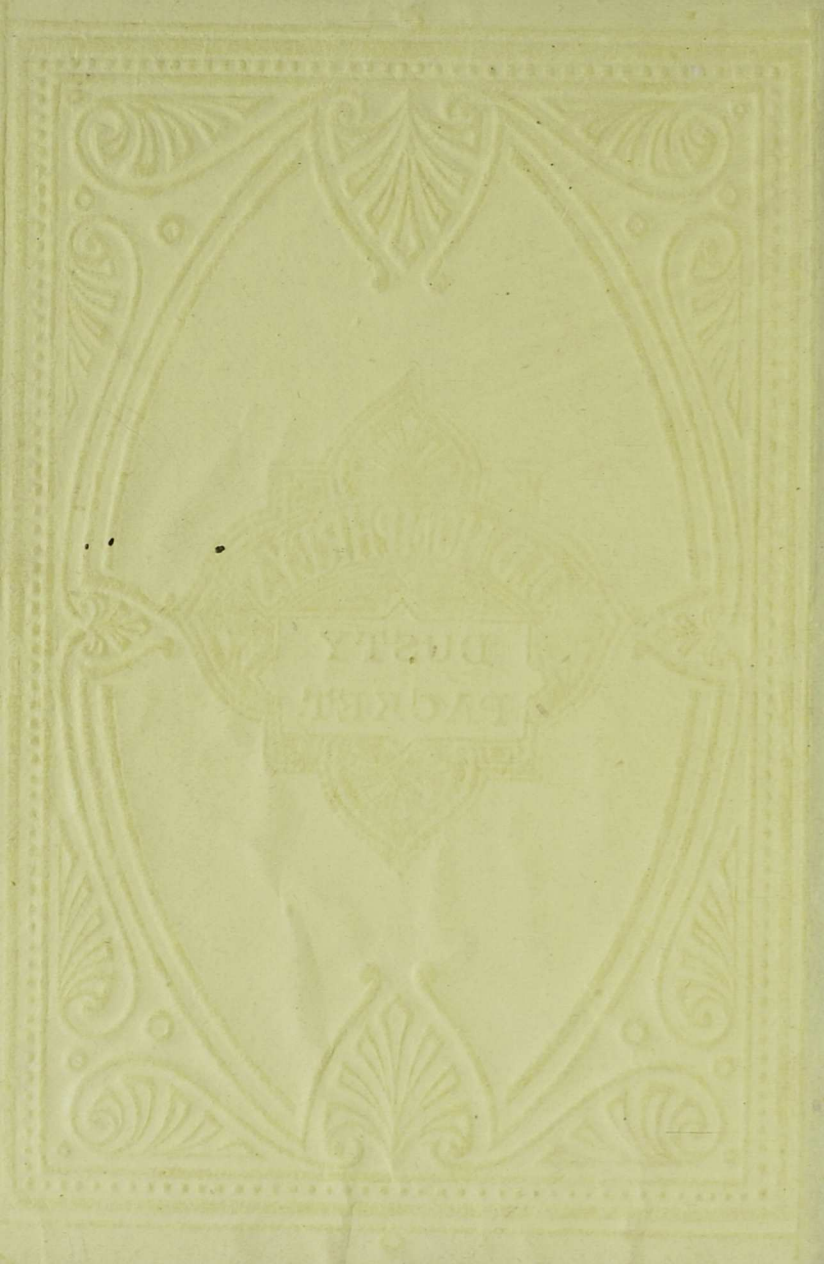
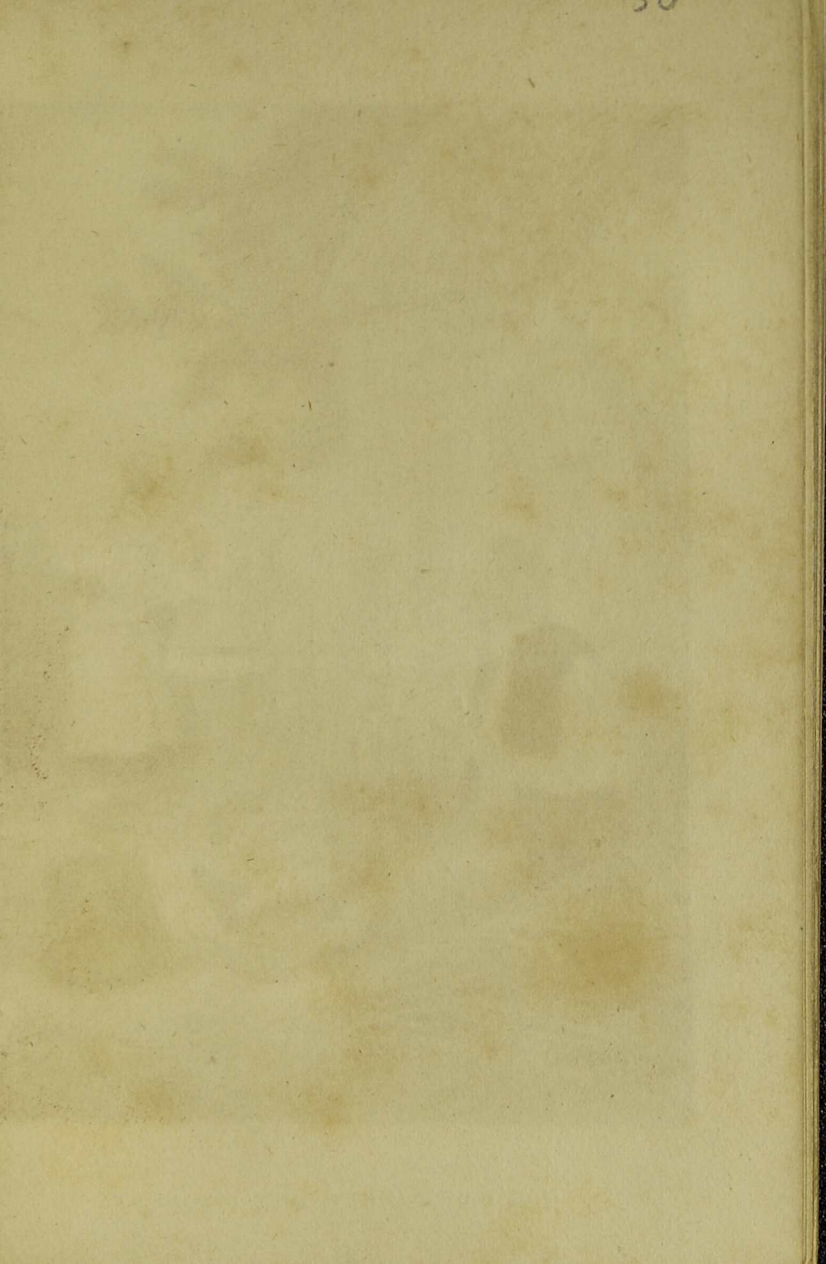


OLD HUMPHREYS
DUSTY
PACKET.



