THE

DEW-DROP;

OR, THE

SUMMER MORNING'S WALK.

London:

PRINTED FOR DARTON, HARVEY, AND DARTON,
55, GRACECHURCH-STREET;

1818.

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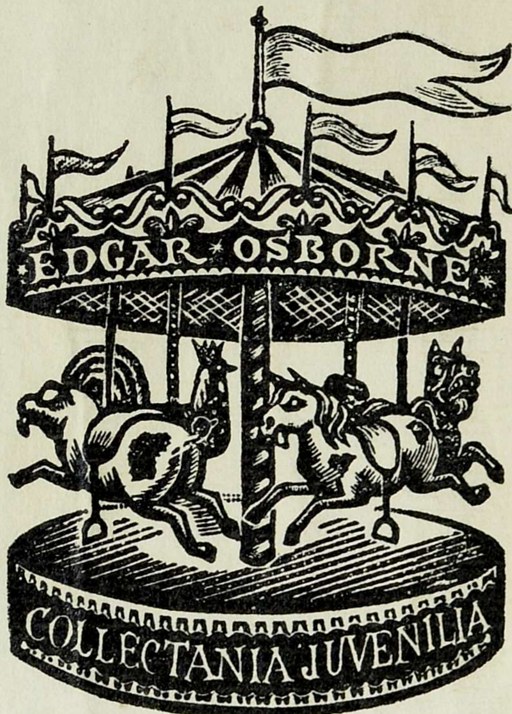

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III

Caroline Burgess
Wigston Grange

FRONTISPIECE.

Oh! no, Papa, I must not be a sluggard.

THE

DEW-DROP;

OR,

THE SUMMER MORNING'S WALK.

By F. B. VAUX.

LONDON:

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1818.

THE DEW-DROP.

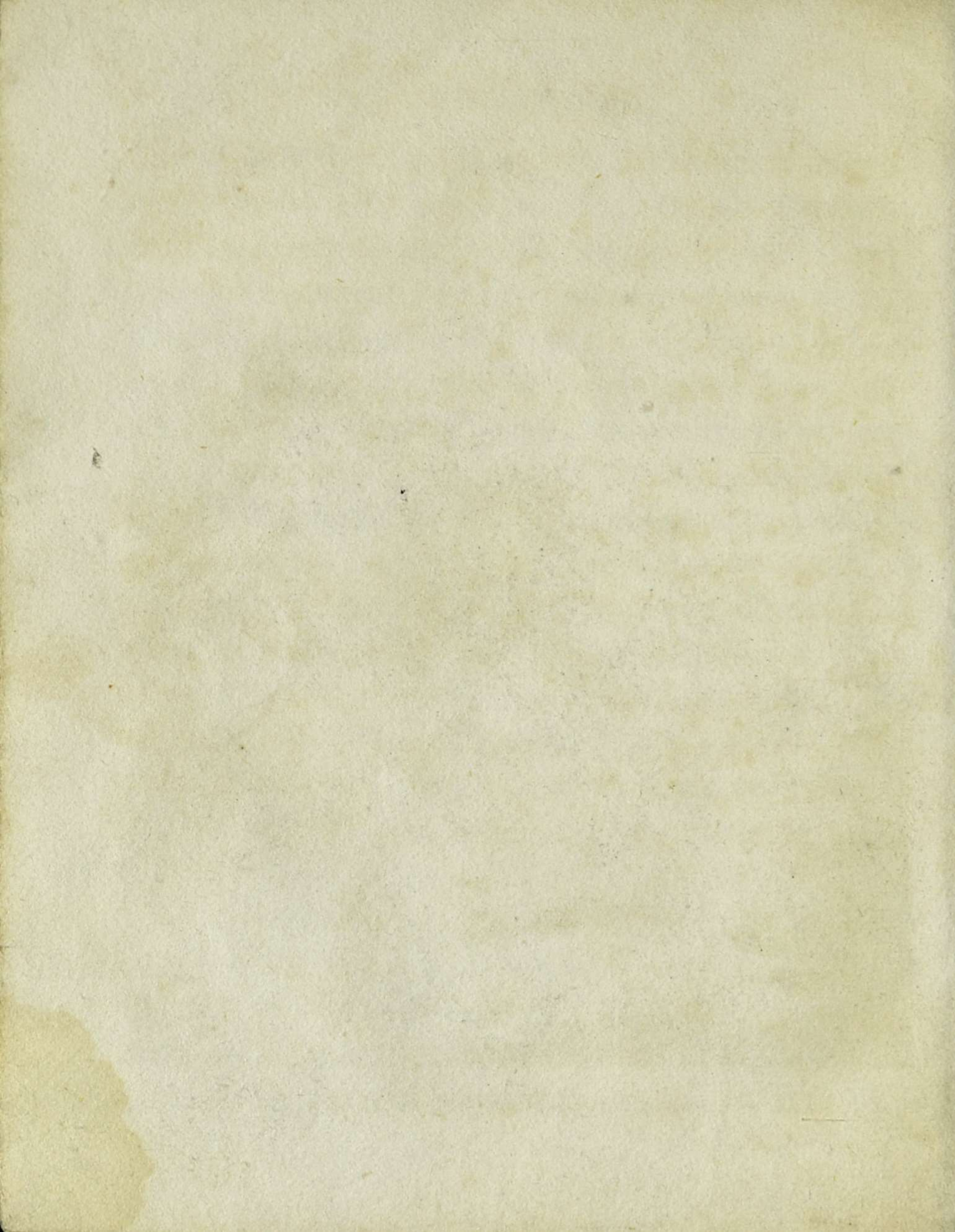
CHAPTER I.

