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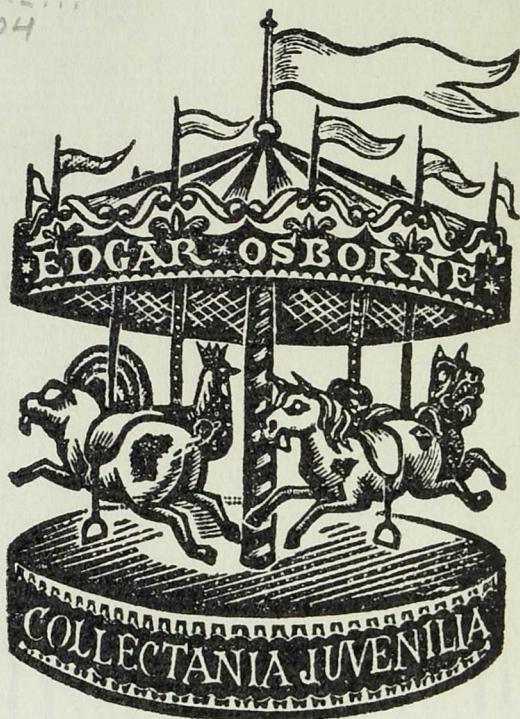
THE  
TAME  
GOLDFINCH:

OR,

*The Unfortunate Neglect.*

CORNER OF  
*St. Paul's Church-Yard.*

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TAME...  
1804



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James C. Stone

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# The Tame Goldfinch.

Page 8.



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THE  
TAME GOLDFINCH:

OR, THE

UNFORTUNATE NEGLECT.

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1804.

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THE  
TAME GOLDFINCH.



AS Louisa Manners was sitting, one fine afternoon at the parlour window, the cry of "Buy my singing birds," excited her attention, and in a few moments she perceived a man carrying a large cage full of linnets and canary birds, and holding on one finger, a remarkably beautiful goldfinch, which was so perfectly tame as to eat from the hand, and drink from the lip of its master.

Louisa gazed on the pretty

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songsters with a wishful eye, and when the bird-man asked her if she would purchase one, she could hardly refrain from drawing out her purse. However, she prudently considered that it would be extremely wrong to lay out her money without the consent of her parents, and therefore she requested the man to stop while she consulted her papa.

She then ran to the library, and exclaimed, "O my dear papa, only come with me to the door! There is a man with a cage full of pretty birds, and he has a goldfinch on his finger, which I should be extremely happy to buy, if you would give me leave."



Mr. Manners told his daughter that if she were to purchase one of those birds, it must be regularly fed, and as he knew her to be a very giddy girl, he was sadly afraid it would soon perish through neglect. But she assured him that she would supply all its little wants with the utmost care and attention, and that she would never eat her own breakfast till her bird had been properly fed.

For some time, her papa seemed unwilling to believe these fair promises, but at length her coaxing and entreaties had the desired effect, and Mr. Manners accompanied her to the door, where he permitted her to purchase the *tame*

*goldfinch*; at the same time giving her some money to buy a handsome cage, and a pair of glasses for seed and water.

Louisa's heart might, indeed, be said to have leaped for joy when the beautiful bird was put into her possession, and she almost devoured her father's hand with kisses while thanking him for his goodness. She then ran into the drawing room, to show her charming goldfinch to her mamma and her sisters, and felt herself highly gratified on hearing them all unite in admiring her new favourite. Indeed they praised it with great justice, for the brilliant colours of its plumage, the sweetness of its notes, and its peculiar tameness

rendered it a most interesting little creature; and every young lady and gentleman, that visited at the house, pronounced it a perfect beauty.

Louisa, for some time, adhered strictly to her promise of feeding the goldfinch before she took her own breakfast, and in addition to the seed with which one of his glasses was usually filled, she would give him some chopped egg, or loaf sugar, and enwreath his cage with groundsel, chickweed, &c.