Master Wm Brewster





Kronheim & Co, London

OLD HUMPHREY'S DUSTY PACKET.

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DUSTY PACKET.



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THE DUSTY PACKET.

—318—

COULD my young friends look into the little parlour where I am now writing, they would see piles of paper, some large and some small, some loose and some tied neatly round with red tape. Those on the table are clean and newly written; others in the corner of the shelves appear dingy and soiled.

But there is one that has more dust on it than the rest, and as we are best able to make out the words written on its cover, we find this direction: "To be made into a book at some future time." Perhaps that time has now come, so

We reach the packet from the shelf,
And cut the tape that binds it;
The dingy dust spreads o'er it all,
And the lurking spider on the wall
Has wreath'd a cobweb round it.

Let us now see its contents. Well, they seem on all sorts of subjects. The first paper we discover is, "The Old Basket-maker." We will proceed with this, and then take up the rest as they come to hand.

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OLD HUMPHREY'S
D U S T Y P A C K E T.

THE OLD BASKET-MAKER.

Do you see the old man, in his long, unbuttoned waistcoat, and ribbed worsted stockings? Well! that is the old basket-maker. There he sits, stretching out his legs, working away at his basket; while the lad that is looking on wonders how he can manage to bend the twigs so cleverly into the proper form. The old man, with his cap on his head, is peering through his spectacles at the boy, telling him that "practice makes perfect," and that if he had made some

hundreds of baskets, he would find no difficulty in the matter.

See! there is one finished basket before him, and another behind him, and, at the rate he is going on, there will soon be a third. There is nothing like being industrious; for idleness is the father, ay, and the mother too, of all kinds of evil. But I will tell you, now, a little more of the old basket-maker.

He was sitting at his work in the sun, by the side of his cottage, when James and his sister Susan, who had lately come into the neighbourhood, and had never seen basket-making before, turned a little out of the road to look at him: no wonder that they should hold up their hands with astonishment.

After some talk together, the old basket-maker, finding the children to be quick and clever of their years, spoke to them thus: "There's many a better trade than basket-

making ; but yet, for all that, it is not to be despised, for if a man gets but a little at it, he gets it honestly ; and the Bible says, ' Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.' Prov. xv. 16.

“ There is another pleasant thing, too, belonging to it ; for while the hand is at work, the thoughts are free. At one time, I think, perhaps, of what it says in Holy Scripture about Paul—though I forget whether his name was Paul or Saul then—being let down in a basket through a window at Damascus, to escape from the Jews. Ay, those Jews were very bitter against the Lord of life and glory, as many Jews are now : may God in mercy open their blind eyes, and soften their hard unbelieving hearts. At another time, the miracles of our blessed Saviour come into my head ; how he fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves

and two fishes, and twelve basketsful of fragments were picked up after; how he made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and raised the dead to life. There is many a trade that so puzzles a man's brain, that he can think about nothing else; but, you see, that is not the case with basket-making.

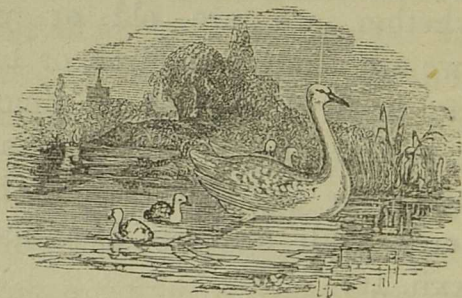
“Some of these twigs are so stiff and stubborn, that it is quite as much as I can do to twist them into their proper places. I hope you are not stiff and stubborn in your temper, my children; for, if you are, God will give you many a sharp twist, I promise you. Never go against God's word and God's will, for he knows best what to do with you, and what shape to bend you into. No one ever hardened himself against God and prospered yet, and no one ever will.

“These twigs are called osiers; and in some parts of the country, in low, marshy places, and by the sides of brooks and rivers

there are hundreds of acres covered all over with them. Every two or three years they are cut off the stumps they grow on, and in a little time after, the stumps throw out fresh shoots as thick as ever. It is God that makes them grow and spring up: and if ever you should be brought low, by sickness, or want, or accident, I hope you will learn to trust in him; for he can make you spring up again too. Oh, it is a blessed thing, whether we are old or young, whether we are country children or basket-makers, to trust in God at all times; to love him, to fear him, to obey him, and to honour him; for 'he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.'"
Psalm xxxii. 10.

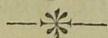
How long the old man would have gone on talking in this manner, had he not been interrupted, it is hard to say; but just then he was called into the cottage; so James and Susan, after feeling the platted osiers with

their hands, and taking a peep at the black-bird that hung in his cage against the cottage, bid good-bye to the old basket-maker, thanking him for what he had said.



TYRELL THE TINMAN;

OR, I'LL DO IT WELL.



TYRELL the tinman is worth thousands, all obtained by honest industry. There are different ways among honest men of obtaining wealth. One gets a name for his fair dealing, another for his industry, a third by his perseverance; but Tyrell got a name for doing everything that he did well.

It is the business of a tinman, as perhaps you know, to make tea-kettles, tea-pots, coffee-pots, saucepans, drinking cans, canisters, dish-covers, dripping-pans, and a hundred other useful household utensils. Without the services of the tinman our comforts would be much lessened.

The metal of which all our large tin goods

are formed is called block tin. When hot iron plates are merely covered over with hot, liquid tin, oftentimes the tin wears off, and people have been poisoned by eating fish which had stood the night before in a copper pan, the inside tin of which was corroded. Block tin plates, however, are now usually made by fastening a thin sheet of cold tin on each side of a thin sheet of cold iron, and these mingle so closely together that when cut with shears, the iron is not seen.

To the business of a tinman Tyrell served his time as an apprentice, working in a manufactory; but his health so far failed him when out of his time, that he was no longer able to work at his trade. This was a sad misfortune, for it threw him upon the wide world destitute; he had neither money, nor the means of supporting himself. What was he to do without friends, and unable to pursue his calling?

