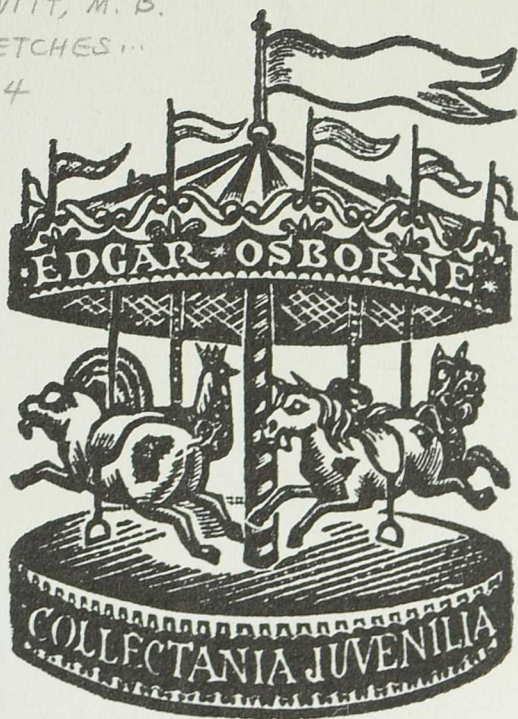


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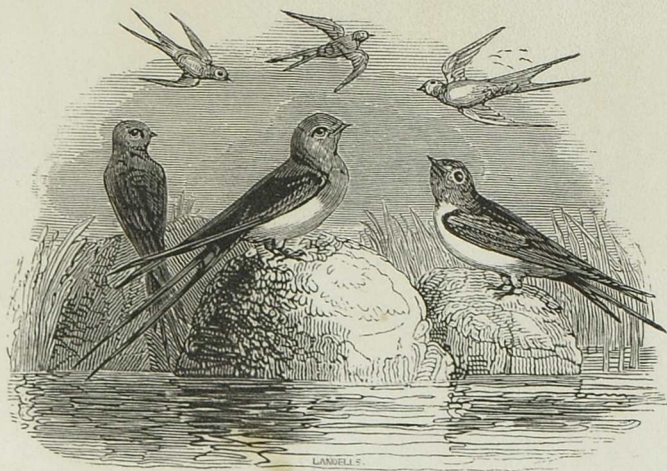
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SKETCHES OF NATURAL HISTORY.



SKETCHES
OF
NATURAL HISTORY.

BY MARY HOWITT.



LONDON:
EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1834.

TO
ANNA MARY AND ALFRED WILLIAM
HOWITT,

These Sketches,

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN FOR THEIR AMUSEMENT,

ARE

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

THESE simple and unpretending Sketches require no introduction ; and yet, when title-page, contents, and dedication have been made out, an introduction so naturally follows, that it might be supposed a book could not be put together without one,—though the writer, as in my case, has little either to say of herself or her volume.

All, therefore, that I shall now remark is, that these Sketches were written for my own Children ; and many of them at

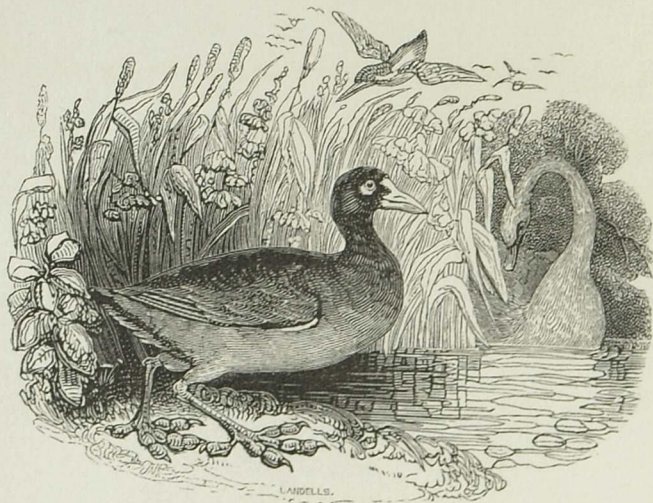
their suggestion ; and that in seeing the pleasure they have derived from them, I have hoped their young cotemporaries may find them equally agreeable. A few of them have already appeared in some of the Juvenile Annuals, and may therefore be familiar to many of my young readers ; but I trust they will pardon a reprint of what is already known, in the prospect of finding more that is new.

Nottingham, May, 1834.

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THE COOT.

OH Coot ! oh bold, adventurous Coot,
I pray thee tell to me,
The perils of that stormy time
That bore thee to the sea !

I saw thee on the river fair,
Within thy sedgy screen ;
Around thee grew the bulrush tall,
And reeds so strong and green.

The kingfisher came back again
To view thy fairy place ;
The stately swan sailed statelier by,
As if thy home to grace.

But soon the mountain-flood came down,
And bowed the bulrush strong ;
And far above those tall, green reeds
The waters poured along.

‘ And where is she, the Water-Coot,’
I cried, ‘ that creature good ?’
But then I saw thee in thine ark,
Regardless of the flood.

Amid the foaming waves thou sat’st,
And steer’dst thy little boat ;
Thy nest of rush and water-reed
So bravely set afloat.

And on it went, and safely on
That wild and stormy tide ;
And there thou sat’st, a mother-bird,
Thy young ones at thy side.

Oh Coot ! oh bold, adventurous Coot,
I pray thee tell to me,
The perils of that stormy voyage
That bore thee to the sea !

Hadst thou no fear, as night came down
Upon thy watery way,
Of enemies, and dangers dire
That round about thee lay ?

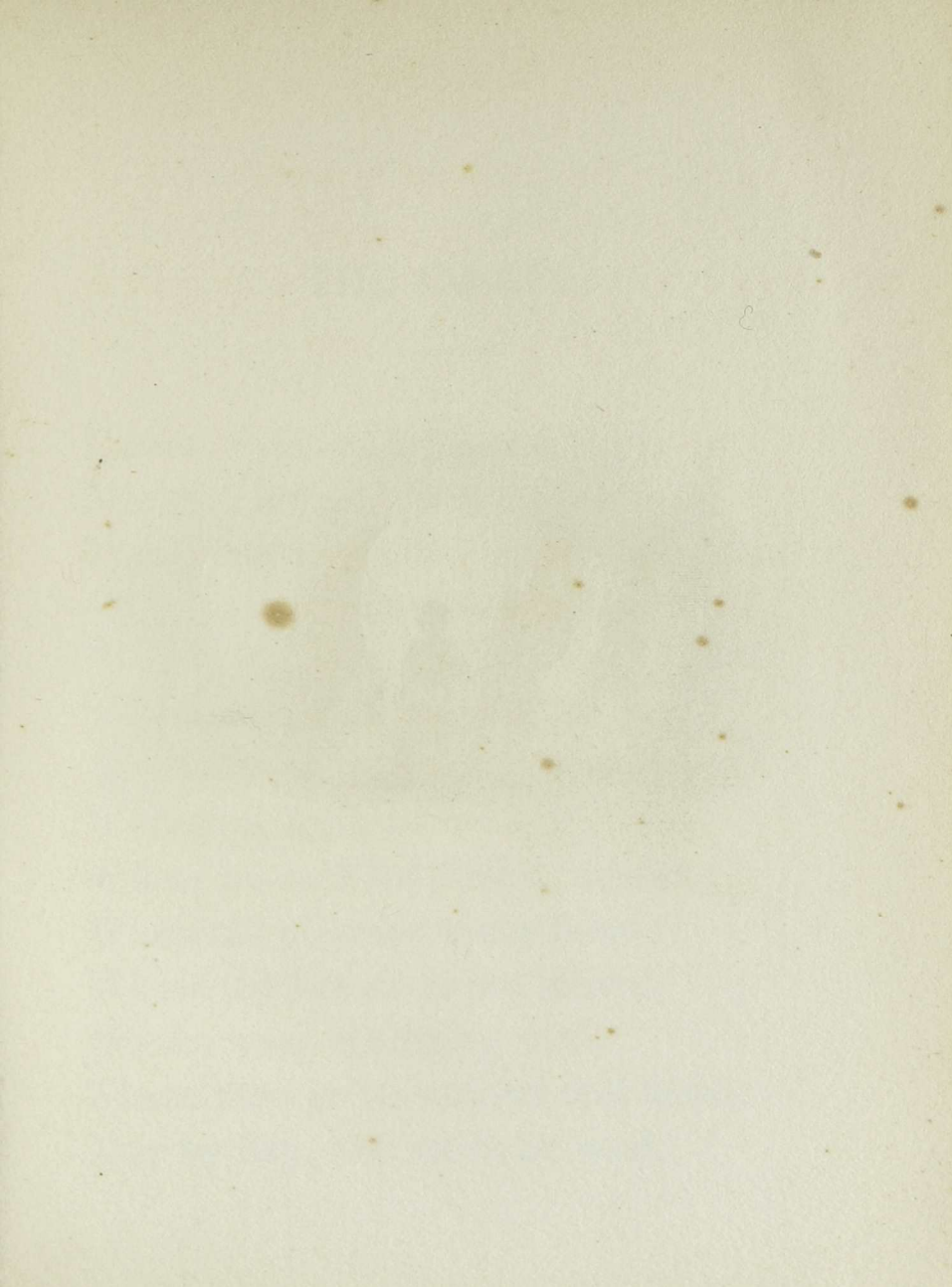
Didst thou not see the falcon grim
Swoop down as thou passed by ?
And 'mong the waving water-flags
The lurking otter lie ?