"COME, Edward, get up, my dear," said Mr. Lennox, as he opened the curtains and peeped at his little sleeping boy, one summer's morning; "the sun shines brightly in the sky, and your sister is dressed, and cries shame upon the little sluggard."

At the word *sluggard*, Edward jumped upright in his bed. "Oh, no, papa! I must not be a sluggard. I will not say, 'a little more steep and a little more slumber;' I will not 'waste half my days, and my hours without number;' but I will be industrious, and make great haste, that I may enjoy the pleasant sun-shine, with you and Harriet. I would rather be like the little busy bee, which, as my hymn says, 'im-

proves each shining hour,' than like the sluggard, who, 'on his bed, turns his sides, and his shoulders, and his heavy head.'" So saying, Edward, who during this speech had been putting on his stockings, jumped out of bed, and dressed himself as quickly as he could; but although he was in great haste, and although his sister Harriet frequently called out, "how long you are, Edward; pray, come down," he did not forget to brush his nails, clean his teeth, and comb his hair very neatly, before he went into the garden. I have known some little children, who, when they are in a hurry, frequently neglect these things; but Edward's father and mother taught him to be very exact and regular in every thing he did. And if he lives to grow a man, I am sure he will feel very much obliged to them for taking so much pains with him; for few things are of more importance to a man, than neatness and regularity, and they are very necessary for a little boy too. When Edward was going to learn his lessons, he always knew where to find his books; so no time was lost in hunting about, first in one improper place, and then

Henry running to pick a sprig of wild roses.



in another. He had a place for every thing; and he found it quite as easy to put every thing into its place, as to toss it out of his hand, into any closet or drawer that happened to be near him at the moment he had finished his lessons.

As soon as Edward was dressed he ran nimbly down stairs, and tripping happily along the terrace in the garden, joined his father and sister just as they reached a little gate that led into a pleasant lane. He ran on before them, to gather for Harriet a very pretty sprig of wild roses, which were blooming in the hedge. The one on which he had fixed his mind, grew a few inches above his head, so that he was obliged to jump up to reach it; and seizing it, he gave it a sudden jerk, which shook the whole bush, and almost covered him with the large drops of dew that hung upon the leaves. He had, however, secured his prize, and running back to his sister, gave it to her with a good-humoured smile, adding: "If I had kn own what a sprinkling I should have got, I do not think I should have been very willing to have gathered it for you, Harriet. Papa, I had no notion it had been such a

rainy night; there is not a cloud in the sky this morning."

"I do not think there has been any rain, Edward: I awoke several times, and always saw the moon shining brightly and clearly through the curtains. What makes you think it has been raining, my love?"

"Indeed, papa, I have good reason to think so," said Edward, holding up his rosy face, sprinkled with dew-drops: "see how I have wetted myself with only gathering that one rose for Harriet."

"You are wetted, indeed, my dear," replied his father, wiping Edward's face with his handkerchief, "but that is no proof it has been a rainy night: the bush was covered with dew. If you look, you will see each blade of grass moistened in the same manner."

Edward ran to the bank, and found each pointed blade of grass glittering with dew. "It is very beautiful, indeed, papa. If it is not rain that makes dew-will you please to tell me what it is."

"There is a great deal of moisture in the earth,

Edward, which the heat of the sun, during the day, causes to exhale."

"I do not know the meaning of *exhale*, papa."

"It means, to give out a steam or vapour—to breathe."

Edward drew in a deep breath. "Did I exhale then, papa?"

"No, my dear, you then inhaled the air: it is when you breathe it out again that you exhale."

"Oh! now I think I understand:—when the tea-kettle boils, it exhales the steam at the spout, does it not?"

"Yes, my love, the heat of the fire makes it exhale, and, in the same manner, the warmth of the sun causes a watery vapour to arise out of the earth, which is called an exhalation."

"Well, papa, it is really very curious that these bright drops of water should come out of the dirty ground. I should never have guessed such a thing possible. How did people first find this out, papa? and how can I convince myself that this curious thing is really true?"

"If you take a bell-glass, or a tumbler, Edward, and place it at night over a tuft of grass, you will find, on the following morning, that the grass will be fringed with dew, equally with that which is exposed to the open air. Now, if the dew fell from the clouds, as you suppose, the part covered with the tumbler would be perfectly dry."

"That is true, papa. I will try the experiment this very night, and if I find the tuft wetted, as you say it will be, I shall feel convinced that it must be caused by vapours rising from the earth, and which the coldness of the tumbler turns into water."