Necessity compelled him to take up with

any situation, however low, that he had strength to fill, and in which he could get honest bread. "Wherever I am," said he, "on this I am determined, whatever I do, *I'll do it well.*"

Now this was a noble resolution, and well he kept it. It was going to work in a right spirit; it was adopting a prudent plan; it was laying the foundation of his future prosperity. He who makes up his mind to do nothing without doing it well, is almost sure to succeed in what he undertakes.

It happened that at a tavern they wanted a young man to black the boots and shoes, to clean the knives, to run on errands, and do other things, and he at once offered himself for the place. Never before he entered on the situation had the boots of the customers been half so well blacked, the knives and forks been made half so bright, or the errands been half so punctually performed.

By this good conduct Tyrell secured the good opinion of his master and his customers, and won their confidence. It was seen that he was worthy of a better situation, and one was soon found for him in which he behaved as well as he had done in the former place, for he kept up his principle and his practice, "Whatever I do, *I'll do it well.*"

If we could always look on the bright side of our position, instead of brooding, as we are too apt to do, on the shadowy one, we should not afflict ourselves and those around us by our despondency. What is impossible to us is possible to God, for with him it is a light matter to remove our heaviest afflictions. Tyrell, who at one time was pulled down by sickness, was, in much mercy, built up by returning health, so that he was once more able to work at the business to which he had been apprenticed.

Tyrell found himself quite at home among his saucepans and coffee-pots, his cans and

canisters, his dish-covers and dripping pans, and was soon able to set up in business on a respectable scale. This he conducted with untiring industry to the satisfaction of all who dealt with him; and why? simply because he held fast to his old rule, "Whatever I do, *I'll do it well.*"

When a boy learns how to keep his head above water, he soon learns to swim; and when a poor man relieves himself from his poverty by industry and good conduct, he is in a fair way of getting on in life. Tyrell so far prospered in his ways, that at this present time he is, as was said before, "worth thousands." The poor shoe-black that was, is now the rich tinman.

But wealth, after all, is only a doubtful good. When used well it is a blessing, when misused it is oftentimes a curse. Riches are only a part of Tyrell's possessions, for God has added thereto a grateful heart. He knows the Heavenly Hand that has bestowed

all his mercies. He is bringing up his family in the fear of the Lord; he is liberally supporting benevolent and Christian objects, and is a sincere seeker of that wisdom, whose ways are "ways of pleasantness," and whose paths are "paths of peace."

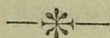
Need any more be said to convince the mind of the young reader of the great advantage of acting upon some noble and high minded principle, looking humbly but hopefully to God for his blessing thereon? All that Tyrell is, and all that he has attained, is owing, under a heavenly blessing, to his having adopted, and carried out the excellent principle, "*Whatever I do, I'll do it well.*"

Hundreds have erred by supposing that it matters but little how things are done by those in a low situation. This is a very great mistake, for he who acts well in a low position is almost sure to have it said to him at one time or another, "Go up higher."

We once heard of a poor man who worked at the bottom of a sawpit, but as he did his work well, he soon worked at the top. He next bought the piece of timber that he stood on, then turned wheelwright, and afterwards set up as a builder, in which business he thrived, creditably bringing up a large family, and thanking God for his success. This builder and Tyrell the tinman were men of the same stamp, for both of them thrived, both of them saw the hand of God in their prosperity, and both of them acted on the same principle, "Whatever I do, *I'll do it well.*"



ILL-USED ANIMALS AND BIRDS.



WHILE walking a street in London, I saw a crowd of persons, mostly children, gathered round a sort of show-box, so I crossed over to see what it was that took their attention.

No sooner had I drawn near to the throng, than I saw that they were looking on what was called "The Happy Family," consisting of a cage raised on a wooden frame, in which were crowded together creatures whose natures and habits were opposed to each other. No wonder that such a sight should attract the passers-by.

Here, on the lower part of the cage sat a large cat, blinking in dreamy unconcern, while a long-tailed rat and two or three mice took refuge from the glaring light under

her furry body. There up above, looking very grave, and with hardly spirit enough to be mischievous, sat a monkey, sadly cribbed up for want of room in which to play his tricks. A well-fed raven, a very tame magpie, an owl of more than usual gravity, several small birds, and other creatures made up the collection.

“Why don’t the cat kill the rat, father?” said a boy in a blue jacket and cap.

“That’s where it is, Fred,” replied the father; “I want you to tell me.”

“I thought owls lived on birds, mother,” said a little girl: “see! there’s a little bird on the owl’s back, and he does not touch it. What is the reason?”

“The man has taught him to do it, Mary; that’s the reason,” replied the mother.

“Beautiful!” said a gentleman to a lady who was hanging on his arm, after looking at the cage for a few moments. “We see here what may be done by kindness. The

timid are made fearless, and the fierce become gentle and harmless." So saying, he walked away talking to his companion about humanity, and the duty of making every creature happy.

"Call this a 'Happy Family?'" said I to myself; "why, it cannot be. That these creatures do not hurt each other I admit, but that they are happy I must deny. Before such creatures can enjoy each others' company, their very natures must be altered.

"If a man, a crocodile, a tiger, and a boa constrictor could be brought up together, without doing any injury one to another, would that be a proof that they were happy? I think not. There could be no bond of union between such opposite natures. Instead of calling these creatures 'The Happy Family,' I would call them 'The Ill-used Animals and Birds.'"

"Are you rats happy?" said I, as they

came to the front of the cage, but they scampered off without saying "yes." I put the same question to the cat, the owl, and the raven, with no better success; for puss remained silent, and the owl and the raven began to feather themselves as though they had no desire to be spoken to.

"And what say you, friend pug?" said I. "Are you as happy as the day is long with these companions of yours?" Pug shrugged up his shoulders as monkeys often do, and looked at me, with his mouth much in the form it would have been had he said, "No." I was quite satisfied as it regarded the happiness of the "Happy Family."

The collection of creatures of which I have spoken is certainly curious, and much may be learned from it that may be turned to account; but I cannot consider the caging of such creatures together to be other than an act of cruelty. At any rate, one col-

lection of the kind is quite enough, and having seen one, I hope that I shall not see another.

If we really hate cruelty we must give it no quarter, but hate it in all its forms. Not only must we abstain from it ourselves, but also be quick to discern it, and gently reprove it in another. This ought to be done while we are in health and able to follow out our inclinations.

For time, as it moves on its way,
 May change all our joy into sorrow,
And the pulse that beats wildly to-day
 May beat faintly and slowly to-morrow.