The eagle's scream came wildly near,
Yet, caused it no alarm ?
Nor man, who seeing thee, weak thing,
Did strive to do thee harm ?

And down the foaming waterfall,
As thou wast borne along,
Hadst thou no dread ? Oh daring bird,
Thou hadst a spirit strong !

Yes, thou hadst fear ! But He who sees
The sparrows when they fall ;
He saw thee, bird, and gave thee strength
To brave thy perils all.

He kept thy little ark afloat ;
He watched o'er thine and thee ;
And safely through the foaming flood
Hath brought thee to the sea !”





THE CAMEL.

CAMEL, thou art good and mild,
Might'st be guided by a child ;
Thou wast made for usefulness,
Man to comfort and to bless.
Thou dost clothe him ; thou dost feed ;
Thou dost lend to him thy speed.
And through wilds of trackless sand,
In the hot Arabian land,
Where no rock its shadow throws ;
Where no pleasant water flows ;
Where the hot air is not stirred,
By the wing of singing bird,
There thou go'st, untired and meek,
Day by day, and week by week,

Bearing freight of precious things,
Silks for merchants, gold for kings ;
Pearls of Ormuz, riches rare,
Damascene and Indian ware ;
Bale on bale, and heap on heap,
Freighted like a costly ship !

When the red Simoom comes near,
Camel, dost thou know no fear ?
When the desart sands uprise
Flaming crimson to the skies,
And like pillared giants strong,
Stalk the dreary waste along,
Bringing death unto his prey,
Does not thy good heart give way ?
Camel, no ! thou do'st for man
All thy generous nature can ;
Thou do'st lend to him thy speed
In that awful time of need ;

And when the Simoom goes by,
Teachest him to close his eye,
And bow down before the blast
Till the purple death has passed !

And when week by week is gone,
And the traveller journeys on
Feebly ; when his strength is fled,
And his hope and heart seem dead,
Camel, thou do'st turn thine eye
On him kindly, soothingly,
As if thou would'st cheering, say,
“ Journey on for this one day !
“ Do not let thy heart despond ;
“ There is water yet beyond !
“ I can scent it in the air ;—
“ Do not let thy heart despair ! ”
And thou guid'st the traveller there.

Camel, thou art good and mild,
Might'st be guided by a child ;
Thou wast made for usefulness,
Man to comfort and to bless ;
And these desart wastes must be
Untracked regions but for thee !



CEDAR TREES.

THE Power that formed the violet,
The all-creating One ;
He made the stately Cedar trees
That crowned Mount Lebanon.

And all within the garden
That angels came to see,—
He set in groves and on the hills
The goodly Cedar tree.

There played the gladsome creatures,
Beneath its shadow dim ;
And from its spreading, leafy boughs
Went up the wild bird's hymn.

And Eve in her young innocence
 Delayed her footsteps there ;
And Adam's heart grew warm with praise
 To see a tree so fair.

And though the world was darkened
 With the shade of human ill,
And man was cast from Paradise,
 Yet wast thou goodly still.

And when an ancient poet
 Some lofty theme would sing,
He made the Cedar symbol forth
 Each great and gracious thing.

And royal was the Cedar
 Above all other trees !
They chose of old its scented wood
 For kingly palaces.

And in the halls of princes,
And on the Phoenix-pyre,
'T was only noble cedar-wood
Could feed the odorous fire.

In the temple of Jerusalem,
That glorious temple old,
They only found the cedar-wood
To match with carved gold.

Thou great and noble Solomon,
What king was e'er like thee?
Thou 'mong the princes of the earth
Wast like a Cedar tree!

But the glory of the Cedar tree
Is as an old renown,
And few and dwindled grow they now
Upon Mount Lebanon.

But dear they are to poets' heart ;
And dear to painter's eye ;
And the beauty of the cedar tree
On earth will never die !

THE MONKEY.

MONKEY, little merry fellow,
Thou are nature's punchinello !
Full of fun as Puck could be ;
Harlequin might learn of thee !

Look now at his odd grimaces !
Saw you e'er such comic faces ?
Now like learned judge, sedate ;
Now with nonsense in his pate !

Nature, in a sunny wood,
Must have been in merry mood,
And with laughter fit to burst,
Monkey, when she made thee first.

How you leaped and frisked about,
When your life you first found out ;
How you threw, in roguish mirth,
Cocoa nuts on mother earth ;

How you sate and made a din
Louder than had ever been,
Till the Parrots, all a-riot,
Chattered too to keep you quiet ;

Little, merry Monkey, tell
Was there kept no chronicle ?
And have you no legends old,
Wherein this, and more is told ?

How the world's first children ran
Laughing from the monkey-man,
Little Abel and his brother,
Laughing, shouting to their mother ?

And could you keep down your mirth,
When the floods were on the earth ;
When from all your drowning kin,
Good old Noah took you in ?

In the very Ark, no doubt,
You went frolicing about ;
Never keeping in your mind,
Drowned monkeys left behind !

No, we cannot hear of this ;
Gone are all the witnesses ;
But I 'm very sure that you
Made both mirth and mischief too !

Have ye no traditions,—none,
Of the court of Solomon ?
No memorial how ye went
With Prince Hiram's armament ?

Were ye given, or were ye sold
With the peacocks and the gold ?
Is it all forgotten quite,
'Cause ye neither read nor write ?

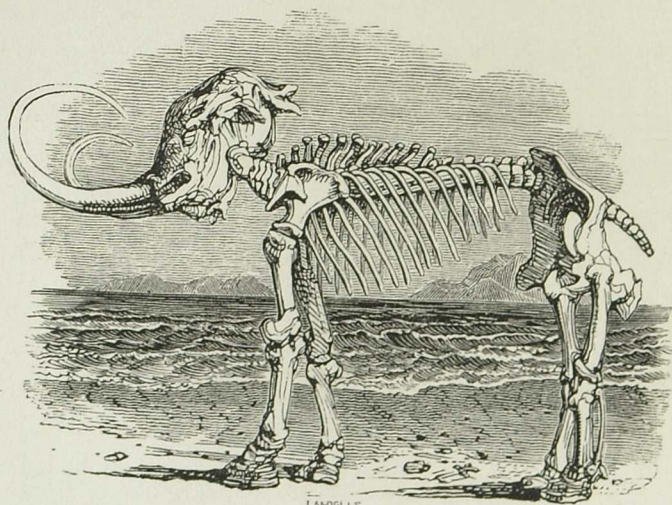
Look now at him ! Slyly peep,
He pretends he is asleep ;
Fast asleep upon his bed,
With his arm beneath his head.

Now that posture is not right,
And he is not settled quite—
There ! that's better than before,
And the knave pretends to snore !

Ha ! he is not half asleep !
See, he slyly takes a peep !
Monkey, though your eyes were shut
You could see this little nut.

You shall have it, pigmy brother !
What, another ? and another ?
Nay, your cheeks are like a sack,—
Sit down, and begin to crack.

