all must allow, that no harm is befalling,
So long as we honestly follow our calling.

But, child, when you are not in want of a meal,
You then should think what the poor animals feel;
And not swing a pretty duck over your back,
For nought but the pleasure of hearing it quack.

It was with concern and displeasure I saw,
Last night, a poor rabbit you had in your paw;
You kept it in misery more than you need,
And teas'd and tormented it sadly indeed.

The creatures that nature has put in our power,
We have a just right both to kill and devour;
But this we should do in the easiest way,
And not take delight in tormenting our prey.

16.

SOPHIA, A LITTLE PEDANT.

SOPHIA, I've a fable here,
That suits some folks too well, I fear:
I saw with pain, the other day,
When with your little friends at play,
You seem'd to look, and speak, and jest,
As though you thought yourself the best;
And wish'd, in every thing, to be
Head of the little company.
You talk'd about your books and playing,
Thus your own vanity betraying;
And show'd, with all your proud pretence,
A want of modesty and sense.
I'd rather that my child should be
Possess'd of sweet humility,
Her own deficiencies discerning,
Than full of vanity and learning.
The very little that you know
Has made you self-conceited grow;
For those who know and think the most,
Are always *least* inclin'd to boast.

The conceited Young Owl.

ALONE in the gloom of an ivy-bush tower,
Dame Owl and her daughter pass'd many an hour
In dullness and torpor, in winking and blinking,
Which Miss, ostentatiously call'd, profound thinking.

The Owl was just taking her afternoon's doze,
When her daughter broke in on her pleasant re-
pose;
Says she, is aught living, of man, beast, or fowl,
That a life so contemplative leads, as an Owl?

Our neighbours, engag'd in the vulgar pursuits,
Adapted to birds of mean feather, and brutes,
All shun our acquaintance, unable, of course,
To join in our grave, scientific discourse.

The Lark only soars up so high for her fun,
And never contemplates the path of the sun:
And as for the Nightingale, tho' she can squall,
She has no astronomical knowledge at all.

She cannot distinguish the Crab from the Lion,
The tail of the Bear from the belt of Orion;
And yet she stays out every evening, by choice;
Poor thing! she's excessively vain of her voice.

The Plover, though fond of the heath and the hill,
Yet never must boast of botanical skill;
There is not a weed on this ruin between us,
Of which he could tell you the species or genus.

To account for the distance they keep, (I have heard,)
They say we're a dull and unsociable bird;
But the truth of it is, that our wisdom discerning,
They all feel afraid of our talents and learning.

There's something, you know, in our look so profound,
Our beaks are so pointed—our eyes are so round—
That air of nobility—grandeur and power,
No wonder they're frighten'd at ivy-bush tower.

But really, tho' none to our rank can pretend,
I should like, now and then, just to visit a friend;
Though such early hours they usually keep,
That when we should see company, they are asleep.

My dear, said the Owl, (who was now wide awake,)
I fear you are under a little mistake;
Though shunn'd by our neighbours, I often suspect,
'Tis more from contempt and dislike, than respect.

Our life is secluded, by all 'tis allow'd,
But some call us stupid, and all think us proud:
For when people keep so much out of the way,
'Tis often because they have nothing to say.

We think ourselves wise, but some folks doubt our sense,
And think it conceit, and a solemn pretence;
So all that we get by our grandeur and power,
Is living alone in this ruinous tower.

17.

THE ILL-NATURED SCHOOL-FELLOW.

Our school, Mamma, would be delightful,
If Jonas Clerk were not so spiteful:
He's always telling stories, mother,
To make us quarrel with each other;

And every day he seems intent
To get us blame and punishment.
With nobody he will agree,
And all avoid his company.

I'm very much concern'd to hear,
Such a bad character, my dear:
May you, from his example, learn
Such mean contrivances to spurn;
Such wicked children all forsake,
Like the envenom'd Rattlesnake.

The Rattlesnake.

THE Rattlesnake spreads gloom and fear,
And desolation wide;
For none can ever venture near,
Where he is known to hide.

His prey, where'er he shows his head,
Prepares for death or battle;
None are so bold as not to dread
The terror of his rattle.

The Rattle Snake.

Only the Vulture waves her wing*
  Athwart his gloomy way;
She heeds not his envenom'd sting,
  But seeks her favourite prey.

A savage, melancholy mood,
  His dreary state expresses;
A wild and gloomy solitude,
  Is all that he possesses.