Short is the season in which we can show either cruelty or kindness; let us then do all we can to promote the happiness of all orders of living beings.

THE QUARREL.



ABEL HOWE could not live without quarrelling. Some boys are of a kind, forbearing, and forgiving spirit; but this was not the case with Abel. He would pick a quarrel with his brother about the veriest trifle in the world. "Behold," says the psalmist, "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Psa. cxxxiii. 1.

But if Abel Howe was quarrelsome, his sister Abigail was quite as sharp in her temper, and a word was enough to set her and Abel by the ears. Seldom did a day pass without a wrangle taking place between them. "A soft answer turneth away wrath.

but grievous words stir up anger," says the wise man. Prov. xv. 1.

One day, when Abigail, who ought to have been at work with her needle, was amusing herself in the garden with blowing a downy feather into the air, Abel, who should have been at his books, came up to her, and ill-naturedly began to blow it away from her. It was but a feather, it is true; but Abigail was as angry as if it had been a thing of much value.

"Let my feather alone," said she; "it is not yours, and you have no business to touch it."

"It came off one of the fowls," said Abel, "and is as much mine as it is yours."

"You shall not have it," said Abigail.

"I will have it," replied Abel; and, saying this, he caught the feather, and rubbed it up altogether in his hands, so that it would no longer fly in the air.

"You are a very provoking boy," said

Abigail, bursting into tears with anger and vexation.

“And you are a waspish, ill-tempered girl,” replied Abel, “to make such a fuss about a feather.”

“I’ll tell grandfather Humphrey of your spoiling my feather,” said Abigail; “that I will.”

“And I will tell him of your falling into a passion, and calling me names,” said Abel.

“You need not be at that trouble, either of you,” said Old Humphrey, coming out of the summer arbour, where, unknown to them, he had been sitting all the while, seeing them through the lilac bushes, and hearing every word they had spoken.

At sight of her grandfather, Abigail put one of her fingers in her mouth, and bent her eyes on the gravel-walk; while Abel began to fumble with his fingers, not knowing what to do with himself. Both their

faces were red with shame, as well they might be; for they knew that both their parents had, again and again, tried in the kindest way to convince them of the folly and sin of quarrelling with each other.

“Come into the arbour with me,” said Old Humphrey, mildly, “for I have just met with a clever little tale that may do you good. Listen, while I read it aloud for your benefit.” He then read to them the following story:—

“THE PIN AND THE NEEDLE.

“A pin and a needle being neighbours in a work-basket, and both being idle folk, began to quarrel, as idle folk are apt to do.

“‘I should like to know,’ said the pin, ‘what you are good for, and how you expect to get through the world without a head?’

“‘What is the use of your head,’ replied the needle, rather sharply, ‘if you have no eye?’

“ ‘What’s the use of an eye,’ said the pin, ‘if there is always something in it?’

“ ‘I am more active, and can go through more work than you can,’ said the needle.

“ ‘Yes; but you will not live long; for you have always a stitch in your side,’ said the pin.

“ ‘You are a poor crooked creature,’ said the needle.

“ ‘And you are so proud that you can’t bend without breaking your back,’ said the pin.

“ ‘I’ll pull your head off, if you insult me again,’ cried the needle.

“ ‘And I’ll pull your eye out, if you touch me. Remember, your life hangs on a single thread,’ said the pin.

“ While they were thus conversing, a little girl entered, and beginning to sew with the needle, she soon broke it off at the eye; she then tied the thread around the neck of the pin, and attempting to sew with

it, she soon pulled its head off, and threw it into the dirt by the side of the broken needle."

If the faces of Abel and Abigail were red with blushes before they heard the tale, they were much redder by the time it was finished. "Do try," said Old Humphrey, "and pray that you may be enabled to get the better of the failing you so often fall into. We may smile at the thought of a pin and needle quarrelling; but we cannot smile at the sad thought of a brother and sister quarrelling and indulging in angry words about a feather. Do, my dear children, 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'" Eph. iv. 31, 32.

Grandfather Humphrey here left Abel

and Abigail by themselves, to think over what he had read and said to them: let us hope, then, that the story of the pin and the needle may not have been read to you in vain.



CANARY BIRDS.



“MR. HUMPHREY, do you know anything about canary birds?”

“Some little, Charles; but what is it that you want to know about them?”

“I will tell you. This morning I met Andrew Taylor, carrying a fine bird-cage, quite new, and he told me that it was for a prize canary that his father had. He was in such a hurry that he had no time to tell me what I wanted to know. Can you tell me what a prize canary is?”

“Why, yes, I think I can. In a great city there are annual shows of cattle, sheep, pigs, little dogs, rabbits, pigeons, and canary birds, as well as of fruits and flowers. At these shows prizes are given for the best of

the kind produced, so that a prize canary is a canary so perfect and beautiful, that it has either obtained a prize or is about to contend for a prize."

"Oh, thank you! Now I know very well what a prize canary is. Andrew said his father's canary was of a deep yellow."

"It was a jonquil, I dare say."

"Where do canaries come from? Do you know?"

"Canaries come to us from Spain, and the Spaniards are said to have procured them from the Canary Islands. These islands are thirteen in number, and they lie in the North Atlantic Ocean, near the coast of Africa."

"But do all the canary birds that we see come from Spain or from the Canary Islands?"

"Oh, no! They are mostly bred in England by bird-fanciers, who make a handsome profit by rearing them. The food

called canary-grass, which these birds eat, as well as rape and hempseed, grows very commonly now in this country. It would be very difficult to say which is the original kind of canary among the many sorts we have in England, but those who have thought on the subject say the lizard canary comes the nearest to it."

"I did not know that there were different sorts of this bird."

"The lizard canary is more regular in its plumage than most others, being of a greenish bronze, all but the head, which is a clear yellow."

"Why is it called the lizard canary?"

"Because its plumage, in colour and marks, is much like the skin of the green lizard. The grey, the yellow, the blackish, and the chestnut are the principal varieties; but there are, perhaps, more than thirty in all. The spangled-back canary is a beauty in its way, but the marks on the feathers are

more broken up and confused than in the lizard. The jonquil canary is of a pure deep yellow, having no tinge of green. On the cap over the eyes the colour is yet deeper than in other parts. The mealy-bird canary has a back, breast, and head of a golden plumage, which appears to be frosted over, or powdered. This is owing to the small whitish edge of the small feathers. The chestnut or cinnamon canary is among the rarest, and this variety is bred principally by the Norwich weavers. Canaries usually have four nests of young birds every year, so that from two parent birds as many as thirty or forty young ones are often obtained. Canary birds may be made very tame. I know one at the present time that flies, when his cage door is thrown back, on the open hand of his master, to be fed, hopping up his arm to his shoulder, and then picking seeds out of his mouth. And this he will do over and over again, till

he is satisfied. At other times he flies off to his favourite perch, which is the top of the head of Ann, the housemaid; there he sits quite at his ease, while she walks about, and goes on with her work just as if he was not there."

