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A Soldier.

FRONTISPIECE.



The Young Sparrows.

THE
YOUNG SPARROWS:

OR,

Little Robert taught Humanity.

Ornamented with Cuts.

WELLINGTON, SALOP:

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THE
YOUNG SPARROWS:

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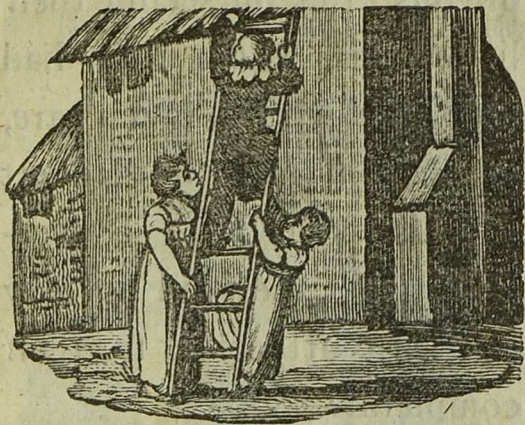
Little Robert taught Humanity.



LITTLE Robert one day perceived a sparrow's nest under the eaves of the house, and running immediately for his sisters, to in-

form them of his discovery, they all contrived together how to get the little covey into their possession. It was agreed to wait until the young ones should be fledged; and then Robert should raise a ladder against the wall, and his sisters should hold it fast below, while he climbed up for the nest.— When they thought the little birds sufficiently feathered,

they made ready to put their



design in execution. It succeeded perfectly, and they found three young ones in the nest.

The old birds sent forth piteous cries on seeing their little ones, whom they had nourished with so much care, taken from them; but Robert and his sisters were so overjoyed, that they did not pay the least attention to their complaints.

They were at first something puzzled what to do with their prisoners. Au-

gusta, the youngest, being of a mild and compassionate



disposition, was for having them put into a cage: she promised to take the charge

of them upon herself, and to feed them regularly every day: she described in a very lively manner to her brother and sister, the pleasure that they should have in seeing and hearing those young birds when grown big.—This was opposed by Robert: he maintained that it was better to pluck them just as they were, and that it would be much more *funny* to look

at them jumping about the room without feathers, than to see them dismally shut up in a cage. Charlotte, the eldest, declared herself of the same opinion as Augusta, but Robert persisted in his own.

At last the two little girls, seeing that their brother would not give up the point, and that besides he had the nest in his possession, agreed

to whatever he desired. But he had not waited for their consent to begin his³ execution. The first was already plucked. There is one stript, says he, setting it on the ground. In a moment all the little family were deprived of their tender feathers.

The poor things cried, *peep! peep!* and complained very piteously; they shud-

dered with the cold, and shook their bare little wings.



But Robert, instead of pitying their sufferings, did not end his persecutions there:

he pushed them with his toe to make them go on, and whenever they tumbled over he burst out a laughing; and at last his sisters joined in the laugh with him.

While they were indulging this cruel amusement, they saw at a distance their tutor coming towards them, Mum! Each pocketed a bird, and was slinking off. “Well,

(cried their tutor to them,) where are you going? Come



hither!" This order obliged them to stop. They advanced slowly, with their eyes fixed on the ground.

Tutor. Why do you run away at my coming?

Robert. We were only playing.

Tutor. You know, I do not debar you of amusement, and indeed I am never so happy as when I see you all merry.

Robert. We were afraid

that you were coming to scold us.

Tutor. Do I ever scold you for taking an innocent diversion? I see you have done something amiss. Why have you each your hand in your pocket? I must know the reason. Shew me each your hand, and what you have in it. (*they shew each their hand, with a bird plucked.*)

Tutor, (with an emotion of pity and indignation.) And



who could give you the idea
of treating these poor little
creatures thus?

Robert. Why, it is so droll to see sparrows jump without feathers.

Tutor. You think it very droll to see innocent creatures suffer, and to hear their cries when in pain?

Robert. No, sir; I did not think it put them to pain.

Tutor. Didn't you? Come

hither: I will convince you it did. (*He plucks a few hairs out of Robert's head.*)

Robert. Oh! Oh!

Tutor. Does that hurt you?

Robert. Do you think it does not, to pluck one's hairs?

Tutor. Pshaw! there are only a dozen.

Robert. But that is too much.

Tutor. What would it be then, were one to pluck out all your hair so? Have you a notion of the pain that you would feel? And yet you have put these birds to the very same torture, though

they never did you any harm. And you, young ladies, you that should be more tender-hearted, did you suffer this?

The two little misses were standing by silent, but hearing these last words, and feeling the keenness of the rebuke, they sat down with their eyes swimming in tears. The tutor remarking their

sorrow, was touched with it, and said no more to them.

Robert did not cry, and endeavoured to justify himself thus: "I could not think that I did them any harm. They sung all the while, and they clapped their wings as if they were pleased."

Tutor. Do you call their

criessinging? But why should they sing?

Robert. I suppose to call their father and mother.

Tutor. No doubt. And when their cries should have brought them, what did the young ones mean to tell them by clapping their wings?

Robert. I cannot tell ex-

actly; perhaps to ask their help.

Tutor. Just so. Therefore, if those birds could have expressed themselves in our speech, you would have heard them cry, “Ah! father and mother, save us! We have unhappily fallen into the hands of cruel children, who have plucked all our feathers. We are cold and in

pain.—Come, warm us and cure us, or we shall die.”

The little girls could hold



out no longer: they sobbed

and hid their faces in their handkerchiefs. “It was you, Robert, that led us to this cruelty. We hated the thought of it ourselves.”

Robert was then himself sensible of his fault. He had already been punished by his tutor plucking his hair; he was now much more so by the reproaches of his own heart. The tutor thought

there was no occasion to add to this double punishment.

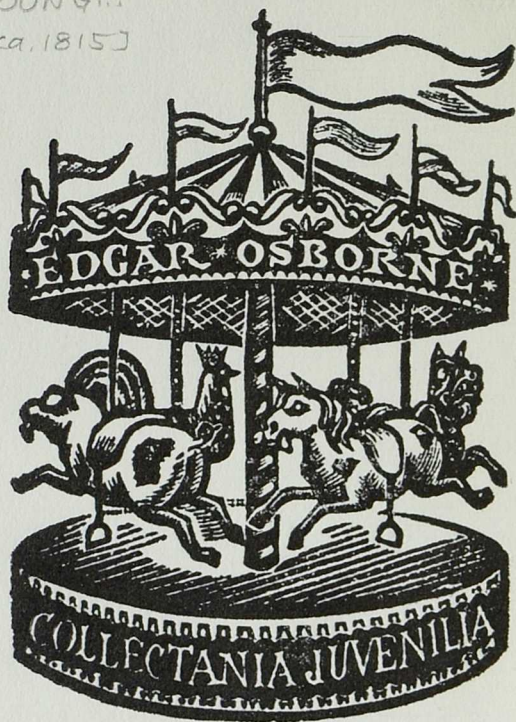
It was not, indeed, from an instinct of cruelty, but purely from want of thought, that Robert had done this ill-natured action, and the pity which he felt from that moment for all creatures weaker than himself, opened his heart to the sentiments of

kindness and humanity that
have animated him all the
rest of his life.

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