Why is he shunn'd by all that lives,
  And fear'd by every creature?
'Tis for the cruel death he gives—
  The venom of his nature.

18.

THE EVENING WALK.

As we to-day have all been good,
We go this evening to the wood;

* The certain death which ensues from the bite of this animal, makes a solitude wherever it appears; but the vulture, no way terrified by the rattle, hastens at this signal to seize the Snake, as its most favourite food.

And there, amid the shade, you know,
Those pretty bells and cowslips grow:
Beneath the shady chesnut tree
We'll make a fire and have our tea;
And then mamma, if she is able,
Will tell us all a pretty fable.
And now, I hope, she'll think of one
To make a little sport and fun!
About a fox, I like the best,
And that I know will please the rest.

Well, then, to-night I'll try and find
A fable quite to Charles's mind;
That's neither grave nor melancholy,
Nor aim'd at any little folly;
And as you like a merry jest,
Æsop and I will do our best.

The Fox and the Hen.

One night, a Fox the woods forsook,
About old Robin's farm to look:
Within the hen-house see him crawl,
Thro' a sly crevice in the wall.

With slow and cautious step he creeps,
And into every corner peeps;
With greedy eye he looks about,
To find the ducks and chickens out:
Impatient for his nice repast,—
And casting up his eyes at last,
With eager pleasure there he sees
A young hen roosting at her ease.
But now to gain this dainty prize,
He must some stratagem devise.
The perch so high—the wall so steep,
He knows 'twould be in vain to leap;
And so contriv'd a better way
To seize his unsuspecting prey.
In tones of kind condolence then,
He soon address'd the sleepy hen:
Dear, Mistress Hen, (he thus beset her,)
I hear you're ill—I hope you're better:
I fear'd the worst, and came in search;
They even said, you kept your perch.
Do tell me how you fare and feel:
I hope they give you barley-meal.
Much may be done by keeping quiet,
With change of air, and proper diet.
I have a little skill myself,
(You know I do not come for pelf)

But vex'd to hear you were so fond
Of those *quack* doctors in the pond,
I came to examine what your state is,
And offer my prescriptions gratis.
I never *quack*, (exclaim'd the *Hen*)
(Says he) try my prescriptions then;
There's none, you'll find, so quickly eases
Chickens and ducks of their diseases;
At once I free them from their pain,
So that they never more complain.
But, oh! from such high seats preserve us,
Enough to make a lion nervous:
Come down, without delay, and then
I'll feel your pulse, my pretty Hen;
I'm sure you've got a little fever,
Do pray come down, said the deceiver.

The hen his cunning plainly saw,
And did not mean to trust his paw;
For well she knew that Doctor Fox
Was no true friend to fowls or flocks.
Some doctors kill or cure, they say,
But Foxes kill or run away:
She, therefore, from her roost on high,
Thus thank'd him for his courtesy.
Kind Sir, I own your friendly care,
In coming through the evening air,

To see a helpless invalid;—
I take it very kind indeed.
But, Sir, I fear 'twould not be right,
To leave my nest so late at night;
Nor am I fit to hold a parley—
Just now I took three grains of barley,
By the advice of Doctor Duck;
I thought I could but try my luck.
I don't like quacks, I must confess,
But Doctor Duck has great success:
He goes upon the modern plan—
Quite a well-educated man.
The doctor charg'd me not to stir,
And therefore you'll excuse me, Sir;
The flight would take away my breath,
I think it would be certain death.
The Fox retir'd—bewail'd his luck,
And vow'd revenge on Doctor Duck.

19.

SOPHIA'S ALARM.

Oh! dear Mamma, I have had such a shock,
I found a spider crawling up my frock!

I tremble still, I was in such a fright,
Spiders, you know, have poison in their bite.
O! Sophy, what a silly tale to bring,
A spider is a very harmless thing;
There's no occasion for the least alarm,
The insect cannot do you any harm.
The other day you laugh'd at Jane, you know,
Because a toad was crawling on her toe:
Such false alarms, my dear, recal to me
A fable I will tell you after tea.

The Friendly Conference.

A Beetle, an Ear-wig, a Spider, and Toad,
All chanc'd to be journeying on the same road,
And mounting a mole-hill, the prospect to view,
They rested awhile, as most travellers do.