"How I should like to see him! What a saucy little fellow he must be!"

"Oh, he is a pretty creature! 'One thing at a time' seems to be his motto; for when he has once begun to eat a hemp-seed, or a crumb of bread, he never leaves it till he has finished up every speck of it. Offer him what you will, you cannot tempt him to touch it till he has eaten up what he began before."

"Well done, Dicky! I should like just such a bird."

"Birds are beautiful creatures, and add much to the pleasure of man. The lark trilling his morning lay, the throstle warbling his mid-day song, and the nightingale

pouring her plaintive strain at night—all give a charm to the country. What a sweet picture is that in the second chapter of the Song of Solomon: “The winter is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.”

“Yes, that is a pretty picture.”

“It was said by our blessed Saviour, when he went about doing good, ‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.’ Matt. viii. 20. What a thought! that he who came to lay down his life for guilty man—that he who is the way, and the only way, to salvation and eternal life, should be rejected of men, persecuted, buffeted, spat upon, scourged, and crucified! That he should be regarded as an enemy, instead of a friend, a benefactor, and a merciful redeemer. Yet so it was. It is a pleasant thing to regard the music of

singing-birds as praise to their Almighty Maker ; and that is a pretty thought about the lark : ' He mounts up ! up ! up ! singing towards heaven ; and if he had strength enough he would carry his song of thanksgiving even to the throne of the Eternal.' ”

“ Thank you, thank you, Mr. Humphrey, for all that you have told me about singing-birds and canaries.”



HAVE YOU GOT THE RIGHT KEY?



THE clock had struck eight one morning, and I was in fearful haste, for my portmanteau and carpet-bag were being carried from the hall to the cab standing at the door, when I found it was necessary to go to the top of the house for an important paper which was under lock and key, before I could quit my habitation. Half an hour was all the time I had to get to the railway station, happen what might, so that I was in no small bustle.

In such a season and situation as this, a man need not be exhorted to "put his best foot foremost." With truth may it be said, that no time was lost by me in mounting the staircase, and in applying one of my keys to

the box, the casket of my required treasure. Finding some difficulty in my attempts to insert the key in the keyhole, I became impatient, and used more force, but all in vain. It was not till I had placed the box in all positions, tried the key in all directions, and almost given up the matter in despair, that the discovery was made by Ann, the housemaid, that I was trying the wrong key.

In my boyish days, two or three school-fellows and myself having to work a difficult sum in arithmetic, arrived at four different results; this placed us in a difficulty, as we knew not which of us was right, and our master was very severe. We knew that, being limited in his attainments, he himself could not work the sum, and that he was altogether dependent on the key to the cypher-book, from which the sum was taken. This key he kept very closely to himself in the drawer of his desk, and we sadly

wanted to get a peep at it. At length our master left the school-room for a few minutes, when the key to the cypher-book lay on his desk. No sooner was his back turned, than one of my school-fellows sprang to the desk, consulted the key, and thus relieved us of our difficulty. Now this conduct you know was very wrong; but from these two illustrations, my reader will be at no loss to draw the reasonable inference, that to possess a proper key is a great advantage to us, either in unlocking a box, or in unravelling the mystery of a difficult question.

Not few are the positions in life in which we are placed, wherein the question might with profit be asked by ourselves, Have you got the right key? for the answer would set us about that careful examination which would confirm us in what was right, and correct us in what was wrong.

On how many occasions do we "err not

knowing the Scriptures," needlessly writing bitter things against ourselves ?

"How oft amid the tempest loud
The sunbeam wins its way ;
And breaking from the thunder cloud,
Proclaims a glorious day.

How often in eternal things,
When judgments seem to roll,
Mercy looks mildly forth and flings
Her sunbeams on the soul !"

A man full of worldly wisdom, and proud of his attainments, may prayerlessly strive without the assistance of the Holy Spirit to become acquainted with God's holy word, and to understand the ways of the Eternal. Alas ! the undertaking is beyond his powers. As well might he attempt to weigh the earth in a balance, and to mete out the waters of the sea with the hollow of his hand. This way will never do, and so long as he pursues it, he never can gain his end. He must change his plan altogether, for with such a key he will never unlock the

treasury of Divine truth. He must take the hat from his haughty head, and the shoes from his presuming feet, for the place on which he stands is holy ground. He must come with a humble and loving heart, a meek and obedient spirit; and then he may plead the promise, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." This will be using the right key, and not the wrong one.

The more I think on this subject, the more am I inclined to believe that it may be made useful. Oh for a key of kindness that we may unlock each others' hearts, and live in love! Oh for a key of faith to admit us more immediately into his presence, of whom it is said, "I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. i. 18.

No doubt my reader remembers that

precious key called Promise, which Hopeful, in "Pilgrim's Progress," pulled out of his bosom. Neither the bolt of the dungeon door, nor that of the door of the castle-yard could stand against it; and though the lock of the great iron gate "went very hard, yet the key did open it." It was the right key, and not the wrong one, you may depend upon it.

Duty is a key to a good reputation, and a good conscience is a key to the chamber of quietness and peace. Many say that money is the key to all earthly honour and renown; but, however this may be, the key of heaven is a living faith in a crucified Redeemer.



A TALK WITH AN AGED MARINER.



I LOVE to talk with old soldiers and sailors, for the dangers they describe make me think more of that haven of love and joy, where war will be exchanged for peace, and tempest for eternal repose.

The weather was very rough, and the sea was awful to look upon. A fishing smack had struck on a little rocky point hardly above water, and as her danger was great, the life-boat was sent to her rescue. It was but just in time. She saved the lives of three men and a boy, and I saw her bring them in gallantly. There was a fine old sailor among those that manned the life-boat, whom I could not help noticing. I should have thought him too old for such a

service, but he was quite equal to it—every inch a sailor. The following day, seeing the aged mariner walking on the shore, I joined him, and thus we talked together:—

“Yours was a daring deed to put off to the fishing smack yesterday; I was afraid that you would never come back again, the sea was so rough.”