There, the little ancient man
Cracks as fast as crack he can !
Now good bye, you merry fellow,
Nature's primest punchinello !



THE FOSSIL ELEPHANT.

THE earth is old ! Six thousand years
Are gone since I had birth ;
In the forests of the olden time,
And the solitudes of earth.

We were a race of mighty things ;
The world was all our own.
I dwelt with the Mammoth large and
strong,
And the giant Mastodon.

No ship went over the waters then,
No ship with oar or sail ;
But the wastes of the sea were habited
By the Dragon and the Whale.

And the Hydra down in the ocean caves
 Abode, a creature grim ;
And the scaled Serpents huge and strong
 Coiled up in the waters dim.

The wastes of the world were all our own ;
 A proud, imperial lot !
Man had not then dominion given,
 Or else we knew it not.

There was no city on the plain ;
 No fortress on the hill ;
No mighty men of strength, who came
 With armies up, to kill.

There was no iron then—no brass—
 No silver and no gold ;
The wealth of the world was in its woods,
 And its granite mountains old.

And we were the kings of all the world ;
We knew its breadth and length ;
We dwelt in the glory of solitude,
And the majesty of strength.

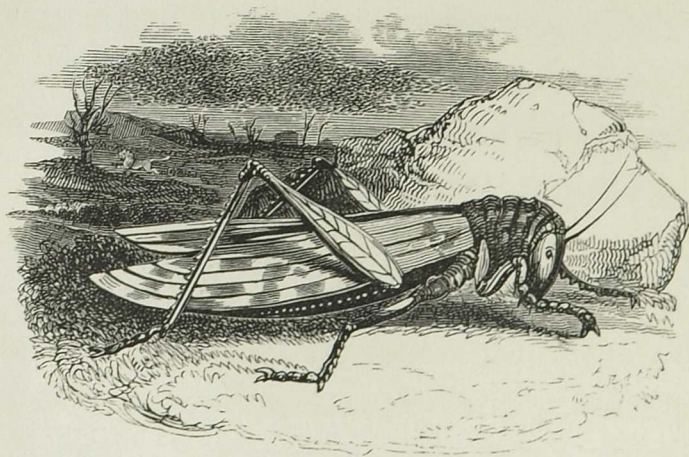
But suddenly came an awful change !
Wherefore, ask not of me ;
That it was, my desolate being shews,—
Let that suffice for thee.

The Mammoth huge and the Mastodon
Were buried beneath the earth ;
And the Hydra and the Serpents strong,
In the caves where they had birth !

There is now no place of silence deep,
Whether on land or sea ;
And the Dragons lie in the mountain-rock,
As if for eternity !

And far in the realms of thawless ice,
Beyond each island shore,
My brethren lie in the darkness stern
To awake to life no more !

And not till the last conflicting crash
When the world consumes in fire,
Will their frozen sepulchres be loosed,
And their dreadful doom expire !



THE LOCUST.

THE LOCUST is fierce, and strong, and grim,
And an armed man is afraid of him :
He comes like a winged shape of dread,
With his shielded back and his armed
head,
And his double wings for hasty flight,
And a keen, unwearying appetite.

He comes with famine and fear along,
An army a million million strong ;
The Goth and the Vandal, and dwarfish
Hun,
With their swarming people wild and dun,

Brought not the dread that the Locust
brings,
When is heard the rush of their myriad
wings.

From the desarts of burning sand they
speed,
Where the Lions roam and the Serpents
breed,
Far over the sea, away, away !
And they darken the sun at noon of day.
Like Eden the land before they find,
But they leave it a desolate waste be-
hind.

The peasant grows pale when he sees
them come,
And standeth before them weak and
dumb ;

For they come like a raging fire in power,
And eat up a harvest in half an hour ;
And the trees are bare, and the land is
brown,
As if trampled and trod by an army down.

There is terror in every monarch's eye,
When he hears that this terrible foe is
nigh ;
For he knows that the might of an armed
host
Cannot drive the spoiler from out his coast,
And that terror and famine his land await ;
That from north to south 't will be de-
solate.

Thus the ravening Locust is strong and
grim ;
And what were an armed man to him ?

Fire turneth him not, nor sea prevents,
He is stronger by far than the elements !
The broad green earth is his prostrate
prey,
And he darkens the sun at the noon of
day !



THE BROOM-FLOWER.

O the Broom, the yellow Broom,
The ancient poet sung it,
And dear it is on summer days
To lie at rest among it.

I know the realms where people say
The flowers have not their fellow ;
I know where they shine out like suns,
The crimson and the yellow.

I know where ladies live enchained
In luxury's silken fetters,
And flowers as bright as glittering gems
Are used for written letters.

But ne'er was flower so fair as this
In modern days or olden ;
It groweth on its nodding stem
Like to a garland golden.

And all about my mother's door
Shine out its glittering bushes,
And down the glen, where clear as light
The mountain-water gushes.

Take all the rest,—but give me this,
And the bird that nestles in it ;
I love it, for it loves the broom,
The green and yellow linnet.

Well, call the rose the queen of flowers,
And boast of that of Sharon,
Of lilies like to marble cups,
And the golden rod of Aaron.

I care not how these flowers may be
Beloved of man and woman ;
The Broom it is the flower for me
That groweth on the common.

Oh the Broom, the yellow Broom,
The ancient poet sung it,
And dear it is on summer days
To lie at rest among it !

THE EAGLE.

No, not in the meadow, and not on the
shore ;

And not on the wide heath with furze
covered o'er,

Where the cry of the Plover, the hum of
the bee,

Give a feeling of joyful security :

And not in the woods, where the Night-
ingale's song,

From the chestnut and orange pours all
the day long ;

And not where the Martin has built in the
eaves,

And the Red-breast e'er covered the chil-
dren with leaves,

Shall ye find the proud Eagle ! O no,
 come away ;
I will shew you his dwelling, and point
 out his prey !
Away ! let us go where the mountains
 are high,
With tall splintered peak towering into
 the sky ;
Where old ruined castles are dreary and
 lone,
And seem as if built for a world that is
 gone ;
There, up on the topmost tower, black as
 the night,
Sits the old monarch Eagle in full blaze
 of light :
He is king of these mountains : save him
 and his mate,
No Eagle dwells here ; he is lonely and
 great !

Look, look how he sits ! with his keen
glancing eye,
And his proud head thrown back, looking
into the sky ;
And hark to the rush of his out-spreading
wings,
Like the coming of tempest, as upward
he springs ;
And now how the echoing mountains are
stirred,
For that was the cry of the Eagle you
heard !
Now, see how he soars ! like a speck in
the height
Of the blue vaulted sky, and now lost in
the light !
And now downward he wheels as a shaft
from a bow
By a strong archer sent, to the valleys
below !

And that is the bleat of a lamb of the
flock ;—

One moment, and he re-ascends to the
rock.—

Yes, see how the conqueror is winging
his way,

And his terrible talons are holding their
prey !

Great bird of the wilderness ! lonely and
proud,

With a spirit unbroken, a neck never
bowed,

With an eye of defiance, august and
severe,

Who scorn'st an inferior, and hatest a peer,
What is it that giveth thee beauty and
worth ?

Thou wast made for the desolate places of
earth ;

To mate with the tempest ; to match with
the sea ;

And God shewed his power in the Lion
and thee !



THE NETTLE-KING.

THERE was a Nettle both great and strong ;
And the threads of his poison flowers
were long ;

He rose up in strength and height also,
And he said, “ I’ll be king of the plants
below ! ”

It was a wood both drear and dank,
There grew the Nettle so broad and rank ;
And an Owl sate up in an old ash tree
That was wasting away so silently ;
And a Raven was perched above his head,
And they both of them heard what the
Nettle-king said ;

And there was a toad that sate below,
Chewing his venom sedate and slow,
And he heard the words of the Nettle also.

The Nettle he throve, and the Nettle he
grew,

And the strength of the earth around
him he drew :

There was a pale *Stellaria* meek,
But as he grew strong, so she grew weak ;

There was a *Campion*, crimson-eyed,

But as he grew up, the *campion* died ;

And the blue *Veronica*, shut from light,

Faded away in a sickly white ;

For upon his leaves a dew there hung,

That fell like a blight from a serpent's
tongue,

And there was not a flower about the spot,

Herb-Robert, Harebell, nor Forget-me-
not.