"In the same manner, Edward," exclaimed Harriet, "as the steam of the tea-kettle was condensed by papa's snuff-box, the other day. Do not you recollect how it hung in drops on the lid? Pray, papa, is not the beautiful hoar-frost which glitters on the naked branches of the trees in winter, formed by frozen dew?"

"It is, my love. Can either of you tell me what occasions a shower of rain?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure," cried Edward: "there

comes a great black cloud in the sky, and then I always think it is a sign of rain; and it generally does rain before the black cloud goes away, and before the sun shines again."

"But that is not answering my question, Edward."

"Yes, papa, the rain comes out of the black cloud: does it not?"

"But how came the rain in the black cloud?"

"That, I am sure, I cannot tell: can you, Harriet?"

"I believe I can; but I am almost afraid to say what I think, for fear it should be wrong."

"And even if it should be wrong, my love," said her father, kindly taking her hand, "you need not be discouraged: there is no harm in making a mistake. Do not indulge a false shame. Ignorance is not a fault, except where it arises from inattention. Now, tell me what you think occasions the clouds."

"I believe they are exhalations, chiefly raised from rivers, in the same manner as the dew is from the earth, and being collected together in the air, they are formed into clouds."

"You are quite right, my dear: and rain is formed

by the clouds being condensed into drops, which fall to the earth by their own weight. In very cold weather, these drops are frozen as they fall, and form hail: and snow is formed by the freezing of a cloud before it falls."

"I like to know all these things extremely, papa," exclaimed Edward; "but one thing surprises me very much, and that is, that hail, which you say is frozen rain, should fall in the middle of a hot summer's day; for you know, last Thursday, though it was so very hot, there was a heavy shower of hail. How could the rain freeze when it was so warm, papa?"

"I do not wonder at your surprise, my, love if you have never been told, that the upper region of the air is so cold, even during the greatest heats of summer, that on the tops of high mountains, the snow never melts all the year round; and in some parts of South America, which is as hot as any part of our globe, the air on the tops of the mountains is so intensely cold, that the traveller passing over them is in danger of being frozen to death."

"The rain then is frozen in that high part of the air, and has not time to thaw again as it falls to the earth. I think I have heard of a country where there is very little rain, papa: how are the plants watered there. Is there dew enough to nourish them?"

"Wherever the great Ruler of the World sees fit to withhold one blessing, Edward, we generally find the want is supplied in some other way. In all parts of the globe, provision is made for the wants of the inhabitants. In Egypt, where there is very little rain, the river Nile, at a certain season of the year, overflows its banks, and carries with its waters a rich mud, which renders the soil fruitful, without that labour which the husbandman in England is obliged to bestow, before the fields are fit to receive the grain. In Egypt, the farmer has nothing to do but to commit his seeds to the earth, as the overflowing of the Nile saves him the trouble of manuring and ploughing his land."

"The farmers there must live idle lives, papa. But suppose the Nile should not overflow, what would they do then?"

"This calamity sometimes happens, and it generally occasions a famine; for, as the farmer is not acquainted with our mode of husbandry, he has no means of supplying the deficiency, if his river do not afford him its usual assistance."

"Well, I would rather be an English farmer, and depend upon my own labour. I think, papa, we always enjoy those things most, which we work the hardest for. The flowers I gather out of my own little garden, seem to me always much prettier than those which the gardener brings to mamma; and I never relished any gooseberries so much as those I eat yesterday, off the tree I have taken so much pains to raise."

"I have heard, Edward, that the hope of reward sweetens labour; and I also believe, that labour increases the value of our reward."

"What a number of things you have taught us this morning, papa! and it all began from my sprinkling my face with dew, in gathering Harriet's rose. That made me enquire the cause of dew, and from that we got to showers of rain, and then to hail and snow, and

the cold mountains in America, and the river Nile in Egypt; and so on, from one thing to another, till we ended with my little garden, and my gooseberry-tree. When we are talking, how curiously one subject springs out of another."

"All the information you have gained this morning, my dear little boy, you well deserve, since it has arisen from your kind desire to please your sister."

Just at this moment, Edward's attention was attracted by a pretty little bird, which perched upon a branch near them. On the top of its head was a row of exceedingly beautiful feathers, which sometimes stood quite upright, and at others lay flat upon the head, so that they were not seen at all. Its eyes were encircled with white; the sides of the neck were of a fine shining yellowish green, and Edward thought it was, upon the whole, the most beautiful little creature he had ever seen. His father told him it was a crested or golden wren, and that it was the smallest bird found in England.

"I should like you to see her nest," said he, "if

we could find where she has hidden it, for her habitation is almost as pretty as herself."

"Let us watch her a little longer," said Harriet, "perhaps we may trace her home."

The little bird did not seem at all alarmed at their aproach, but stood dressing its feathers upon the spray. After some little time, it flew into a neighbouring bush, and they lost sight of it.

"Oh, you pretty creature! we shall find your house now, I dare say. Well, you need not be afraid," continued Edward, as if the bird could understand his harangue; "we will not hurt you, nor will we take away your pretty nest; we only want to peep at it, that we may see how clever you are."