“It was rough, sir, but I have been out in worse weather. Perhaps you are not accustomed to the sea, and that made it look rougher to you than it was.”

“I do not know much about the sea certainly, but I know enough to think well of a sailor that will risk his life in such weather, as it was, to save the lives of others.”

“Why, sir, I have had a helping hand in danger myself before now, and one good turn deserves another.”

“I should like to hear some of your adventures, if you will be kind enough to tell me about them.”

“They say, sir, that seamen are fond of telling long stories about themselves, spinning yarns, as it is called, and that they often tell of things that are as new to them as to those who listen to them. This may be true, and indeed I believe it is; for when a sailor is surrounded by those who, knowing nothing about the sea, gape and stare at everything he tells them, it is often a temptation too strong for him, more’s the pity; and then he makes the storm blow great guns a little over-loud, and lets the mainmast go by the board a little more freely than he ought to do.”

“You have years on your brow, and have seen a little of the world no doubt.”

“A little of the world of waters I have, sir, and been knocked about in most seas. I was but a young one when I first pulled a tarred rope.”

“You have been glad to run into port in many a storm, I dare say.”

“Why, sir, if all is right and tight, and

he has plenty of sea-room, a seaman does not think much of a hard blow. A man may be safe in a storm in the middle of the Atlantic, when he would be in great danger in the British Channel."

"Yes, that is the case, I dare say. You are afraid of the rocks, I suppose?"

"We are, sir—of rocks both above and below; for if the rocks be above water, the ship may have her bows bulged in; and when they are below, if her keel be not damaged, her stem may be stuck fast, while her stern is pounded up and down on the hard rock by the heavy sea and the wind. A ship had need be well put together to bear this long. If the storm does not abate, and she cannot get off, to pieces she must go, let her captain and her crew be whom they may."

"You have been wrecked, I dare say, in your time."

"I have indeed. If you had seen the wreck of the 'Neptune,' you would not have

forgotten it. What a shriek that was when the ship first struck! Many a sailor on board thought as much of those around him as he did of himself. I have heard the wild war whoop of the red men when they rushed on another tribe with their tomahawks in their hands; but this is nothing to the shriek of horror that rises from the hold and deck of a passenger ship when it is driven on the rocks by the storm. Sailors are quiet enough on such occasions, for he that has a chicken-heart has no business afore the mast; but women shriek, and children shriek, and well they may, poor souls! for a vessel parting mid-ships, and a clean run of the sea over her, has an ugly look even to a seaman."

"Were there many people lost by the wreck of the 'Neptune?'"

"Sadly too many, sir, and part of them were not over well prepared to go into another world with little warning; though,

for aught I know, they may be quite as well prepared as we sailors were."

"From what port did you sail, and to what land were you bound?"

"I see, sir, that you are set on hearing all about it, and so you shall. The 'Neptune' left Cork bound for Sydney, in New South Wales, and had aboard men, women, and children, who were emigrants, besides her crew. Some of us that came back again did not bring home the light hearts we took out with us, and I was one of them, for I had two lads, and I lost them."

The old tar had a struggle here, for his voice faltered, and it was some time before he went on. At last the sleeve of his rough jacket was hastily drawn across his eyes, and he recovered himself. Years had passed since his loss, but as he told his story, it seemed to come upon him as if it had been but yesterday; the father conquered the seaman. When he went on again he tried hard to be cheerful.

“As I said, sir, the ‘Neptune’ left Cork for Sydney, and not much the matter with the wind. We saw on our voyage about as many porpoises, and spoke about as many ships as we expected; so that nothing uncommon could be entered on the ship’s log till we were within fifty leagues of King’s Island, at the entrance of Bass’s Straits; but then a man went overboard. Landsmen have their dangers, but every seaman may say, ‘There is but a step between me and death.’

“We kept a sharp look-out for the next few days, and at last made land, though when we neared it, it did not look much to our liking. Awful breakers were ahead of us, and very soon we were among them. All that could be done was done; the ‘Neptune’ tacked, and, as danger increased, she was placed in stays, though, perhaps, not being used to the sea, you may not know what that means.”

“I do not; it is a new term to me.”

“ It means that the sails and rudder are so managed that the head of the ship is brought right up to the wind, to get her on a contrary tack. It was, however, of no use, for the ‘ Neptune ’ struck and unshipped her rudder ; and though she got off again, it was but for a minute or so, for she struck again heavily on the larboard bow, swung broadside on the reef, and began to fill. Then rose a wild scream from the passengers, who gave themselves up for lost. The shriek of suffering woman goes to a sailor’s heart, and here we had enough of it. The ship was partly broke in two, and as the danger increased, the cries of the distressed passengers rose louder and louder. Every one saw that the ‘ Neptune ’ had completed her last voyage. The boats were ordered out. The first mate was in the pinnace, with passengers and a few hands, and one of my lads was with him too, poor fellow ! he was but sixteen, but he did his duty. Hardly had the pinnace left the ship before

the breakers swamped her. Down she went with her unhappy cargo. Only one man swam back again to the wreck, and he was not my son.

Then the long-boat was pushed off with another cargo, and my other lad was the last that leaped into her. Before she was a cable's length from the ship the violence of the surf upset her. My lad, who was a year older than his brother, struggled hard to regain the wreck, and he would have reached it, too, but he turned aside to save a woman who was clinging to a hen-coop that had been flung overboard. Twice I saw him recover her when she had lost her hold, but then the hencoop was washed away, and they both went down together. Hard work this for a father! Two sons at once, and such lads as they were, too!"

It was a little time before the aged mariner got the better of the choking in his throat that affected his voice, but then he again went on.

“ You may perhaps think, sir, that I gave myself up when my two lads were gone, but that was not the case. Life is sweet to us even in the hour of desperate distress, and I made a struggle to preserve mine. The ship went to pieces, and those of the crew and passengers that had not perished clung to the different parts of the wreck, the winds howling over them, and the waves roaring about them.

“ Such as love to see sights might have seen them then. Husbands trying to save their wives, and mothers struggling to save their children. It was of no use to get on the rocks, for they were so low that billow after billow went boiling over them. Every one who sought a refuge on them was swept away. It was dreadful to see death bearing off one after another.

“ The captain and second mate, with five or six more, clung to the mast, which had gone over before the ‘Neptune’ broke up altogether; whilst I, with two men and a

woman, held on by the bowsprit. The woman soon let go, overcome by the waters, but I caught her and held her fast. For hours we kept drifting on towards the shore, sometimes in rougher, and sometimes in smoother water; till at last, through God's mercy, by drifting and struggling, about a dozen of us reached King's Island.