They happen'd that morning to turn their discourse
To man, and the evils of which he's the source.
Alas! (they exclaim'd) our sad cause of complaint
Is out of the reach of all language to paint.

How many the species that creep and that crawl,
But among them, we are the worst treated of all!
There's even the wasp, tho' his venom is sure,
Has less persecution than we to endure.

Why now, (said the Beetle,) pray tell me if I
Am not as well dress'd as the gay Butterfly?
Altho' she is flatter'd and courted by those,
Who hunt a poor Beetle wherever he goes.

Her dress, in the summer, is airy and light,
But, in winter, she is such a terrible fright!
For my part, I like to be all of a piece:
I would not put on such a dowdy pelisse.

If they would but examine my drapery too,
My coat would be found of a changeable blue;
And some have acknowledg'd, the tints I disclose,
Are like my green cousin's, who lives in the rose.

Your case (says the Ear-wig) we all much deplore,
But surely my own is the worst of the four;
As I and my kindred are all in disgrace,
From a slander that long has attended the race.

Men say we creep into their ears, tho' the fact is,
We are most unjustly accus'd of the practice:
I'll tell you the story, as far as it goes,
From which this report of our species arose.

As one of our fathers (who dwelt in a fig)
Was making the tour of a gentleman's wig,
He happen'd to come to a cavernous hole,
About eighty degrees and a half from the *pole*.

A spirit of enterprise led him to brave
The dangers attending the sight of the cave;
And so he descended, new wonders to seek,
As others may do in the Derbyshire Peak.

Of what he discover'd, I vainly should strive
To give a description—more dead than alive,
At last he got out,—and you now may be sure,
We always avoid it in making the tour.

O! dear, (said the Toad, when he came to an end)
What an ill-natur'd world do we live in, my friend!
They cannot on Ear-wigs more calumny load,
Than what has been said of the innocent Toad.

You know I am partial to living alone,
Spending most of my time in the shade of a stone;
And why I'm abus'd and molested for ever,
I never could tell, tho' I often endeavour.

I've not many personal charms, I allow;
(My friends, I'm not fishing for compliments now;)
But yet it does vex me to hear them maintain,
As they do, that I am so *excessively* plain.

Alas! (said the Spider) my pleasant abode
Is no less molested than yours, neighbour Toad;
Yet allow me to hint, (for I think it my duty,)
You and I have no need to be vain of our beauty.

Do, pray, let them laugh at our colour and shape,
As long as they please, if they let us escape;
And what if they talk of our venomous bite?
My dear neighbour Toad, it is nothing but spite.

'Tis strange, to be sure, we should still have to stand
Such treatment as this, in a civiliz'd land;
But being thus injur'd, we now may be able
To make our case public—by printing this fable.

20.

ROSE'S MISTAKE.

MAMMA, the people think it odd, no doubt,
That in this frightful hat I walk about.
Last night, when we were out, I saw them stare:
You must afford a new one, I declare.—
My dear, it makes me laugh to hear you talk:
I'm sure no one observ'd us in our walk:
Pray do not fret about it any more,
I dare say no one saw the hat you wore.
'Tis silly vanity I cannot bear,
To think that people notice what we wear.
Poor little child! so every foolish elf
Thinks nothing so important as itself:
Why, you remind me, with your frightful hat,
Of Æsop's fable of the Bull and Gnat.

The Gnat and the Bull.

A GNAT had been playing, as oft she had done,
And singing her song in a beam of the sun;
Till, being fatigued with her dance in the air,
She wish'd to her home in the hedge to repair.

Her nearest way there was, this evening, to pass
Across a wide meadow of newly-mown grass;
Where, just as a Bull was about to repose,
Miss Gnat, most presumptuously, lit on his nose.

(Says she) Mr. Bull, you will not think it rude,
That I venture, in this friendly way, to intrude;
I'm greatly fatigued with the heat of the day,
And, therefore, have call'd on your nose by the
way.

It is a late hour, and it must be confess'd,
That to pay such a visit I'm shockingly dress'd;
I know, Mr. Bull, I'm not fit to be seen,
Among all the company here on the green.

A Butterfly beau, who was hearing me sing,
Has shaken his powder, and dusted my wing;
And the beams, at this season, you know, are so
full:
I hope you'll excuse it, my dear Mr. Bull.

The Bull, most politely, replied as he sat:
Indeed, you are welcome, my charming Miss Gnat;
At any time when you're inclin'd for a doze,
I beg that you'll feel quite at home on my nose.