The pretty creature seemed grateful for these acts of kindness, as he always began to chirrup when his mistress entered the room, and on her taking him from his cage he would hop upon her fin-

ger, her bosom, and her shoulders, without attempting to fly away.— Mrs. Manners took great pains to improve this docility, and her exertions proved so succesful, that in a short time the little creature would, at the word of command, hop out of his cage upon the table, sham a fit of sleepiness, and at length lie down on his back, panting, and occasionally closing his eyes, till bidden to get up \* again. He would then fly to the geraniums that stood in the parlour window, and after picking for some time among the earth, he would seat himself on one of the largest branches, and warble so melodiously, that

\* This is a fact.

Louisa would frequently drop her work, in consequence of her fixed attention. Every evening she made it a rule to play a tune on her little bird organ, and the *tame goldfinch* listened so attentively, that he soon learnt many of the airs.

After a few weeks had passed, a young gentleman came on a visit to Mr. Manners, and he was so greatly delighted with Louisa's bird, that he begged permission to learn him something which had been lately exhibited to the public. Louisa begged to know what it was, but he refused to tell, and observed that he must practise the bird in private, but that when he had completed his design, he was

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sure it would give general satisfaction. Louisa accordingly consented, and after some time the young visitor declared his feathered pupil sufficiently clever to appear in public. One day, therefore, when the cloth was withdrawn, the young gentleman placed a little stage on the table, with a small brass cannon at one end, and some little matches, and a lighted lamp at the other. The tame goldfinch was then brought forward, and did precisely as he was ordered, taking up one of the little matches in his bill, lighting it at the lamp, and applying it to the touch-hole of the cannon, with-

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out exhibiting the least symptom of alarm at the explosion\*.

The whole company was charmed with this capital performance, and Louisa could hardly credit her own eyes, as she thought it utterly impossible that birds could be taught so successfully. Her papa, however, told her, that even greater feats than these had once been performed by a Canary bird in Germany.—“In a most interesting book,” said he, “which I have been reading this morning, there is an account of a poor bird-man who procured a subsistence by a Canary, which would lie down, rise up,

\* This was performed by a goldfinch, some years ago, in London.

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sing, dance a hornpipe, and bow to the company in the most extraordinary manner; but one day after it had gone through all its little performances, at a gentleman's house, a large cat leaped suddenly upon the table, and carried it off. Its body was rescued from the talons of its murderer, and a liberal subscription was made, to atone, in some measure, for the dreadful accident; but the poor bird-man was almost overwhelmed with sorrow, and all the company were affected even to tears."

"O! the nasty cat," exclaimed Louisa, "did they not kill her, Papa?"

"No, my dear," replied Mr. Manners, "the gentleman of the



house observed, with great justice, that the cat ought not to be killed for an act which was natural to her; but his feelings were so deeply wounded by the fate of the poor bird, that he could not bear the sight of her, and therefore ordered her to be taken from his estate."

Louisa thanked her papa for this information, and then turned her attention towards her own pretty bird, which had now hopped back into its cage. She cleaned out his glasses, gave him fresh food and water, fixed a lump of sugar between the wires, and then asked her beloved parents if she had not kept her word, by regularly attending on her favourite? They

told her that her conduct had, hitherto, been commendable; but reminded her that it would be necessary to pay the same attention in *future*.

For some time, Louisa was perfectly happy with her goldfinch, and took every opportunity of amusing her young visitors with its pretty tricks; but as new objects presented themselves to her notice, the bird was gradually neglected, till at length she contented herself with merely giving him food and water three or four times a week. The innocent songster chirped as usual whenever he saw her, and repeated the most harmonious notes which he had learnt from

the bird organ ; but it was now very seldom that his mistress opened the door of his cage, or suffered him to hop on her shoulders, or to sing among the fragrant geraniums.

On Louisa's birth-day, several young people were invited to her father's house, and most of them were very anxious to see the surprising feats of the tame goldfinch ; but Louisa's attention was now chiefly engrossed by other matters, and she, consequently, took but little pleasure in the exhibition which she had so often witnessed.