Yet up grew the Nettle like water-
sedge,
Higher and higher above the hedge ;
The stuff of his leaves was strong and
stout,
And the points of his stinging-flowers
stood out ;
And the Child that went in the wood to
play,
From the great King-nettle would shrink
away !

“ Now,” says the Nettle, “ there ’s none
like me ;

“ I am as great as a plant can be !

“ I have crushed each weak and tender
root,

“ With the mighty power of my kingly
foot ;

“ I have spread out my arms so strong
and wide,
“ And opened my way on every side ;
“ I have drawn from the earth its virtues
fine,
“ To strengthen for me each poison-spine ;
“ Both morn and night my leaves I’ve
spread,
“ And upon the falling dews have fed,
“ Till I am as great as a forest-tree ;
“ The great wide world is the place for
me ! ”

Said the Nettle-king in his bravery.

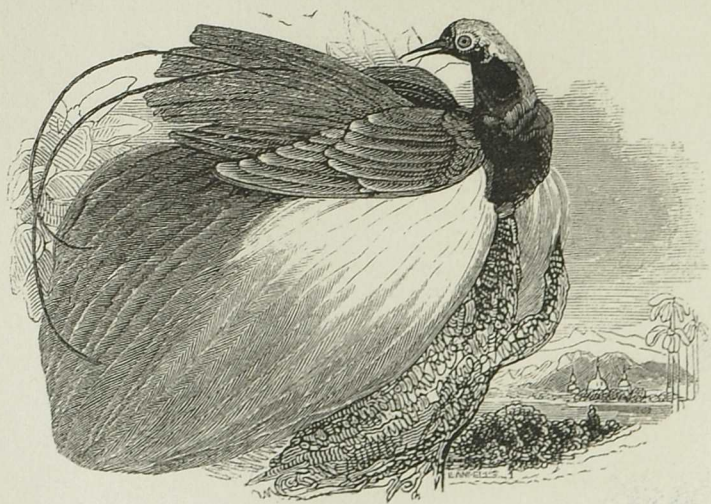
Just then came up a Woodman stout,
In the thick of the wood he was peering
about.

The Nettle looked up, the Nettle looked
down,

And graciously smiled on the simple clown :

“Thou knowest me well, Sir Clown,”
said he,
“And ’t is meet that thou reverence one
like me !”

Nothing at all the man replied,
But he lifted a scythe that was at his side,
And he cut the Nettle up by the root,
And trampled it under his heavy foot ;
And he saw where the Toad in its shadow
lay,
But he said not a word, and went his way.



THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

O lovely Bird of Paradise,
I'll go where thou dost go !
Rise higher yet, and higher yet,
For a stormy wind doth blow.

Now up above the tempest
We are sailing in the calm,
Amid the golden sunshine,
And where the air is balm.

See, far below us rolling
The storm-cloud black and wide ;
The fury of its raging
Is as an angry tide !

O gentle Bird of Paradise,
Thy happy lot I'll share ;
And go where'er thou goest
On, through the sunny air !

Whate'er the food thou eatest
Bird, I will eat it too,
And ere it reach the stormy earth,
Will drink with thee the dew !

My father and my mother,
I'll leave them for thy sake ;
And where thy nest is builded,
My pleasant home will make !

Is it woven of the sunshine,
And the fragrance of the spice ;
And cradled round with happiness ?
Sweet Bird of Paradise !

O take me, take me to it,
Wherever it may be,
For far into the sunshine
I'll fly away with thee !

Thus sung an Eastern poet,
A many years ago ;
Now, of the Bird of Paradise
A truer tale we know.

We know the nest it buildeth
Within the forest green ;
And many and many a traveller
Its very eggs hath seen.

Yet, lovely Bird of Paradise,
They take no charm from thee ;
Thou art a creature of the earth,
And not a mystery !



LANDRELL

THE WATER-RAT.

COME into the meadows, this bright summer day ;

The people are merrily making the hay :
There 's a blithe sound of pastoral life
everywhere ;

And the gay Lark is carolling up in the
air.

And I know in the wood where the
Columbine grows,

And the climbing Clematis and Pink
Apple-rose ;

And I know where the Buglos grows blue
as the sky,

And the deep crimson Vetch like a wild
Vine runs high.

And I'll shew you a sight you love better
than these,

A little field-stream overshadowed with
trees,

Where the water is clear as a free
mountain-rill,

And now it runs rippling, and now it is
still ;

Where the crowned Butomus is gracefully
growing,

Where the long purple spikes of the Loose-
strife are blowing,

And the rich, plummy crests of the Mea-
dow-sweet seem

Like foam which the current has left on
the stream ;

There I'll shew you the brown Water-
Rat at his play—

You will see nothing blither this blithe
summer day ;

A glad, innocent creature, for whom was
ordained

The quiet of brooks, and the plants they
contained.

But, hush ! step as lightly as leaves in
their fall ;

Man has wronged him, and he is in fear
of us all.

See ! there he is sitting, the tree-roots
among,

And the Reed-sparrow by him is singing
his song.

See how gravely he sits ; how demure
and how still,

Like an anchorite old at his mossy door-
sill !

Ah no, now his mood of sedateness is
gone,

And his harlequin motions he'll shew us
anon.

Look ! look now ! how quickly the water
 he cleaves,
And again he is up 'mong those arrow-
 head leaves ;
See his little black head, and his eyes
 sparkling shine,
He has made up his mind on these dain-
 ties to dine,
For he has not a want which he cannot
 supply
In a water like this, with these water-
 plants nigh ;
And he asketh no bounty from man ; he
 can find
A plentiful table spread out to his mind ;
For this little field-stream hath all good
 that he needs,
In the budding tree-roots and the clus-
 tering reeds,

And the snowy-flowered arrow-head thick
growing here :

Ah, pity it is man has taught him to fear !
But look at him now, how he sitteth afloat
On the broad Water-lily leaf, as in a boat.
See the antics he plays ! how he dives in
the stream,

To and fro—now he chases that dancing
sun-beam ;

Now he stands for a moment as if half
perplexed,

In his frolicsome heart to know what to
do next.

Ha ! see now, that Dragon-fly sets him astir,
And he launches away like a brave
mariner ;

See there, up the stream how he merrily
rows,

And the tall fragrant Calamus bows as
he goes !

And now he is lost at the foot of the tree ;
'T is his home, and a snug little home it
must be !

And 't is thus that the Water-Rat liveth
all day,

In these small pleasures wearing the
summer away ;

And when cold winter comes, and the
water-plants die,

And his little brooks yield him no longer
supply,

Down into his burrow he cozily creeps,
And quietly through the long winter-
time sleeps.

Thus in summer his table by Nature is
spread,

And old mother Earth makes in winter
his bed.

THE SPARROW'S NEST.

NAY, only look what I have found !
A Sparrow's nest upon the ground ;
A Sparrow's nest as you may see,
Blown out of yonder old elm tree.

And what a medley thing it is !
I never saw a nest like this,—
Not neatly wove with decent care,
Of silvery moss and shining hair ;

But put together, odds and ends,
Picked up from enemies and friends :
See, bits of thread, and bits of rag,
Just like a little rubbish-bag !

Here is a scrap of red and brown,
Like the old washer-woman's gown ;
And here is muslin, pink and green,
And bits of calico between ;

O never thinks the lady fair,
As she goes by with mincing air,
How the pert Sparrow over-head,
Has robbed her gown to make its bed !

See, hair of dog and fur of cat,
And rovings of a worsted mat,
And shreads of silks, and many a feather,
Compacted cunningly together.

Well, here has hoarding been and hiving,
And not a little good contriving,
Before a home of peace and ease
Was fashioned out of things like these !

Think, had these odds and ends been
brought

To some wise man renowned for thought,
Some man, of men a very gem,
Pray what could he have done with them ?

If we had said, “ Here, sir, we bring
You many a worthless little thing,
Just bits and scraps, so very small,
That they have scarcely size at all ;

“ And out of these, you must contrive
A dwelling large enough for five ;
Neat, warm, and snug ; with comfort
stored ;

Where five small things may lodge and
board.”