He walked on tip-toe towards the bush, and the moment he moved away the branches, out flew two little wrens. Convinced now that the object of their search was not far off, they all three began carefully to look for it; but it was a long while before they could discover it, so completely had the little birds concealed their treasure. At length, Edward, with a loud exclamation of delight, declared he had found it,

We will not hurt you.

"Look, Harriet! one, two, three, four, five, six, seven:—there are seven little, tiny eggs, not bigger than peas. Do look, Harriet."

"But I cannot see, Edward, because your head is quite in the way."

Edward moved on one side, to make room for his sister. When they had both admired the eggs for some time, and amused themselves with conjecturing how large the birds could be the minute they were hatched, and what the old ones could find that would be small enough to feed them with, their father stepped forward, and desired them to examine the shape of the nest, which was oval, instead of being round, like those of most other birds which they had seen. It was formed of moss, and lined with feathers.

"When the little ones are flown, may we have this nest?" said Edward.

"Yes, my love: the parent birds will have no occasion for it when their young ones can provide for themselves; you may then take it home and examine it at leisure. But come away now; for, no doubt, the

old birds are somewhere near, watching our motions with great anxiety."

The children immediately retired from the bush, and continued talking of the little birds and their nest as they walked towards home.

Their father told them that the common wren was also a very pretty bird, though not quite so small nor quite so beautiful as the one they had been just admiring, but that it was more careful than almost any other bird, in the construction of its nest. "It generally," said he, "adapts the materials to the place where its habitation is formed. Sometimes it builds against a hay-rick, the outside is then formed of hay; at others, against a tree covered with white lichens, in which case it covers its nest with the same substance. If, on the contrary, it builds on a tree covered with green moss, it chooses green moss for the outside of its dwelling."

"Oh, the cunning little creatures! they are in hopes that the nest will be mistaken for the tree itself, and so escape discovery," said Harriet. "How cruel are those who can take pleasure in depriving these lit-

tle tender creatures of the dwelling they have formed with so much art and industry."

"Indeed I think so," exclaimed Edward: "I am sure I would not take a nest, till I was certain the old birds had done with it, on any account."

"I want to know, papa," said Harriet, "whether you think it is true that there is a bird in India which sews two leaves together to make its nest."

"A bird sew leaves together? No, to be sure, Harriet, that cannot be true," interrupted Edward. "How is it possible? Where could it find a needle and thread in the woods, and where are its hands, pray?"

"Other birds form their nests so beautifully neat without hands," returned Harriet, "and do so many curious things, which I should have thought impossible, Edward, if I had not seen them, that I can believe this account may be true: besides, I read it in a book which, mamma told me, I might depend upon. What is your opinion, papa?"

"I have no doubt of the fact, my love, because I have seen a nest of this kind in the Museum; and

when we go next to London, you shall see one too."

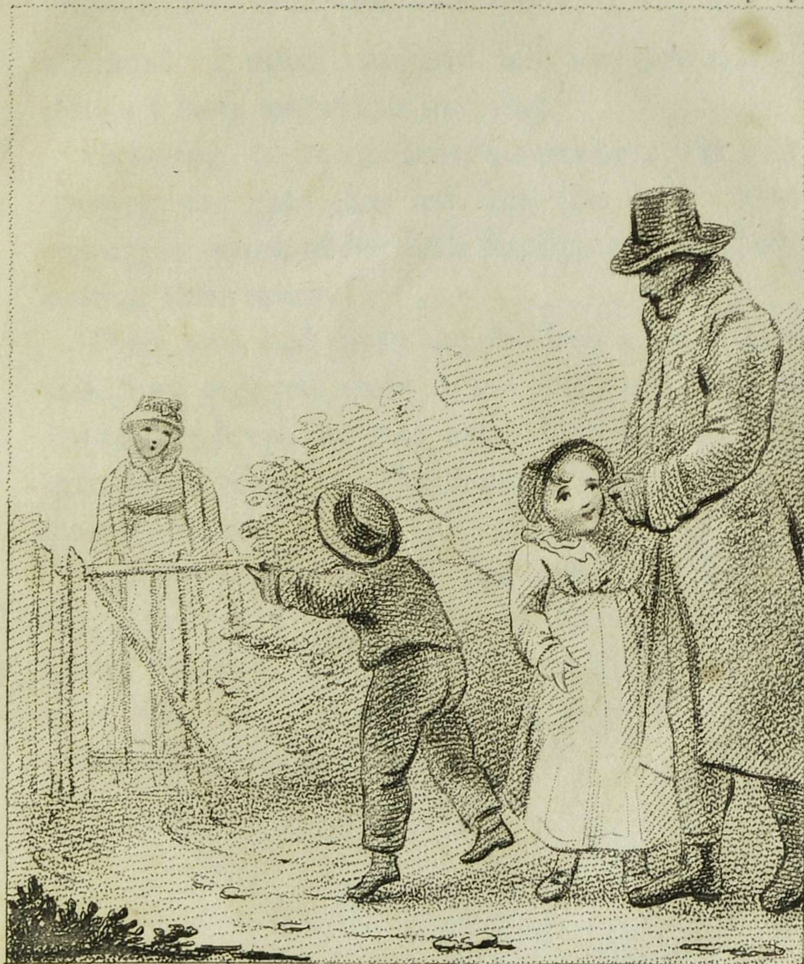
"But, papa," said Edward, "perhaps some person might make the nest, on purpose to impose upon people. How can you be sure it was built by a bird?"