After dinner, her uncle informed her that he had brought her a birth-day present ; and he accord-

ingly produced an elegant wax doll, which seemed to be asleep, but on his touching a secret spring, it opened its fine blue eyes, to the astonishment of all the little spectators. The doll was, indeed, remarkably handsome, and Louisa thought she had never possessed such a charming play-thing before. Her whole attention was devoted to dressing and undressing it; and many hours were spent every day in removing it from the cradle to a bed, and from thence to the grandest room in the baby-house. In short, Miss Dolly was *charming* because she was *new*, and her mistress thought it impossible to take too

The first thing I noticed when I  
 stepped out of the car was a  
 warm blanket of sunlight. The  
 air was crisp and clean, a  
 stark contrast to the smoggy  
 city I had just left. I took a  
 deep breath, feeling a sense of  
 freedom and possibility. The  
 landscape was beautiful, rolling  
 hills and valleys, dotted with  
 small towns and farms. I  
 felt like I had entered a new  
 world, one where the possibilities  
 were endless. I was excited  
 and nervous, but most of all, I  
 was hopeful. This was my chance  
 to start over, to create a new  
 life for myself. I was going  
 to make it work. I was going  
 to succeed. I was going to  
 be happy.

# The Tame Goldfinch.

Page 46.



Published Decr. 1784, by J. Harris corner of St. Pauls Church Yard, London.

was to reply to answer the  
and it appeared very rough,

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much pains, or to spend too much time, in dressing her to the best advantage, or placing her in the most graceful position.

It may be naturally supposed that the tame goldfinch found a formidable rival in Louisa's doll, and this was so much the case, that the poor bird frequently experienced the bitter pangs of hunger and thirst, while his giddy mistress was employed in nursing her new favourite.—One morning, however, Mr. Manners happened to take down the cage, and found the goldfinch lying upon its breast, and evidently panting for life. Its feathers, also, appeared very rough, and it was totally unable to answer the

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well known call. Louisa was now sent for, and questioned with respect to her bird. Her face was instantly covered with the blush of conscious guilt, and she said, in a low voice, that she had somehow forgotten the seed, but she would fetch it immediately.

While she was gone for the seed bag, her papa examined the glasses, and found that poor Dick was utterly destitute both of food and water.—“Alas!” exclaimed he, “this is what I feared from my daughter’s thoughtlessness, and therefore I was unwilling to buy thee. Poor bird! thou art, indeed, in careless hands, but I fear my pity is now of little use.”—When Louisa returned, her father told



The first of these was the  
 fact that the British  
 government had decided to  
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 the world. The second was  
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 respect to her place in  
 the world.

Published and sold by

# The Tame Goldfinch.

Page 26



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her, that the bird was dying with hunger, and her mamma reproached her so sharply on account of her carelessness and cruelty, that she burst into a flood of tears, and sobbed as if her heart would break. At length, however, Mr. Manners succeeded in recovering the goldfinch from its melancholy condition, and Louisa dried up her tears, under the idea that all the danger and trouble was now completely over.

Resolving to make some atonement for her past neglect, she went out, in the afternoon, for the express purpose of gathering some chick-weed; and at night, she played several airs upon her bird-

organ. But what was her astonishment, next morning, at hearing her papa order the footman to take the goldfinch to a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, who, he said, would treat it with more kindness than a naughty, careless girl.

Deeply wounded by these words, and almost distracted at the thought of being accounted wicked and cruel, poor Louisa seized her papa's hand with warm emotion, and, looking up in his face with a most sorrowful countenance, earnestly begged him to let her keep her bird, and not to punish so severely an unfortunate omission of her duty.