How would the man of learning vast,
Have been astonished and aghast ;

And vowed that such a thing had been
Ne'er heard of, thought of, much less seen.

Ah! man of learning, you are wrong ;
Instinct is, more than wisdom, strong ;
And He who made the Sparrow, taught
This skill beyond your reach of thought.

And here, in this uncostly nest,
These little creatures have been blest ;
Nor have kings known in palaces,
Half their contentedness in this—
Poor simple dwelling as it is !



THE KINGFISHER.

For the handsome Kingfisher, go not to
the tree,

No bird of the field or the forest is he ;

In the dry riven rock he did never
abide,

And not on the brown heath all barren
and wide.

He lives where the fresh, sparkling waters
are flowing,

Where the tall, heavy Typha and Loose-
strife are growing ;

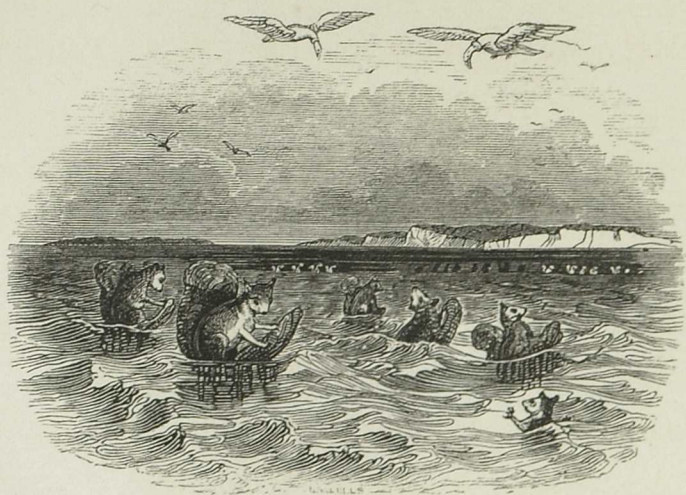
By the bright little streams that all joy-
fully run
Awhile in the shadow, and then in the sun.

He lives in a hole that is quite to his
mind,
With the green, mossy Hazel roots firmly
entwined ;
Where the dark Alder-bough waves grace-
fully o'er,
And the Sword-flag and Arrow-head grow
at his door.

There busily, busily, all the day long,
He seeks for small fishes the shallows
among ;
For he builds his nest of the pearly fish-
bone,
Deep, deep in the bank far retired, and
alone.

Then the brown Water-Rat from his
burrow looks out,
To see what his neighbour Kingfisher's
about ;
And the green Dragon-fly, flitting slowly
away,
Just pauses one moment to bid him good-
day.

O happy Kingfisher ! what care should
he know,
By the clear, pleasant streams, as he
skims to and fro,
Now lost in the shadow, now bright in
the sheen
Of the hot summer sun, glancing scarlet
and green !



THE MIGRATION OF THE GREY SQUIRRELS.

WHEN in my youth I travelled
Throughout each north countrie,
Many a strange thing did I hear,
And many a strange thing see.

I sate with small men in their huts,
Built of the drifted snow ;
No fire had we but the seal-oil lamp,
Nor other light did know.

For far and wide the plains were lost
For months in the winter dark ;
And we heard the growl of the hungry
Bear,
And the blue Fox's bark.

But when the sun rose redly up
To shine for half a year,
Round and round through the skies to
sail,
Nor once to disappear,

Then on I went, with curious eyes,
And saw where, like to man,
The Beaver built his palaces ;
And where the Ermine ran.

And came where sailed the lonely Swans
Wild on their native flood ;

And the shy Elk grazed up the mossy
hills

And the Wolf was in the wood.

And the frosty plains like diamonds shone,
And the iced rocks also,
Like emeralds and like beryls clear,
Till the soft south wind did blow.

And then upsprang the grass and flowers
Sudden, and sweet, and bright ;
And the wild birds filled the solitude
With a fervour of delight.

But nothing was there that pleased me
more

Than when, in autumn brown,
I came in the depths of the pathless woods,
To the Grey Squirrels' town.

There were hundreds that in the hollow
boles

Of the old, old trees did dwell,
And laid up their store hard by their door
Of the sweet mast as it fell.

But soon the hungry wild Swine came,
And with thievish snouts dug up
Their buried treasure, and left them not
So much as an acorn-cup !

Then did they chatter in angry mood,
And one and all decree,
Into the forests of rich stone-pine
Over hill and dale to flee.

Over hill and dale, over hill and dale,
For many a league they went ;
Like a troop of undaunted travellers
Governed by one consent.

But the Hawk and Eagle, and peering Owl,
Did dreadfully pursue ;
And the farther the Grey Squirrels went,
The more their perils grew.
When lo ! to cut off their pilgrimage,
A broad stream lay in view.

But then did each wondrous creature
shew
His cunning and bravery ;
With a piece of the Pine-bark in his
mouth,
Unto the stream came he,

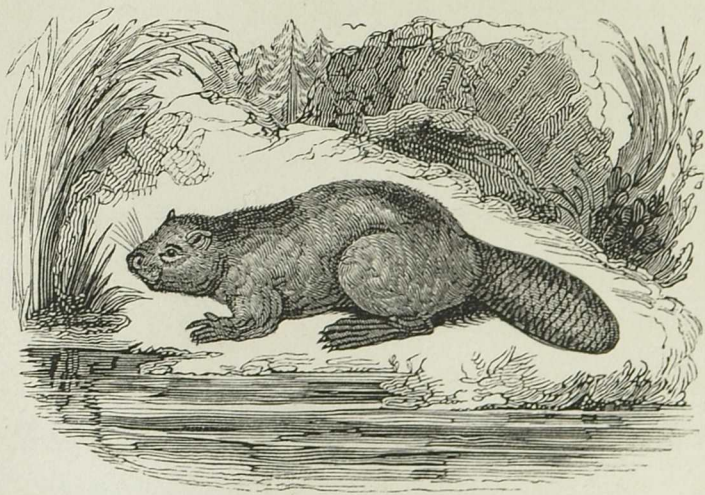
And boldly his little bark he launched,
Without the least delay ;
His bushy tail was his upright sail,
And he merrily steered away.

Never was there a lovelier sight
Than that Grey Squirrels' fleet ;
And with anxious eyes I watched to see
What fortune it would meet.

Soon had they reached the rough mid-
stream,
And ever and anon,
I grieved to behold some small bark
wrecked,
And its little steersman gone.

But the main fleet stoutly held across ;
I saw them leap to shore ;
They entered the woods with a cry of joy,
For their perilous march was o'er.

W. H.



THE BEAVER.

UP in the north if thou sail with me,
A wonderful creature I 'll shew to thee,
As gentle and mild as a Lamb at play,
Skipping about in the month of May ;
Yet wise as any old learned sage
Who sits turning over a musty page !

Come down to this lonely river's bank,
See, driven-in stake and riven plank ;
'T is a mighty work before thee stands
That would do no shame to human hands.

A well-built dam to stem the tide
Of this northern river so strong and wide ;
Look ! the woven bough of many a tree,
And a wall of fairest masonry ;
The waters cannot o'erpass this bound,
For a hundred keen eyes watch it round ;
And the skill that raised can keep it
good
Against the peril of storm and flood.

And yonder, the peaceable creatures
dwell
Secure in their watery citadel !
They know no sorrow, have done no sin ;
Happy they live 'mong kith and kin—
As happy as living things can be,
Each in the midst of his family !
Ay, there they live, and the hunter wild
Seeing their social natures mild,

Seeing how they were kind and good,
Hath felt his stubborn soul subdued ;
And the very sight of their young at play
Hath put his hunter's heart away ;
And a mood of pity hath o'er him crept,
As he thought of his own dear babes and
wept.*

I know ye are but the Beavers small,
Living at peace in your own mud-wall ;
I know that ye have no books to teach
The lore that lies within your reach.
But what ? Five thousand years ago
Ye knew as much as now ye know ;
And on the banks of streams that sprung
Forth when the earth itself was young,
Your wondrous works were formed as true ;
For the All-Wise instructed you !

* A fact.