Mr. Lennox smiled at the incredulity of his little boy, and told him, his uncle Richard had, when in India, seen several of these nests suspended to the end of very slender twigs. "A dead leaf," added he, "is generally sewed to one growing on the tree: the bill of the little bird serves it for a needle, and as soon as its work is completed, it lines the inside with feathers and soft down. Even when the little ones are hatched, and the parent birds are brooding them, the nest is so light, that there is no danger of the leaf's falling from the twig, though its stalk is very slender."

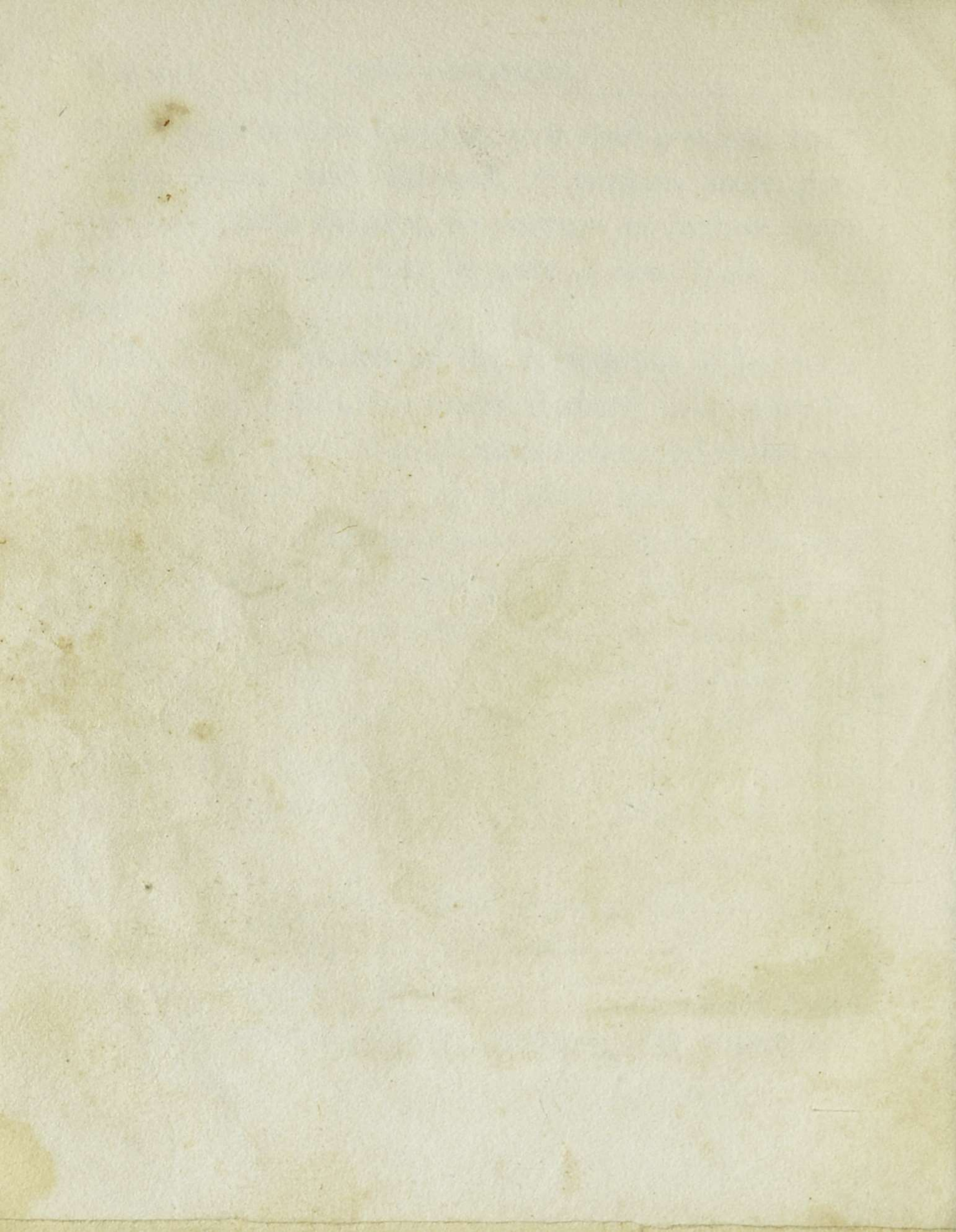
"Well, this is a most curious little creature. Pray, what is its name, papa?"

"The tailor-bird, Edward."

"Oh! what a suitable name.—Here comes our



He ran to meet his Mother.



mamma! I must run and tell her how many new things I have learnt this morning."

So saying, he ran to meet his mother, who was just opening the gate that led into the lane. She was coming in search of her little family, as breakfast was waiting their return.

Their walk had given the children a good appetite, and they enjoyed their bread and milk very much. As soon as breakfast was over, their mother listened, with great delight, to the account they gave of their morning's walk.