For as to the weight of your body, my dear,
Believe me, I should not have known you were here
And whether you're drest like a beau or a belle,
I could not, without a good microscope, tell.

I beg you will rest here whenever you please,
Nor offer such needless excuses as these;
'Tis no inconvenience, because you're so small,
I scarcely can feel you or see you at all.

21.

SOPHIA'S REQUEST.

My dear Mamma, I wish you'd hark,
I do so want to keep a lark!
'Twould sing so sweetly all day long,
And wake me with its early song.

Well, Sophy, when *my* song you've heard,
We'll talk again about the bird;
And you to me shall then explain,
Whether your thoughts the same remain.

The Lark to his Mistress.

Ah! why such care, my little lady,
To make my nest so cool and shady!
For let you do whate'er you will,
It is a dismal prison still.

I chirp no thanks, tho' you're so good,
And furnish me with daily food;
And tho' with tender care you bring
The cooling waters from the spring.

Yet, might I change this dreary plight,
I'd carol on from morn to night;
But here I cannot gaily sing,
A prison's such a dismal thing!

I'm not expos'd to stormy weather,
I need not have a ruffled feather;
Yet would I quit this shelter'd nest,
And let the winds assail my breast.

For once, amid the leafy trees
I lov'd the rustling of the breeze;
And still my captive heart aspires,
To break these gloomy prison wires.

Once, when the night its course had run,
I sung to hail the rising sun;
But now I view the sun with pain,
And strike my quiv'ring wings in vain.

Dear Mistress, if you love me so,
Unbar the door and let me go!
And then a happy, grateful peal,
Shall tell you how a bird can feel.

22.

THE FOOLISH DISPUTE.

WHAT means this altercation that I hear?
Rose and Sophia both disturb'd appear.
I fear, indeed, 'tis shame that makes you mute:
Well, then, I heard the subject in dispute;
And am surpris'd, as well as griev'd, to find
Such childish vanity possess your mind.
I hope the fable which I now shall read,
Will make you very much asham'd indeed;
The vanity of flies and worms, must strike
As odious and ridiculous alike.

The Butterfly's Law-suit.

PRAY have you heard why the enrag'd Butterfly,
With the Dragon-fly is at war?
The dispute will, they say, be decided to-day,
In a solemn court of law.

Their rancorous hate is of ancient date,
And grows worse every day;
But now will the laws decide the cause,
In an equitable way.

The contest has brew'd a violent feud,
Throughout the insect race;
And a Bee is selected, and chief judge elected,
To hear and settle the case.

For fear of the weather, they all meet together
Within a hollow tree;
And there is a stone, to serve as a throne,
For my lord chief justice Bee.

Now the court has met, and the judge is set,
  The jurors all are nam'd;
The attentive band in order stand,
  And silence is proclaim'd.

Then Counsellor Leech commenc'd his speech,
  And open'd the notable cause;
He said, that his client, they all might rely on't,
  Was worthy of their applause.

The plaintiff in court, has always been thought
  T' excel in feminine grace;
And her only claim, is to bear her name,
  As queen of the insect race.

Now a bold Dragon-fly has refus'd to comply,
  And the title disputes with fury;
But I have not a fear, how the case will appear,
  To the gentlemen of the jury.

We have to implore the court to restore
  Her true and rightful claim;
As, from time out of mind, in old records you'll find,
  Her ancestors bore the same.

Both she and her heirs, the title she bears,
  Can always prove to be just;
As you, my lord Bee, by the statute may see,
  In the Twentieth of George the First.

When he came to a close, Sergeant Hornet arose,
  His eloquence all must admire;
'Twas a livelier speech than from Counsellor Leech,
  For his words were the words of fire.

In the Dragon-fly's cause, he won the applause
  Of all the learned court;
With a skilful aim, the Butterfly's claim
  He wittily turn'd to sport.

He mention'd her wing, as a tawdry thing,
  While his client's was delicate gauze;
But 'twas useless so late to prolong the debate,
  As he must win the cause.

His turn being come, with a solemn hum,
  The learned judge arose;
He said, this debate was insulting the state,
  And order'd it to close.

He said, that affairs more important than theirs,
Should occupy their thought;
But that belles and beaus, and their furbelows,
Were quite beneath the court.