“It was something, worn as we were, to set our feet once more on land, and grateful enough we were, for a time, for God's goodness to us; but sailors often have unthankful hearts, and soon forget their deliverances. Finding nothing in the island readily that relieved our hunger, we began to murmur, and to envy those of our companions who had been swallowed up by the waves. I knew but little of God's holy word then, and thought much less of his goodness and mercy than I do now. Affliction, sir, in God's hands, is often made a blessing to us, for we gain by it much more than we lose. It ill becomes those whom

God has snatched from the perils of the water to call in question his goodness on the land.

“A few comforts from the wreck floated ashore in our need : we succeeded in taking some fish, and even the island itself proved to be more fruitful than we had imagined. Every day some of us were on the heights by the sea-coast looking out for vessels, and a woman's shawl was hoisted as a signal of distress. At last a whaler came in sight, and an angel from heaven could not have been more welcome. Our signal was seen, and the whaler came to our relief like a living thing ploughing her way through the waters.

“Danger, trial, and distress, prepare us for comfort and joy. We never could have felt the delight we did, if we had not endured adversity. After burying the bodies that had drifted ashore, we were all taken on board the whaler, treated with great kindness, and landed in Cornwall. The first

chance I had, I worked my way home : but I should have told you that in Cornwall I met with a reader of God's holy word—a meeting that I shall have cause to remember all the days of my life. The loss of my two lads had much sobered me, and my dangers and mercies had, by God's grace, softened my heart ; so that when his word was made plain to me, I listened to it gladly. That word is now my greatest comfort. I have read the fifty-first Psalm, sir, and it has been to me a penitent's prayer ; and my soul has been bowed down as I repented of my sins. Then I have read the blessed truth, ' God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life ; ' and it has given me peace, and is the ground of my hope.

“ You are pleased to think well of the trip of the life-boat yesterday, but such things are in a sailor's way ; and, as I said, what is danger in the eyes of a landsman is not so

perilous in the eyes of a seaman. Snatched, as I have been, from death, it would be but a poor return if I were not ready to help a brother seaman in the season of danger. To endure toil, and to be bold in danger, are part of a sailor's calling. Oh, that he would add to it prudence and the fear of the Lord!

“A little longer, sir, and the voyage of life will be over. My father perished by shipwreck, my brother perished by shipwreck, and I have the belief full in my heart, though in mercy long preserved, that I shall yet myself be swallowed up by the yawning waves. God's will be done, whatever it may be. His ‘way is in the sea,’ and his ‘path is in the great waters,’ and his ‘footsteps are not known.’ I have a good hope, *through faith*, that my sins are pardoned; and that through faith in Christ I am now a child of God. He has given me his holy word for my consolation, and that contains some blessed promises that all the billows of the ocean can never destroy.”

THE MOSQUITO.



Do you know what a mosquito is? If not, I will tell you. It is an insect resembling the gnat that you see playing in the air on a hot summer's day.

In foreign countries mosquitoes are very troublesome, for their numbers are beyond what you can imagine. Myriads and myriads of them swarm in different parts so thickly, that it is necessary to be continually employed in driving them away.

Now, if you will bear in mind that the mosquito is larger than the gnat, and that its bite is very venomous, you may fancy, in some degree, how tormenting it must be to have myriads of such creatures around you on a hot day, sounding their shrill trumpets,

and watching an opportunity of settling upon you. But it is not during the day only that mosquitoes are troublesome; they are, if possible, still more so during the night; for when people are awake they can protect themselves from them, but it is difficult to do this during the hours of sleep.

In India, and other places, the beds are surrounded with gauze curtains, on purpose to keep out the mosquitoes; for if only one happens to get inside, it is enough to prevent the person sleeping there from enjoying any comfortable repose.

Let us draw a picture from the life, such as travellers have drawn over and over again, of one tormented through the night by a mosquito. He prepares to get into bed; but this must be done with very great care, or his night's rest is already at an end.

The gauze curtains are tucked close under the mattress, or bed, all round, to keep out

the mosquitoes, so that it is necessary that he should make only a small hole, and go through it as quickly as he can.

Before he does this, however, it is necessary to drive away the mosquitoes from the part, and this he does by whisking about a long hairy kind of brush; he then drops through the hole, and carefully closes it after him. No sooner has he done this than he hears hundreds of the busy insects sounding their horns, and knocking against the outside of the gauze curtains.

After some time, and just as he is beginning to doze, a sharp humming noise is heard over his head. In a moment he sits up in his cot, and, snatching up his long loose brush, begins to lay about him, beating the air in all direction; but as the lamp burning in the room does not give light enough for him to see the mosquito, he cannot tell whether he strikes him or not. Well, all appears quiet, and he lies down

again, placing his long brush on the bed-clothes, that it may be ready in case of need.

He has hardly got into a comfortable position before he again hears the trumpet of the enemy, who seems as fiercely disposed for fight as he was before, and who in another moment perches himself on the tip of his nose.

This is unpardonable; so, with a tremendous blow with his open hand, he tries to demolish the mosquito. Smarting with the pain he has inflicted on his own face, and as waspish as a spoilt child, he moves his quick eye from one part to another, lest the culprit should have escaped the punishment intended for him. All is, however, quiet, except the outside buzzing; and, right glad that he has at last crushed his annoying enemy, he lies down once more, half imagining that the shrill sound is still heard.

Sweet it is after a sultry and weary day to sink into a soothing slumber, and sadly provoking it is to be disturbed just as you have entered on your first nap. Well! he closes his eyes, and gradually loses the remembrance of all his earthly cares, forgetting even the tormenting insect which has so sorely tried him.

And now the shadows on the walls grow faint or strong as the flame of the lamp rises and falls, and the buzz of the playful mosquitoes continues, though unheard by the unconscious sleeper, till a sharp, stinging pain on his left ear makes him start up in a kind of frenzy; he is bitten by the mosquito, and once more he brandishes his brush like a labouring man threshing in a barn.

Ay, ay! it is very easy to laugh at the poor, tormented tenant of the little cot, as he lays about him half mad with vexation and rage; but if you were in his place, it would sadly try your temper.