"Oh! I am so glad I did not lie in bed," said Edward; "if I had, I should have heard nothing about the dew, nor the rain, nor the snow, nor the river Nile, nor the curious little tailor-bird, which I think was the most amusing of all."

CHAPTER II.

SOON after breakfast was over, and before Harriet and Edward began their morning lessons, a gentleman called upon their father, and staid with him some time, talking about a great many things which seemed to amuse him very much; but Harriet and Edward were not at all amused, because they did not understand these things; so, after listening to the conversation till they were tired, they went to the other end of the room, and Harriet watered her plants, whilst Edward employed himself by picking off the dead leaves. They were rather sorry the gentleman staid so long, and when he at last took leave of their father, they were extremely pleased, and Edward said: "I do not much like that person, papa: I do not think he is at all entertaining. Are not you very glad he is gone?"

"No, indeed, Edward; I am, on the contrary, sorry my good friend could not stay a little longer. I thought his conversation both instructive and amusing."

"Well, that is very odd: I thought him rather disagreeable. He talked such hard words: but I never understand any body so well as I do you, papa."

"That is because I try to lower my language to your comprehension, Edward; but you must not expect all my friends to take that trouble. It is very difficult, and very disagreeable, to a sensible man, to use only such words, and to converse only upon such trifling subjects, as a child like you can understand."

"Is it disagreeable to you, papa, to talk to Harriet and me?"

"No, my dear, it is not."

"And yet, papa, I believe you are a sensible man."

"The anxiety and desire I feel for your improvement, Edward, makes that to me an agreeable task, which would, to another, be very unpleasant and troublesome."

"Indeed, papa, you are very kind to us; but I want to know how you grew so wise, and whether you think I shall ever know as many things as you do."

"If you take the same means, Edward, I have no doubt that you will, in time, know as many, and perhaps even more than I do."

"And what are those means, papa?"

"A great deal of my information, my dear, was obtained by observing carefully every thing I met with; in the same manner as you learnt, from observation, this morning, the difference between a wren's nest, and the nests of many other birds."

"Oh yes, papa, I could never mistake a wren's nest, which is oval, for a sparrow's, which is round; nor a robin's, which is built of twigs, moss, and hair, for a swallow's or martin's, which is always made of mud, clay, or straw. It is a very good plan, to observe carefully what we meet with: I shall always try to do so, and then I shall be like William, in that pretty story of "Eyes and no Eyes," which Harriet read to me in "Evening's at Home," the other day.

Now, papa, please to tell me another way of learning to grow wise."

"I have learnt a great many things, Edward, by conversing with people who were wiser than myself."

"Oh, papa, that is the way I like to improve. When I talk with you and mamma, you always teach me something new. If you had not been so good as to talk to us this morning, we should have known nothing about dew, and all those other entertaining things you taught us. Now, I guess that the next good way to improve ourselves, is by reading nice books. I am sure my books teach me a great many wise things. Frank and Rosamond, and Harry and Lucy, they are full of wisdom."

"Yes, and full of entertainment too," said Harriet: "but I think, Edward, you have forgotten the lesson you learnt in Frank, about the division of labour, for you left me to trim my plants all alone."

"Oh! I am very sorry, Harriet, I will come and help you in five minutes, only I want just to ask papa what little boys could do before books were

made; for I heard mamma speak, a few days ago, of something which happened before the invention of paper or printing."