If the cause to be tried, had been to decide,
Which Fly does most for the state;
The court and the laws had decided the cause,
And ended this debate.

So in shame and disgrace they withdraw from the place,
And thus their suit is lost;
But not to proclaim their mutual shame,
Each party pays his cost.

23.

ROSE IS VAIN.

Do I not often see with pain,
That you, my little Rose, are vain;
By other's failings you may see,
How disagreeable it must be.

The Vain Swan.

What affectation may be seen
In that poor child, Eliza Green!
Always contriving some invention,
To strike, and to attract attention.
A simple child, who seems at ease,
And does her best to serve and please,
Will never fail that love to gain,
Which affectation seeks in vain.
For those are always most admir'd,
Who are most humble and retir'd:
The Swan had never known disgrace,
If she had kept her proper place.

The vain Swan.

A SWAN swam in a silver lake,
And gracefully swam the Swan;
Her plumage was as the snowy flake,
And softly she glided on.

Slowly she sail'd in stately pride,
Her neck did proudly wave;
And as she went, the lucid tide,
Her graceful image gave.

Thus, as she passes on in state,
And all admiring stand;
She wishes it had been her fate,
To be beheld on land.

Soon to the bank she sails away,
And quickly gains the shore;
There all her graces to display;
But praise she hears no more.

Her awkward waddle, and her stoop,
She hears them all deride;
Her wings of snow now humbly droop,
Nor waves her neck with pride.

Alas! and did I wish to roam,
Thus to be scorn'd, (she said,)
And leave my pleasant wat'ry home,
And shady osier bed.

I'll never more its shade forsake,
To be derided here;
But, gliding on the silver lake,
Keep in my proper sphere.

24.

ROSE CORRECTED.

Rose, did I hear that silly speech from you,
That ladies have not any thing to do?
'Tis true, you're not oblig'd to earn your bread,
As by kind parents you are cloth'd and fed;
But indolence no station can excuse,
As time is given us to employ and use:
And those who have most leisure, ought to try
What they can do their neighbours to supply.
They who are rich, have also time to spare,
Therefore, the poor are their peculiar care.
But look around, my dear, and you will see
Incessant calls on time and industry.
Instruct the ignorant, and clothe the poor,
And feed the hungry from your ample store:—
Thus let your days in usefulness be past,
That you may give a good account at last.

The discontented Ant.

One fine summer's day a young Ant was complaining,
And even the order of nature arraigning:

What a poor creeping creature (she murmur'd) am I!
Why had I not wings, like my neighbour the Fly?

To buzz all the day in the sun's golden beam,
Or gaily dance over a murmuring stream,
Is better than being confin'd to the land,
And crawling all day over pebbles and sand.

While thus I'm pursuing my wearisome track,
With the dust in my eyes, and a load on my back;
That pert little fellow regards me with scorn,
As much as to say, he's a gentleman born.

Nor am I the richer for all I can get,
But see it stor'd up by a covetous set;
Who take my hard earnings, and send me again,
Without even waiting to hear me complain.

So thus she went grumbling along ev'ry day,
While the bright summer-season was passing away;
'Till winter approaching, she gladly went down,
For shelter and food, to the garrison town.

Now daily she fed on the common repast,
Which the little republic supplied to the last:

But when the warm breezes had melted the snow,
She ventur'd once more from her covert to go.

But oh! what a scene was immediately spread;
She trampled on heaps of the dying and dead;
And these were the flies she had envied before,
Now perish'd, for want of a provident store.

They foolishly squander'd the best of their hours,
In dancing in sunbeams, and resting on flowers.
The Ant felt the moral this story conveys,
And resolv'd to work hard all the rest of her days.

25.

PRIDE REPROVED.

THIS fable, Philip Sandy, is for you,
So I've contriv'd to place it in your view.
Indeed, my boy, I do not love to chide:
But 'tis disgusting to observe such pride:

E'en to the young companions of your play,
You still will boast you're nobler born than they.
Think when you're lying in the church-yard earth,
What will avail your vaunted noble birth.
You know, in Holy Scriptures, we are taught
To look upon ourselves with lowly thought:
In the poor man we should behold a brother,
And better than ourselves esteem another.

The Sunflower and Marigolds.

A PROUD Sunflower tall,
That high o'er-topp'd them all,
Grew on a bed of humble Marigolds:
His heart so fill'd with pride,
That still he would deride
All that he lower than himself beholds.