But man! how hath he pondered on,
Through the long term of ages gone;
And many a cunning book hath writ,
Of learning deep, and subtle wit;
Hath compassed sea, hath compassed
land,
Hath built up towers and temples grand,
Hath travelled far for hidden lore,
And known what was not known of yore,
Yet after all, though wise he be,
He hath no better skill than ye!

THE
TRUE STORY OF WEB-SPINNER.

WEB SPINNER was a miser old,
Who came of low degree ;
His body was large, his legs were thin,
And he kept bad company ;
And his visage had the evil look
Of a black felon grim ;
To all the country he was known,
But none spoke well of him.
His house was seven stories high,
In a corner of the street,
And it always had a dirty look,
When other homes were neat ;

Up in his garret dark he lived,
And from the windows high
Looked out in the dusky evening
Upon the passers by.
Most people thought he lived alone ;
Yet many have averred,
That dismal cries from out his house
Were often loudly heard ;
And that none living left his gate,
Although a few went in,
For he seized the very beggar old,
And stripped him to the skin ;
And though he prayed for mercy,
Yet mercy ne'er was shown—
The miser cut his body up,
And picked him bone from bone.
Thus people said, and all believed
The dismal story true ;
As it was told to me, in truth,
I tell it so to you.

There was an ancient widow—
One Madgy de la Moth,
A stranger to the man, or she
Had ne'er gone there, in troth ;
But she was poor, and wandered out
At nightfall in the street,
To beg from rich men's tables
Dry scraps of broken meat.
So she knocked at old Web Spinner's
door,
With a modest tap, and low,
And down stairs came he speedily,
Like an arrow from a bow.
“ Walk in, walk in, mother ! ” said
he,
And shut the door behind—
She thought for such a gentleman,
That he was wondrous kind ;

But ere the midnight clock had tolled,
Like a tiger of the wood,
He had eaten the flesh from off her
bones,
And drank of her heart's blood !

Now after this fell deed was done,
A little season's space,
The burly Baron of Bluebottle
Was riding from the chase :
The sport was dull, the day was hot,
The sun was sinking down,
When wearily the Baron rode
Into the dusty town.
Says he, " I 'll ask a lodging
At the first house I come to ;"
With that the gate of Web Spinner
Came suddenly in view :

Loud was the knock the Baron gave—

Down came the churl with glee,
Says Bluebottle, “ Good sir, to-night
I ask your courtesy ;

I ’m wearied with a long day’s chase—
My friends are far behind.”

“ You may need them all,” said Web
Spinner,

“ It runneth in my mind.”

“ A Baron am I,” said Bluebottle ;

“ From a foreign land I come.”

“ I thought as much,” said Web Spinner,

“ Fools never stay at home !”

Says the Baron, “ Churl, what meaneth
this ?

I defy ye, villain base !”

And he wished the while in his inmost
heart

He was safely from the place.

Web Spinner ran and locked the door,
And a loud laugh, laughed he ;
With that each one on the other sprang,
And they wrestled furiously.
The Baron was a man of might,
A swordsman of renown ;
But the Miser had the stronger arm,
And kept the Baron down :
Then out he took a little cord,
From a pocket at his side,
And with many a crafty, cruel knot
His hands and feet he tied ;
And bound him down unto the floor,
And said in savage jest,
“ There ’s heavy work in store for you ;
So, Baron, take your rest ! ”
Then up and down his house he went,
Arranging dish and platter,
With a dull and heavy countenance,
As if nothing were the matter.

At length he seized on Bluebottle,
That strong and burly man,
And with many and many a desperate
tug,
To hoist him up began :
And step by step, and step by step,
He went with heavy tread ;
But ere he reached the garret door,
Poor Bluebottle was dead !

Now all this while, a Magistrate,
Who lived the house hard by,
Had watched Web Spinner's cruelty
Through a window privily :
So in he burst, through bolts and bars,
With a loud and thundering sound,
And vowed to burn the house with fire,
And level it with the ground ;

But the wicked churl, who all his life
Had looked for such a day,
Passed through a trap-door in the wall,
And took himself away :
But where he went no man could tell ;
'T was said that underground,
He died a miserable death,
But his body ne'er was found.
They pulled his house down stick and
stone,—
“ For a caitiff vile as he,”
Said they, “ within our quiet town
Shall not a dweller be !”

THE actions of the Spider above described were told me by a very intelligent man, who permitted the web to remain for a considerable time in his

counting-house window, that he might have the means of closely observing its occupier's way of life. It was, as described above under the semblance of a dwelling-house, seven stories high, and in each story was a small circular hole by which the spider ascended and descended at pleasure ; serving, in fact, all the purposes of a stair-case. His usual abode was in his seventh, or garret story, where he sat in a sullen sort of patience waiting for his prey. The small downy-winged moth was soon taken ; she was weak, and made but little resistance, and was always eaten on the spot. His behaviour towards a heavy and noisy bluebottle-fly was exactly as related. The fly seemed bold and insolent ; and hurled himself, as if in defiance, against

the abode of his enemy. The spider descended in great haste, and stood before him, when an angry parley seemed to take place. The bluebottle appeared highly affronted, and plunged about like a wild horse; but his efforts were generally unsuccessful; the spider, watching an unguarded moment, darted behind him, and falling upon him with all his force, drew a fine thread from his side, with which he so completely entangled his prostrate victim, that it was impossible he could move leg or wing. The spider then set about making preparations for the feast, which, for reasons best known to himself, he chose to enjoy in his upper story. The staircase, which would admit his body, was too strait for that of his victim; he accordingly set

about enlarging it, with a delicate pair of shears with which his head was furnished, and then with great adroitness he hoisted the almost exhausted Blue-bottle to the top of his dwelling, where he fell upon him with every token of satisfaction.

SPRING.

BRIGHT Creature, lift thy voice and sing,
Like the glad birds, for this is Spring !
Look up—the skies above are bright,
And darkly blue as deep midnight ;
And piled-up, silvery clouds lie there,
Like radiant slumberers of the air :
And hark ! from every bush and tree
Rings forth the wild-wood melody.
The Blackbird and the Thrush sing out ;
And small birds warble round about,
As if they were bereft of reason,
In the great gladness of the season ;
And though the hedge be leafless yet,
Still many a little nest is set

'Mong the twisted boughs so cunningly,
Where early eggs lie, two or three.
And hark ! those Rooks the trees among,
Feeding their never-silent young ;
A pleasant din it is, that calls
The fancy to ancestral halls.
But hush ! from out that warm wood's
side,
I hear a voice that ringeth wide—
O, joyful Spring's sweet minstrel, hail !
It is indeed the Nightingale,
Loud singing in the morning clear,
As poets ever love to hear !

Look now abroad.—All creatures see,
How they are filled with life and glee :
This little Bee among the flowers
Hath laboured since the morning hours,

Making the pleasant air astir,
And with its murmuring, pleasanter.
See there! the wavering Butterfly,
With starting motion fluttering by,
From leaf to leaf, from spray to spray,
A thing whose life is holiday ;
The little Rabbits too, are out,
And Leverets skipping all about ;
And Squirrels, peeping from their trees,
A-start at every vagrant breeze ;
For life, in the glad days of Spring,
Doth gladden each created thing.

Now green is every bank, and full
Of flowers and leaves for all to pull.
The Ficary, in each sunny place,
Doth shine out like a merry face ;
The strong green Mercury, and the dear
Fresh Violets of the early year,

Peering their broad green leaves all
through,
In odorous thousands, white and blue ;
And the broad Dandelion's blaze,
Bright as the sun of summer days ;
And in the woods beneath the green
Of budding trees are brightly seen,
The nodding Blue-bell's graceful flowers,
The Hyacinth of this land of ours—
As fair as any flower that blows ;
And here the pale Stellaria grows,
Like Una with her gentle grace,
Shining out in a shady place ;
And here, on open slopes we see
The lightly-set Anemone ;
Here too the spotted Arum green,
A hooded mystery, is seen ;
And in the turfy meadows shine,
White Saxifrage and Cardamine ;

And acres of the Crocus make*
A lustre like a purple lake.
And overhead how nobly towers
The Chestnut, with its waxen flowers,
And broad green leaves, which all expand,
Like to a giant's open hand.
Beside you blooms the Hawthorn free ;
And yonder the wild Cherry-tree,
The fairy-lady of the wood ;
And there the Sycamore's bursting bud,
The Spanish-chestnut, and the Lime,
Those trees of flowery summer-time.
Look up, the leaves are fresh and green,
And every branching vein is seen
Through their almost transparent sheen !
Spirit of Beauty, thou dost fling
Such grace o'er each created thing,

* As in the Nottingham meadows.