He fancies he sees the mosquito here, imagines that he hears him there, and makes sure of killing him by striking a hard blow in the corner; but past experience makes him doubtful whether he has succeeded; he listens and strikes, and strikes and listens by turns, till, wearied with exertions, he once more lies down, rather in despair than hope. But what is his consternation to perceive something like a gap in the gauze curtains!—he fears it is, yet hopes it cannot be so, when on getting up to ascertain the truth, he finds it a reality. Whether he has made the hole with his brush, or by his great care in pulling and tucking in the curtains, he cannot tell; neither, indeed, does it much signify; there it is, and while he is thinking about the best way to repair it, at least a dozen mosquitoes come buzzing in through the breach.

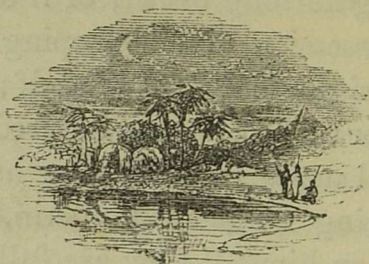
All hope is now at an end; he may use

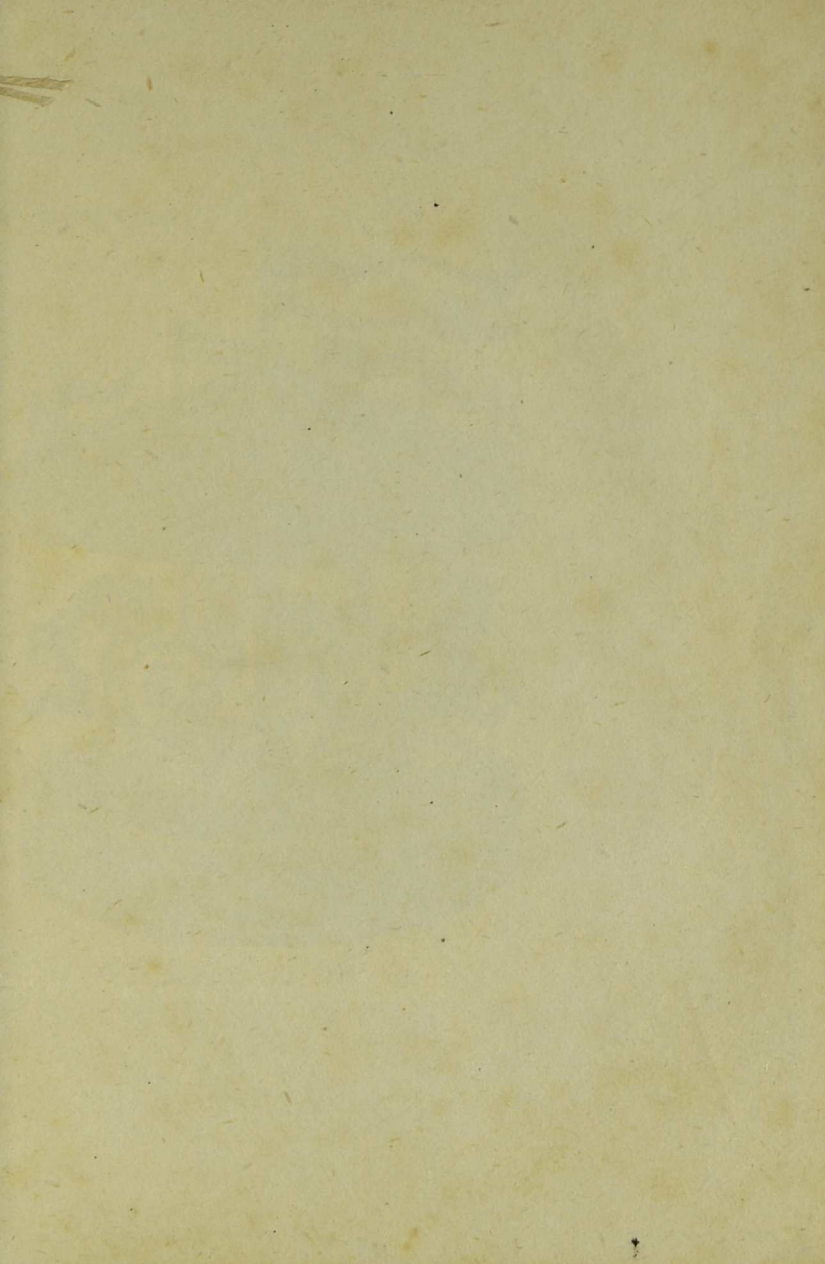
his long brush, or he may let it lie idle, for it will amount to much the same thing in the end; there is no more peace for him till morning. He has the choice whether he will wage battle with his enemies outside or inside the cot; one or the other he must do; for if he will not attack them, they are sure to attack him.

Should he leave his cot and dress himself, he may sit by the lamp the whole night, brandishing his long brush; or if determined to keep possession of his sleeping quarters, he sits upright to defend himself; there he must sit; for though he may be tired, the mosquitoes will never rest till they have buried their stinging fangs in his skin, and banquetted upon him till they are full.

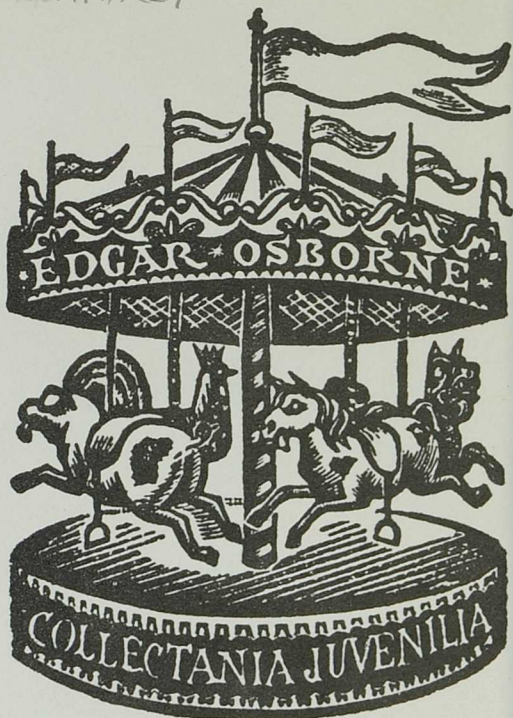
It may be that you are among thousands who, living in happy England, think but lightly of the comfort of a good night's repose. If so, perhaps this account of the mosquito may make you more mindful of

the benefits you enjoy ; you may offer up your nightly praise and prayer with a more grateful spirit to the Father of mercies, that your tent is pitched in a goodly land ; and you may rise from your bed after a night's refreshing sleep, thankful that you have not been robbed of your rest by the stinging bite of the mosquito.





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