To see the vile pot-herbs,
His dignity disturbs:
"I am descended from the sun," cried he:
"Do I not bear his name,
And therefore share his fame?
Surely you might a proper distance see.

"Alas! 'tis true that I
Must bear you company:
The silly gard'ner plac'd us much too near.
Why boast you're *useful* found?
I hate the vulgar sound:
Does that, pray, make *gentility* appear?"

A Marigold replies,
"Why do you us despise?
And wherefore make such boast, proud flow'r, we pray?
For are we not, like you,
Rob'd in a golden hue,
And imitate the sun, with pointed ray?

"We own, the name you bear,
Does very grand appear:
But when, at length, your splendid course is run,
With weeds you'll rot away,
And on some dung-heap lay,
While all forget you're nam'd from the bright sun.

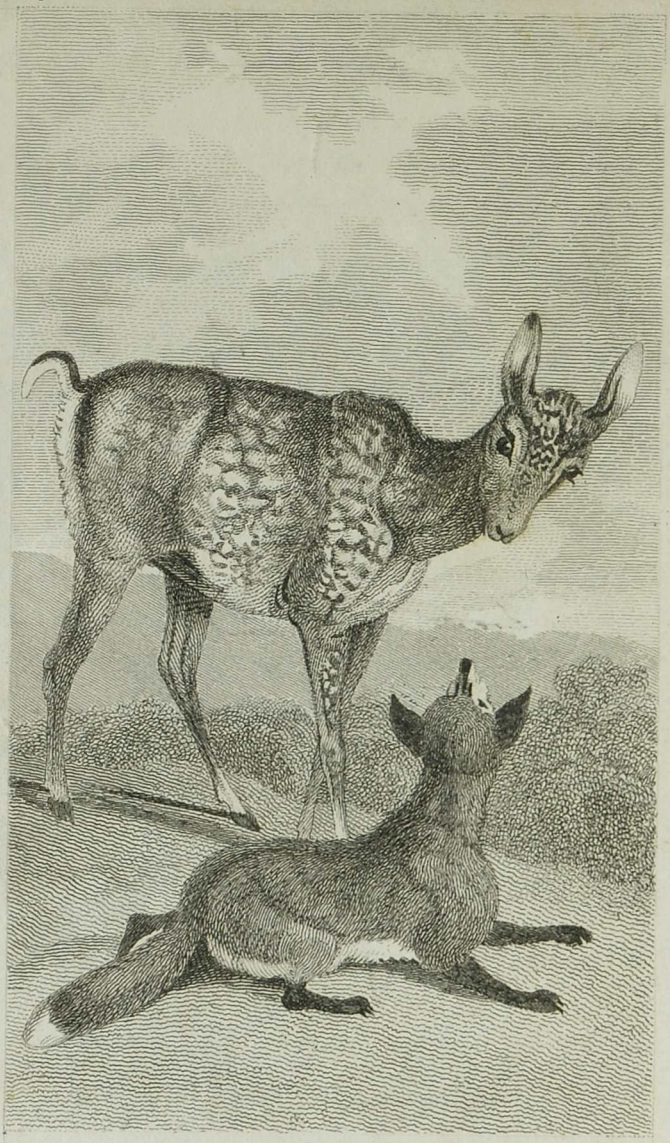
26.

CHARLES IS INATTENTIVE.

I WOULD your heart, my Charles, with goodness fill,
And in your mind each virtuous thought instil.
Why then neglectful of my tender care,
Nor longer strive your mother's love to share?
She who would keep your infant years secure,
And guard from ills which heedless boys endure;
Yet from my fond advice you turn away,
And fill your giddy thoughts with foolish play.
But come, that serious look much good portends,
I see, my boy and I once more are friends.
Well, I've a fable, made, I think, for you,
For the young Fawn is wild and careless too.
O! tell it me, mamma, and you shall see
I will so still and so attentive be.

The careless Fawn.

A HIND, that cropp'd the flow'ry lawn,
Had by her side a darling Fawn.



The careless Fawn.