That even a little leaf may stir
The heart to be a worshipper ;
And joy, which in the soul has birth,
From these bright creatures of the earth,—
Good is it thou should'st have thy way,
Thou art as much of God as they !

Now let us to the garden go,
And dig and delve, and plant and sow ;
The fresh dark mould is rich and sweet,
And each flower-plot is trim and neat ;
And Daffodil and Primrose see,
And many-hued Anemone,
As full of flower as they can be ;
And here 's the Hyacinth sweetly pale,
Recalling some old Grecian tale ;
And here the mild Narcissus too ;
And every flower of every hue,

Which the glad season sends, is here ;
The Almond, while its branch is sere,
With myriad blossoms beautified,
As pink as the sea-shell's inside ;
And, under the warm cottage-eaves,
Among its clustered, budding leaves,
Shines out the Pear-tree's flowers of
snow,

As white as any flowers that grow :
And budding is the southern Vine,
And Apricot and Nectarine ;
And Plum-trees in the garden warm,
And Damsons round the cottage-farm,
Like snow-showers shed upon the trees,
And like them shaken by the breeze.

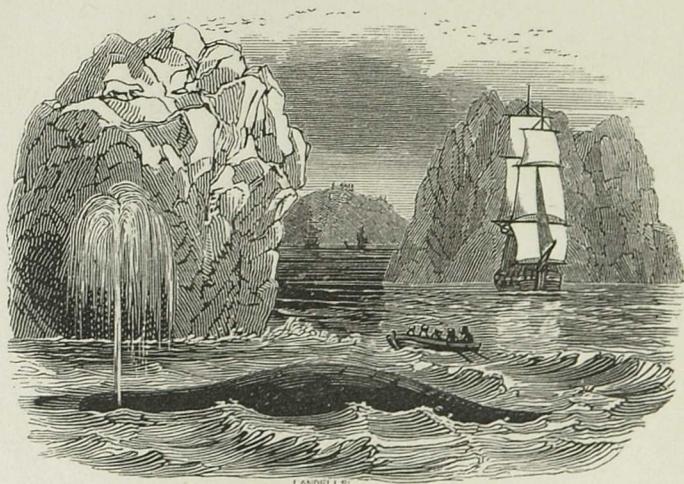
Dear ones! 't is now the time, that ye
Sit down with zeal to Botany ;

And names which were so hard and
tough,

Are easy now, and clear enough ;
For from the morn to evening's hours
Your bright instructors are sweet flowers.
Go out through pleasant field and lane,
And come back, glad of heart again,
Bringing with you life's best of wealth,
Knowledge, and joy of heart, and health ;
Ere long each bank whereon ye look
Will be to you an open book,
And flowers, by the Creator writ,
The characters inscribed on it !

Come let us forth into the fields !
Unceasing joy the season yields—
Why should we tarry within door ?
And see, the children of the poor

Are out, all joy, and running races,
With buoyant limbs and laughing faces.
Thank heaven! the sunshine and the air
Are free to these young sons of care!
Come, let us too, be glad as they,
For soon is gone the merry May!



THE NORTHERN SEAS.

UP! up! let us a voyage take;
Why sit we here at ease?
Find us a vessel tight and snug,
Bound for the Northern Seas.

I long to see the Northern-Lights,
With their rushing splendours fly;
Like living things with flaming wings,
Wide o'er the wondrous sky.

I long to see those ice-bergs vast,
With heads all crowned with snow;
Whose green roots sleep in the awful deep,
Two hundred fathoms low.

I long to hear the thundering crash
Of their terrific fall ;
And the echoes from a thousand cliffs,
Like lonely voices call.

There shall we see the fierce White Bear ;
The sleepy Seals a-ground,
And the spouting Whales that to and fro
Sail with a dreary sound.

There may we tread on depths of ice,
That the hairy Mammoth hide ;
Perfect, as when in times of old,
The mighty creature died.

And while the unsetting sun shines on
Through the still heaven's deep blue,
We'll traverse the azure waves, the herds
Of the dread Sea-horse to view.

We'll pass the shores of solemn pine,
Where Wolves and Black Bears prowls;
And away to the rocky isles of mist,
To rouse the northern fowl.

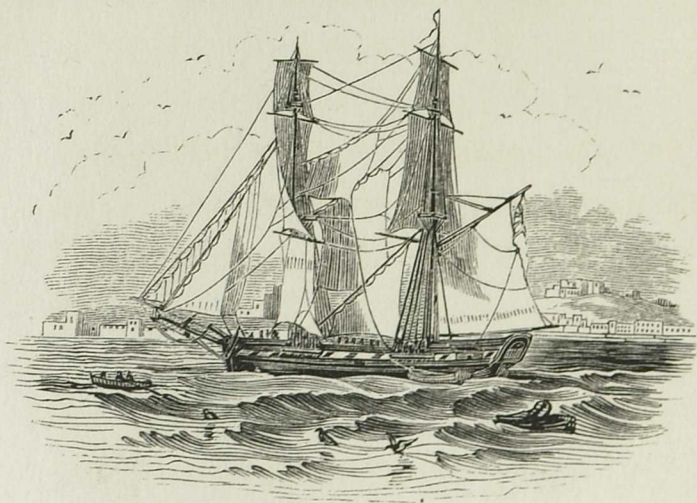
Up there shall start ten thousand wings
With a rushing, whistling din;
Up shall the Auk and Fulmar start,—
All but the fat Penguin.

And there in the wastes of the silent sky,
With the silent earth below,
We shall see far off to his lonely rock,
The lonely Eagle go.

Then softly, softly will we tread
By inland streams to see,
Where the Pelican of the silent North,
Sits there all silently.

But if thou love the Southern Seas,
And pleasant summer weather,
Come, let us mount this gallant ship,
And sail away together.

W. H.



SOUTHERN SEAS.

YES ! let us mount this gallant ship ;
Spread canvass to the wind—
Up ! we will seek the glowing South—
Leave Care and Cold behind.
Let the Shark pursue through the waters
blue
Our flying vessel's track ;
Let strong winds blow, and rocks below
Threaten,—we turn not back.
Trusting in Him who holds the Sea
In his Almighty hand,
We'll pass the awful waters wide—
Tread many a far-off strand.

Right onward as our course we hold,
From day to day, the sky
Above our head its arch shall spread
More glowing, bright, and high.
And from night to night—oh, what delight!

In its azure depths to mark
Stars all unknown come glittering out
Over the ocean dark.
The moon uprising like a sun,
So stately, large, and sheen,
And the very stars like clustered moons
In the crystal ether keen.
While all about the ship below,
Strange fiery billows play,—
The ceaseless keel through liquid fire
Cuts wondrously its way.
But O, the South! the balmy South!
How warm the breezes float!

How warm the amber waters stream
From off our basking boat.
Come down, come down from the tall
ship's side !

What a marvellous sight is here !
Look—purple rocks and crimson trees,
Down in the deep so clear.
See ! where those shoals of Dolphins go,
A glad and glorious band,
Sporting among the day-bright woods
Of a coral fairy-land.

See ! on the violet sands beneath,
How the gorgeous shells do glide !
O Sea ! old Sea, who yet knows half
Of thy wonders and thy pride ?
Look how the sea-plants trembling float
All like a Mermaid's locks,
Waving in thread of ruby red
Over those nether rocks.

Heaving and sinking, soft and fair,
Here hyacinth—there green—
With many a stem of golden growth,
And starry flowers between.
But away! away! to upper day—
For monstrous shapes are here,—
Monsters of dark and wallowing bulk,
And horny eyeballs drear.
The tusk'd mouth, and the spiny fin,
Speckled and warted back,
The glittering swift, and the flabby slow,
Ramp through this deep-sea track.
Away! away! to upper day,
To glance o'er the breezy brine,
And see the Nautilus gladly sail,
The Flying-fish leap and shine.
But what is that? "'Tis land!—'tis
land!—
'Tis land!' the sailors cry.