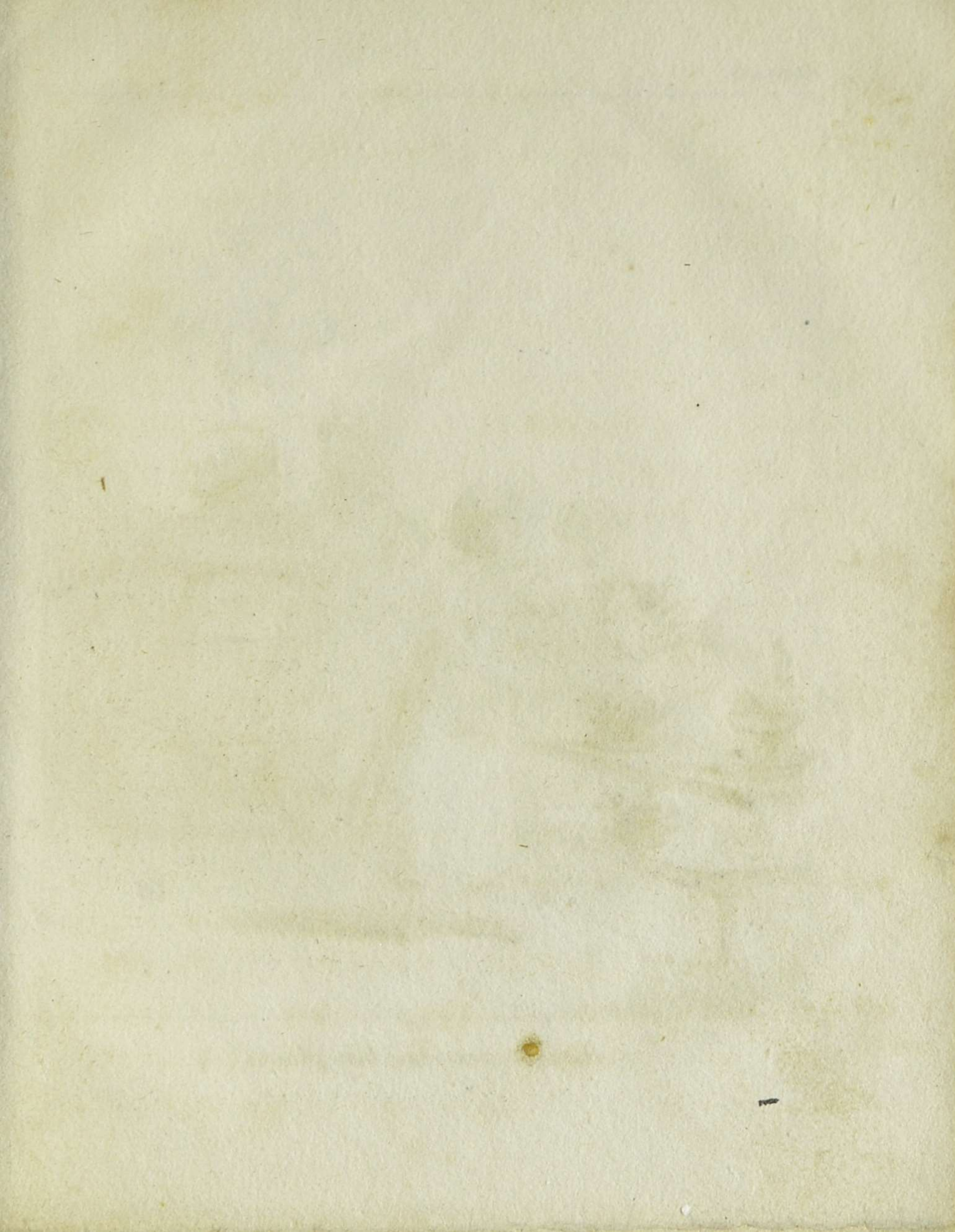
"Not only little boys, but grown-up men," said his father, "lived at that time in great ignorance, and very few people could either read or write."

"No, to be sure, papa, they could not read without books, nor write without paper," exclaimed Edward; "but pray how many years was this ago?"

"It is now about seven hundred years since the plan of making paper from old rags was first found out."

"Paper made of old rags, did you say, papa? Is it possible that nice white paper can be made from rags?"

Edward's father assured him that it was quite true, and promised to take him some day to a paper-mill, where he might see how it was done. Edward was very much pleased with this promise, and asked his father if brown paper were made in the same manner. His father told him that brown paper was made from



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Harriot watering her plants.

The Pictures were very amusing.

hempen ropes. Harriet then enquired, whether the ancients had not, before the invention of paper, any thing to answer the same purpose. Her father was just going to give her an account of the papyrus reed, used first by the Egyptians, and after them by other nations, when a servant came into the parlour, to tell him a gentleman wished to speak with him on business, so Harriet was obliged to wait patiently till he should be again at liberty.

"Come, Harriet, now I will finish my job," said Edward, as he returned towards the window where her favourite plants were placed.

They carefully took off all the decayed leaves from the geraniums and the myrtles, and were well repaid for their trouble, by the improved appearance of the plants. After they had finished, and were satisfied with admiring their handy works, Harriet ran to look at the clock, and finding it wanted a quarter to ten, the time when they usually sat down to their lessons, they began to think how they might most agreeably spend this quarter of an hour; for Harriet and Edward never felt the least pleasure in

trifling away their time, as some idle children do; and I never heard them trouble their mamma by saying: "Oh, dear, I do not know what to do with myself! I am so tired, I do not know what to do, mamma! What shall I play at?" These good children were never tired of themselves, or of each other. They were never at a loss for something to do: sometimes they ran in the garden, sometimes they sowed their flower-seeds, and at others they weeded their beds of flowers. You might tell in a moment, from the neat appearance of their gardens, that they were industrious children. However, this morning they did not wish to play in the garden, because their walk before breakfast had wearied them a little; so they tried to find some pleasant employment within doors.

"Let us put the map of England together," said Harriet.

"I should like better to look at the pictures in the new book which papa bought last week," replied Edward.

Now, perhaps, my little readers may think that

Harriet and Edward felt inclined to quarrel with each other, because one liked to put the map together, and the other preferred looking at the pictures; but it was no such thing. Harriet did not pout, nor did Edward look sulky: but Harriet, who was the eldest, thought it quite right to give up to the wishes of her little brother. So she directly said, "Well, I shall like to look at the book very much: we can put the map together another day."

She then immediately reached down the first volume. The pictures were very amusing, for they were the pictures of different animals; and they were coloured exactly like the real animals for which they were drawn. Harriet and Edward did not look first at one, and then at another, merely for amusement; but they read the accounts of them, so that they gained a great deal of instruction, whilst they at the same time entertained themselves nicely.