In him was center'd all her care,
For well she wish'd her child to rear;
To make him swifter than the wind—
To leave or horse or dog behind.
She daily tells of num'rous foes,
That chase the stag where'er he goes;
Or keepers fell; or, worse than they,
The blood-hounds fierce, and beasts of prey—
Of cruel man, that hunts him long,
And makes his death a jovial song.
Cautions like these she would instil,
To guard her child from every ill;
And chief forbade him not to stray
Beyond the park, where danger lay.
Yet for her son oft griev'd was she;
A wild and careless Fawn was he:
Yet seem'd he not to vice inclin'd,
His greatest fault, a vagrant mind.
And many a time, with tears, she strove
His thoughts to fix—his heart to move.
He hearken'd not to what she said,
But play'd with flies around his head;
Or chas'd the leaf along the ground,
Or for his tail skipp'd round and round.
Now such a Fawn, no wonder he
Should fall into bad company.—

And so it was—a Fox, vile knave!
A wicked bribe a poacher gave;
That he among the deer would get,
And silly Fawns tempt to his net.
This fawn, the Fox's cunning glance
Had mark'd, and meets, as if by chance;
And well he play'd the tempter's part,
His tricks soon gain'd the wild thing's heart,
He tells of distant fields so fair,
Wonders his friend has not been there.
How could a lively Fawn endure
To be confin'd in park secure;
Where, of his age, could one be found,
That had not leap'd its highest bound.
Ah! in green meads we'll play awhile,
No snares can there our feet beguile.
Your mother has too much alarm,
For fear that you should come to harm;
But sure, I know as well as she,
Where dog or snare is like to be.
In darkest nights, I dare to roam,
And venture many a mile from home;
And nothing e'er obstructs my way,
Then, what have you to fear, I pray?
Thus, his discourse and wily tongue
Tempt the young fawn to what is wrong;

So the poor thing consents to go,
Just down the pleasant vale below.
Away, as if before the hounds,
They fleetly run to gain the bounds;
Which scarce the Fox, with all his pow'r,
Can clear—the Fawn he bounded o'er.
Adown the hill he skips along,
Or frisks the yellow broom among:
His nimble feet scarce bend the fern,
He feels his heart with pleasure burn;
His mother's words regards he not,
Her precepts wise are all forgot.
Thus, thro' gay paths was he betray'd,
To where the fatal snare was laid.
Ah! now, he's caught—and loud his cries
Bespeak his bitter agonies.
"Why did I leave my mother's side,
To stray with this perfidious guide?
Had I been wise, I might have seen
Your crafty and deceitful mien:
May you no other Fawn, like me,
Deceive with cunning treachery."

What! said the Fox, it is your shame
To fall in snares—am I to blame!
So friend, good day; I greatly fear
The wicked poacher may be near.

But, as he turn'd, he felt a blow,
Giv'n by a hoof, which laid him low.
It was the mother gave the blow—
The mother's foot that laid him low.
Long had she sought her wandering child,
Through thorny brakes and dingles wild;
As she in grief was passing by,
She heard her son in sorrow cry.
With all the speed e'er mother made,
She flew, her dying Fawn to aid;
And, first, the Fox her vengeance felt,
For quick her hoof his death-blow dealt.
She soon contriv'd her child to free:
Again he feels his liberty.
He promis'd her no more to roam,
But to obey, and stay at home.

27.

COUSIN HENRY'S VISIT.

My dearest boys, it gives me great delight
To hear your cousin Henry comes to night:

Only from quarrels he is seldom free,
And with his playmates never can agree;
For when at school, there scarcely comes a day,
But this sad restless boy excites some fray.
Tho', if in quarrels forc'd to take a part,
He has not shown the most courageous heart.
Yet future good might Henry still attend,
If he should see his faults, and strive to mend:
Therefore, to-night around the fire we'll draw,
And you shall read the fable of the Daw.

The quarrelsome Daw.

FAR up the cliff's tall, rugged side,
Some Daws had long possession had:
These rocks, which rose above the tide,
With shrubs and small green trees were clad.

Here, undisturb'd, their nests long stood,
And, with their young, sweet peace had been;
But one cross bird, among their brood,
Promoting quarrels oft was seen.

They chase each other on the wing,
And whirling o'er, plumb down they go;
With pinions bent now up they spring,
Now skim the air in motion slow.

But this, their play, the wicked daw,
To interrupt took much delight:
Contriv'd them into broils to draw,
And their dispute end in a fight.

The first was he to set them on,
And prais'd the skill the champions us'd;
But was himself a mere poltroon,
And did not like his own sides bruis'd.

Yet bragg'd so much, and talk'd of wars,
And the disgrace all cowards merit;
That he was prais'd among the Daws,
Who thought he was a bird of spirit.