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“Louisa,” said Mr. Manners, with a harsher tone of voice than he usually assumed, “your fault is much greater than you now imagine, and it is necessary that you should see it in its real colour, that so you may learn betimes to abhor every species of cruelty and injustice. Suppose, Louisa, that you had, by any accident, been torn from my protection, and taken prisoner by a man whose power it was impossible to resist;—that after spending some time in fruitless lamentations, you had exerted all your little abilities to please your keeper, and had willingly learnt all the accomplishments he might wish to teach you; if at length you had almost forgot

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the gaoler in the friend, and had begun to love him for his kindness in supplying all your wants, and continually providing for your comfort;—tell me, what would you have thought if after all his pretended kindness and your real gratitude, he had left you without victuals or drink till you sunk faint and exhausted upon the ground, and expected death to end your miseries? Would you not have thought him a base and cruel monster? and would not all who had heard the melancholy tale have pronounced him a *murderer*? Yet *you* have done all this, and done it to a poor little creature that could not speak to tell us his

wants, or to reproach you with your cruel baseness."

"My dear papa," sobbed Louisa, while her rosy cheeks were deluged with tears, "I see my fault, and I beg, O yes, on my bended knees, I beg forgiveness. Do, dear papa, forgive me *this once*, and suffer my poor bird to remain here, that I may act towards him with greater kindness in future."—The energy with which this request was preferred, and the violent sorrow that convulsed Louisa's bosom, induced Mr. Manners to change his resolution, and he accordingly told his daughter that she might keep the goldfinch on condition of its being duly attended. She received this

permission with many thanks, and tranquillity was once more happily re-established.

Louisa now prudently divided her leisure hours between her bird and her doll, but as she was aware that the former stood in need of support, and the other did not, she regularly supplied him with food every morning, and was always rewarded with a sweet song. Her parents began to hope that the late lesson which she had received would prove effectual, and her play-mates no longer found it difficult to procure a sight of Dick's little exploits.

About six weeks afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Manners were



obliged to go out of town for a few days; but before they set off, they took care to provide some young companions for their beloved daughter, and left her under the care of a governess, earnestly exhorting her to remember the *tame goldfinch*. Louisa promised to be very attentive, and her fond parents bade her adieu with every possible mark of tenderness and affection.

The carriage had scarcely driven from the door before Louisa ran to the bird-cage, to examine the stock of provisions, and, on finding it rather low, she determined to go out, and purchase a fresh supply; but just as she was putting on her hat and gloves, her

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young visitors arrived, and she therefore put it off till the afternoon.

After dinner a variety of games were proposed by the young people, and the evening was so completely taken up with blindman's buff, four corners, and hunt the slipper, that it was time to go to bed before the poor goldfinch was remembered. However, Louisa resolved to procure some food for him early in the morning, and with this intention she laid her head on the pillow, to enjoy a sound repose, while Dick was suffering the consequence of her neglect.

Next morning Louisa indulged

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herself with a longer nap than usual, and when she did get up she had the mortification to find the breakfast was waiting. Accordingly she hurried on her clothes, and descended to the parlour, where she apologized for her sluggishness, by stating that she had been much fatigued the preceding day.

When the repast was finished, she was requested to give her opinion on some prints and drawings which belonged to one of her visitors. The subjects were interesting, and the performances so capital, that Louisa's attention was completely fixed for several hours. At the expiration of that time a

walk in the pleasure grounds was proposed and agreed on ; and in the afternoon an invitation to the house of Lady Wellbred proved irresistible. There the time passed happily indeed ; music, dancing, and the exhibition of a magic lantern being successively introduced, for the amusement of the juvenile party ; and an elegant collation terminating the entertainment.

Louisa was so fatigued with the exertions of the evening, that she was glad to go to bed immediately on her return home, and even her sleeping hours were occupied by the contemplation of those pleasures she had so lately experienced. Her little companions, also, were completely tired, and all indulged

themselves in the morning with a longer nap than usual.