The first picture they saw, was that of an ourang-outang. It looked as large as a man, and very much like a man in shape, only it was covered with hair. When they had looked at this animal for some time,

they turned over the leaf and read the account of it; from which they found that it is a native of Africa, and that it sometimes grows to the height of six feet; that it always walks upright like a man; and that it sleeps among the branches of trees, where it builds itself a shelter from the rain. Its food consists of nuts and fruit, but it never eats flesh. They were very much amused with the story of one of these animals, which was shown in London about a hundred years ago. When he was coming over from his native country in a ship, he used sometimes to wear clothes; some of which he could put on himself, the others he would carry in his hands to some of the ship's company, that they might help him. He used to lie in bed, put his head on the pillow, and pull up his bed-clothes to keep himself warm, exactly like a man. He would besides sit at table like one of the company, would eat with a knife and fork, wipe his lips with a napkin, and drink a glass of wine.

Just as Harriet and Edward had finished reading this entertaining account of the ourang-outang, the

clock struck ten. Although they were rather sorry to put away this amusing book, they knew it was time to begin their lessons; and as they preferred doing what was right, to what was agreeable, they were quite ready for their mamma when she came to hear them, and spent a most happy morning in the performance of their different duties.

I cannot tell my little readers any thing more about Harriet and Edward at present; but, perhaps, some time or other, I may give them an account of the happy day they spent at the paper-mill.

THE END.

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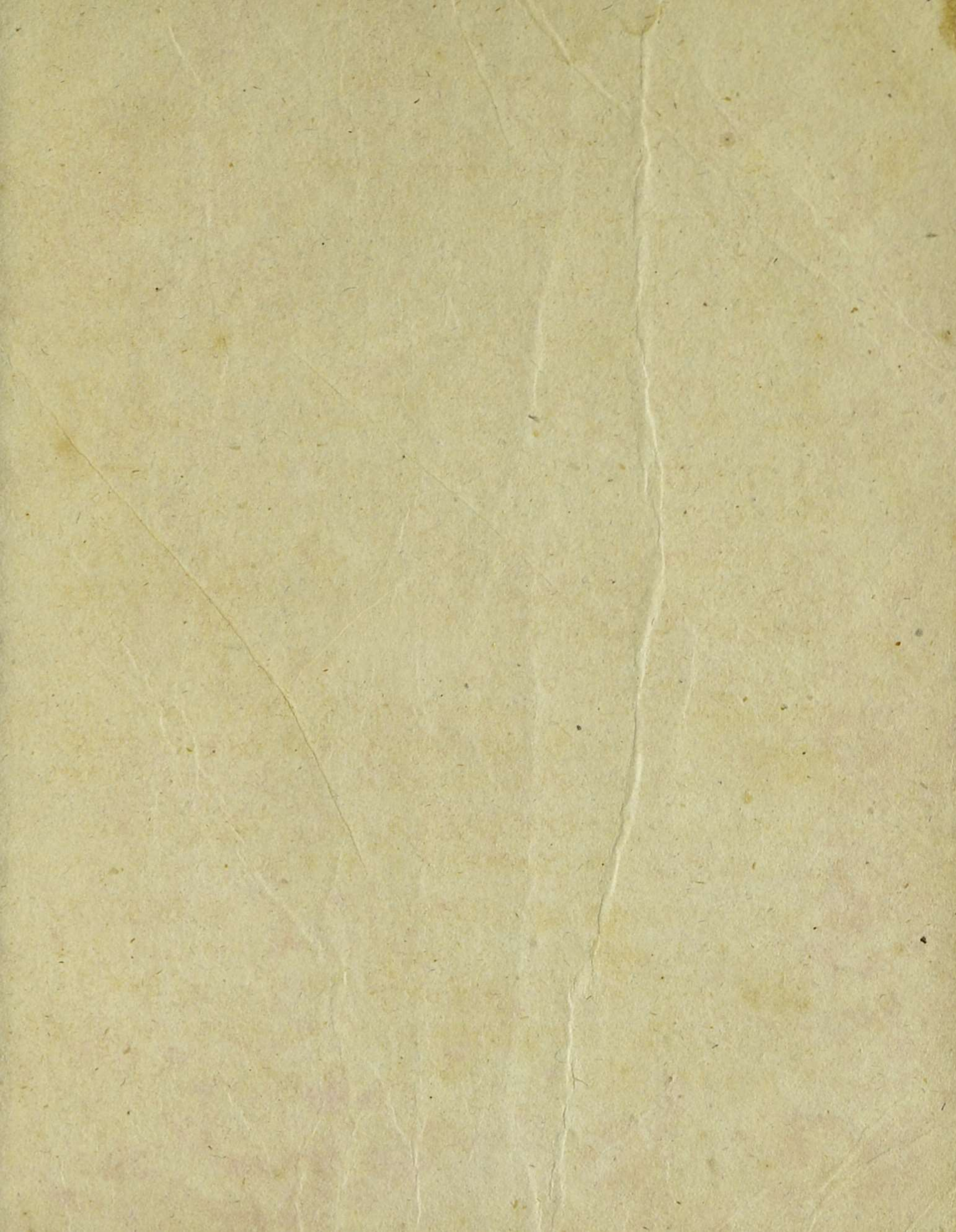

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