Once boasting, he on some prevail'd,
To venture far a-field for food;
When they were by some Rooks assail'd,
Who threat the Daws with war and blood.

But, oh! their captain, where was he!
The braggart bold, he now had fled;
When blows he heard were like to be,
He turn'd, and back in terror sped.

Now feathers thick about them lie;
  The field, 'tis said, was dearly bought;
Their enemies they drove away;
  Their leader fled, yet brave they fought.

Now back return'd, with conquest crown'd,
  They sought the Daw that fled the fight;
The coward in a hole they found,
  And dragg'd their captain forth to light!

Loudly his famous deeds they tell:
  Even the young ones at him shout:
Next from the crowd they him expel,
  And now alone he sneaks about.

Thus, he a fine example proves
  To all who are to strife inclin'd;
Caution to him who discord loves,
  And curb to him of fiery mind.

Among them broils no more we hear,
  For no one dares the gauntlet throw:
Courage, they think, will best appear,
  To guard their nests 'gainst Rook or Crow.

28.

EDWARD TEASES A HELPLESS BOY.

O! MOTHER, we have had such fun,
I'll tell you what the boys have done;
There's William Grove, who lov'd to rule,
And be the first in all the school;
Altho' he is so stout and tall,
And quite the biggest boy of all,
The very smallest he would strike,
Which brought upon him our dislike.
Yet dar'd we not our hatred show,
Because he was so strong, you know.
But he has got a fine reward,
For down he fell in the play-yard;
By which he sprain'd his ancle so,
That he is lame and cannot go:
So we have never ceas'd all day,
To tease and mock him in our play.

Then you have been a naughty boy—
How could you such a play enjoy;
You know, you ever must refrain
From sport that gives another pain.
I hope in you no malice lies,
For we must love our enemies;

The Owl and other Birds.

And good for evil to return,
A lesson is that you must learn:
Besides, my Edward, 'tis a shame
To take advantage of the lame.
But this misconduct I will try
In fable to exemplify.

The Owl and other Birds.

It is a moon-light night,
The Owl has left her tow'r;
She loves its soften'd light—
She loves the midnight hour.

Loud hoots her dismal song,
For the departed day;
And, in the woods among,
Is seeking her small prey.

The careless, sleeping birds,
Or mouse, will be her food:
No hooting now disturbs
The silence of the wood*.

* "Their hooting is never heard when after their prey."

But vain she prowls around;
No meal has she enjoy'd;
No tempting morsel found,
To fill the craving void.

The night was on the wane,
The star of morning rose;
Yet she could nothing gain,
And fierce her hunger grows.

She wanders all the night,
And yet she finds no prey;
Or in the dim twilight,
Or in the morning grey.

The sun now gilds the sky,
Still she is on the wing *;
Nor heeds her dazzled eye,
For hunger's pangs now sting.

The growing light of day
She can no longer bear;
Yet how to find her way,
All blinded by the glare.

* "It sometimes happens, that obeying the dictates of appetite, rather than of prudence, they continue their researches until broad day breaks in upon them, and leaves them dazzled and bewildered, and unable to trace their way back."

Oh! for a shady bower,
  Or hollow of a tree;
Or her own ruin'd tower,
  Where she at peace might be.

Now whither could she fly;
  At last, she thought to hide
Close in a thick hedge nigh,
  And there, 'till night, abide.

But soon there spread alarms,
  The Owl she was abroad;
The birds are up in arms,
  As if with one accord.

The Black-bird, Thrush, and Jay,
  As strongest, head the rest;
But no small bird's away,
  Or Swallow, or Red-breast.

And now are heard their cries;
  The uproar now begins;
Each to insult her tries;
  They flap her with their wings.

The Owl can see no foe:
  Dizzy she turns her head;
And stooping bends her low,
  With her broad wings outspread.

But nothing will avail,
She is but more their scorn;
Their malice does not fail,
But patiently is borne.

They whirl around her head,
The clamour grows more strong;
And as the hours fled,
More numerous was the throng.

The clouds of night appear,
The Owl springs from the fence;
They fly, all wild with fear,
Where's now their insolence?

Ah! they repent them sore,
That they have teas'd her so;
And promise never more
To insult a fallen foe.

She caught the foremost bird,
His struggles were in vain;
His distant cries were heard,
But none saw him again.

THE END.

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