When the little folks had breakfasted, one of them observed that he should wish to be gratified with a sight of the *tame goldfinch*, of which he had heard some remarkable things related. Poor Louisa instantly remembered her neglect, and trembled with apprehension. She ran, however, to the library, where Dick had been usually kept, and eagerly took down the cage. But O! what distress overwhelmed her mind when she beheld the pretty creature laying lifeless on its back, with its little wings extended. "He is *dead!*" exclaimed she, in a voice of anguish, "He

is surely dead ! O ! what will become of me, or how shall I dare to meet my angry father ? Poor, poor bird ! thou wast my *prisoner*, and I have *murdered* thee !”

Louisa's bitter lamentations soon called her young friends around her, and they all united in lamenting the fate of the poor goldfinch, and condemning the carelessness of his mistress. “ Alas !” said one, “ this pretty fellow used to sing delightfully, and to amuse us with a variety of entertaining tricks ; but he is now cold and stiff !” — “ Ah,” said another, “ we shall no more see him light the little match, and fire the cannon. O poor bird ! how unfortunate has been thy end !”

Whilst the little folks were thus lamenting the deceased goldfinch, poor Louisa was almost drowned in tears, and bitterly regretted her having devoted so much time to a round of pleasures, without recollecting her papa's admonitions. However her tears and her repentance were now unavailing; and she attended the summons to dinner with a heavy heart.

In the afternoon the children strolled round the gardens, and amused themselves with gathering fruits and flowers, but Louisa participated not in their pleasures. She felt as a *criminal*, and the sense of her guilt sat so heavily upon her mind, that she found it utterly impossible to shake it off. One of

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her play-mates advised her to conceal the bird's death, or to persuade her papa that it had been carried off by a cat; but Louisa had been too well instructed in the importance of truth, to attempt to cover a crime by telling a falsehood. "That," said she, "would but subject me still more to my papa's anger, and I am, therefore, resolved to confess the truth, whatever may be the result."

At this instant a thundering knock announced the arrival of a carriage, and Mr. and Mrs. Manners came into the parlour, with a small trunk, full of elegant toys, and new books from the celebrated Juvenile Library at the Corner



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of St. Paul's Church-Yard. They kissed Louisa with the utmost affection, and told her they had brought some presents for herself and her little companions. Accordingly, after they had taken their seats, the little trunk was opened, and a variety of books, games, cards, and dissected maps spread upon the table. These were so extremely pretty, that Louisa soon forgot her grief in the contemplation of them; and actually danced round the room when her papa presented her with a beautiful little book-case called the *Cabinet of Lilliput*. The other children were also highly gratified by the donations of Mr. Manners, and the af-

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ternoon was spent in perfect happiness and tranquillity.

The next morning, however, proved an unfortunate one for poor Louisa; for Mr. and Mrs. Manners, happening to go into the library, found the poor bird lying dead in its cage. They were equally hurt at this instance of their daughter's carelessness, and the death of the goldfinch; and Mr. Manners resolved to enquire into the matter immediately. Accordingly, having taken the bird and its cage into a back parlour, he sent for Louisa, and demanded what was become of her goldfinch? The poor girl burst into tears at this question, and, falling on her

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knees, confessed that she had forgot to feed him, in consequence of attending upon her little companions.

Mr. Manners regarded her with a severe look, and reprimanded her on account of her negligence, observing, that if he had twisted off the bird's neck when he bought it, the cruelty would have been small indeed, when compared with that of suffering it to perish with famine. "However," said he, "laying his head upon his hand, and gazing on the bird, which now lay upon the table, "thou art happy in being delivered from the hands of such an unfeeling mistress."

Poor Louisa stood over the bird, clasping her hands with unutterable grief, and occasionally raising her eyes to heaven, as if to ask forgiveness for her unintentional crime. Mrs. Manners was deeply affected by her daughter's unfeigned sorrow, and pleaded so powerfully as to obtain her forgiveness; but whenever she was guilty of any giddiness or inattention, the bird (which was stuffed for that purpose) was immediately produced, and every one exclaimed, "She has not yet forgot the barbarous death of the TAME GOLDFINCH."

FINIS.



THE  
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AND  
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