Nay !—'t is a long and narrow cloud,
Betwixt the sea and sky.
“ 'T is land ! 't is land ! ” they cry once
more—

And now comes breathing on
An odour of the living earth,
Such as the sea hath none.
But now I mark the rising shores !—
The purple hills !—the trees !
Ah ! what a glorious land is here,
What happy scenes are these !
See, how the tall Palms lift their locks
From mountain clefts,—what vales,
Basking beneath the noon-tide sun,
That high and hotly sails.
Yet all about the breezy shore,
Unheedful of the glow,
Look how the children of the South
Are passing to and fro.

What noble forms ! what fairy place !

Cast anchor in this cove,—

Push out the boat, for in this land

A little we must rove.

We 'll wander on through wood and field,

We 'll sit beneath the Vine ;

We 'll drink the limpid Cocoa milk,

And pluck the native Pine.

The Bread-fruit and Cassada-root,

And many a glowing berry,

Shall be our feast, for here at least,

Why should we not be merry ?

For 't is a Southern Paradise,

All gladsome,—plain, and shore,—

A land so far, that here we are,

But shall be here no more.

We 've seen the splendid Southern clime,

Its seas, and isles, and men,

So now !—back to a dearer land—

To England back again !



THE GARDEN.

I had a Garden when a child ;
I kept it all in order ;
'T was full of flowers as it could be,
And London-pride was its border.

And soon as came the pleasant Spring,
The singing birds built in it ;
The Blackbird and the Thristle-cock,
The Woodlark and the Linnet.

And all within my Garden ran
A labyrinth-walk so mazy ;
In the middle there grew a yellow
Rose ;
At each end a Michaelmas Daisy.

I had a tree of Southern Wood,
And two of bright Mezereon ;
A Peony root, a snow-white Phlox,
And a bunch of red Valerian ;
A Lilac tree, and a Guelder-Rose ;
A Broom, and a Tiger-lily ;
And I walked a dozen miles to find
The true wild Daffodilly.

I had Columbines, both pink and blue,
And *Thalictrum* like a feather ;

And the bright Goat's-beard, that shuts
its leaves
Before a change of weather.

I had Marigolds, and Gilliflowers,
And Pinks all Pinks exceeding ;
I 'd a noble root of Love-in-a-mist,
And plenty of Love-lies-bleeding.

I 'd Jacob's Ladder, Aaron's Rod,
And the Peacock-Gentianella ;
I had Asters, more than I can tell,
And Lupins blue and yellow.

I set a grain of Indian Corn,
One day in an idle humour,
And the grain sprung up six feet or
more,
My glory for a summer.

I found far off in the pleasant fields,
More flowers than I can mention ;
I found the English Asphodel,
And the spring and autumn Gentian.

I found the Orchis, fly and bee,
And the Cistus of the mountain ;
And the Money-wort, and the Adder's-
tongue,
Beside an old wood fountain.

I found within another wood,
The rare Pyrola blowing :
For wherever there was a curious flower
I was sure to find it growing.

I set them in my garden beds,
Those beds I loved so dearly,
Where I laboured after set of sun,
And in summer mornings early.

O my pleasant garden-plot!—
A shrubbery was beside it,
And an old and mossy Apple-tree,
With a Woodbine wreathed to hide it.

There was a bower in my garden-plot,
A Spiræa grew before it;
Behind it was a Laburnum tree,
And a wild Hop clambered o'er it.

Ofttimes I sat within my bower,
Like a king in all his glory;
Ofttimes I read, and read for hours,
Some pleasant, wondrous story.

I read of Gardens in old times,
Old, stately Gardens, kingly,
Where people walked in gorgeous crowds,
Or for silent musing, singly.

I raised up visions in my brain,
The noblest and the fairest ;
But still I loved my Garden best,
And thought it far the rarest.

And all among my flowers I walked,
Like a miser mid his treasure ;
For that pleasant plot of Garden ground
Was a world of endless pleasure.

THE LION.

LION, thou art girt with might !
King by uncontested right ;
Strength, and majesty, and pride
Are in thee personified !
Slavish doubt or timid fear
Never came thy spirit near ;
What it is to fly, or bow
To a mightier than thou,
Never has been known to thee,
Creature terrible and free !

Power the Mightiest, gave the Lion
Sinews like to bands of iron ;

Gave him force which never failed ;
Gave a heart that never quailed.
Triple-mailéd coat of steel,
Plates of brass from head to heel,
Less defensive were in wearing
Than the Lion's heart of daring ;
Nor could towers of strength impart,
Trust like that which keeps his heart.

What are things to match with him ?
Serpents old, and strong and grim,
Seas upon a desert-shore,
Mountain-wildernesses hoar,
Night and storm, and earthquakes dire,
Thawless frost and raging fire—
All that 's strong, and stern and dark,
All that doth not miss its mark,
All that makes man's nature tremble,
Doth the Desert-king resemble !

When he sends his roaring forth,
Silence falls upon the earth ;
For the creatures great and small,
Know his terror-breathing call,
And as if by death pursued,
Leave to him a solitude.

Lion, thou art made to dwell
In hot lands intractable,
And thyself, the sun, the sand,
Are a tyrannous triple band ;
Lion-king and desert-throne,
All the region is your own !

THE FOX.

IN the rugged copse, in the ferny brake,
The cunning red Fox his den doth make;
In the ancient turf of the baron's land,
Where the knarled oaks of the forest
stand ;

In the widow's garden lone and bare ;
On the hills which the poor man tills
with care :

There ages ago he made his den,
And there he abideth in spite of men.
'T is a dismal place, for all the floor
With the bones of his prey is covered o'er ;
'T is darksome and lone, you can hardly
trace

The furthest nook of the dreary place ;

And there he skulks, like a creature of ill,
And comes out when midnight is dark
and still ;

When the dismal Owl with his staring eye,
Sends forth from the ruin his screeching
cry,

And the Bat on his black leathern wings
goes by ;

Then out comes the Fox with his thievish
mind,

Looking this way and that way, before
and behind ;

Then running along, thinking but of the
theft

Of the one little Hen the poor Widow has
left ;

And he boldly and carelessly passes her
shed,

For he knows very well she is sleeping
in bed,

And that she has no Dog to give notice
of foes,
So he seizes his prey and home leisurely
goes.

And at times he steals down to the depth
of the wood,
And seizes the Partridge in midst of her
brood ;
And the little grey Rabbit, and young
timid Hare ;
And the tall, stately Pheasant, so gentle
and fair ;
And he buries them deep in some secret
spot,
Where he knows man or hound can dis-
cover them not.

But vengeance comes down on the thief
at length,

For they hunt him out of his place of
strength,

And man and the Fox are at desperate
strife,

And the creature runs, and runs for his
life •

And following close is the snuffing hound,
And hills and hollows they compass round;
Till at length he is seized, a caitiff stout,
And the wild dogs bark, and the hunters'
shout;

And they cut off his tail and wave it on
high,

Saying, “ Here fell the Fox so thievish
and sly ! ”

Thus may all oppressors of poor men die !

Then again mounts each hunter, and all
ride away,

And have a good dinner to end the
day ;

And they drink the red wine, and merrily
sing,

“ Death to the Fox, and long life to
the King ! ”



L. ANDREWS

THE WOOD-MOUSE.

D'ye know the little Wood-Mouse,
That pretty little thing,
That sits among the forest leaves,
Beside the forest spring?

Its fur is red as the red chestnut,
And it is small and slim ;
It leads a life most innocent
Within the forest dim.

'T is a timid, gentle creature,
And seldom comes in sight ;
It has a long and wiry tail,
And eyes both black and bright.

It makes its nest of soft, dry moss,
In a hole so deep and strong ;
And there it sleeps secure and warm,
The dreary winter long.

And though it keeps no calendar,
It knows when flowers are springing ;
And waketh to its summer life
When Nightingales are singing.

Upon the boughs the Squirrel sits,
The Wood-Mouse plays below ;
And plenty of food it finds itself
Where the Beech and Chestnut grow.

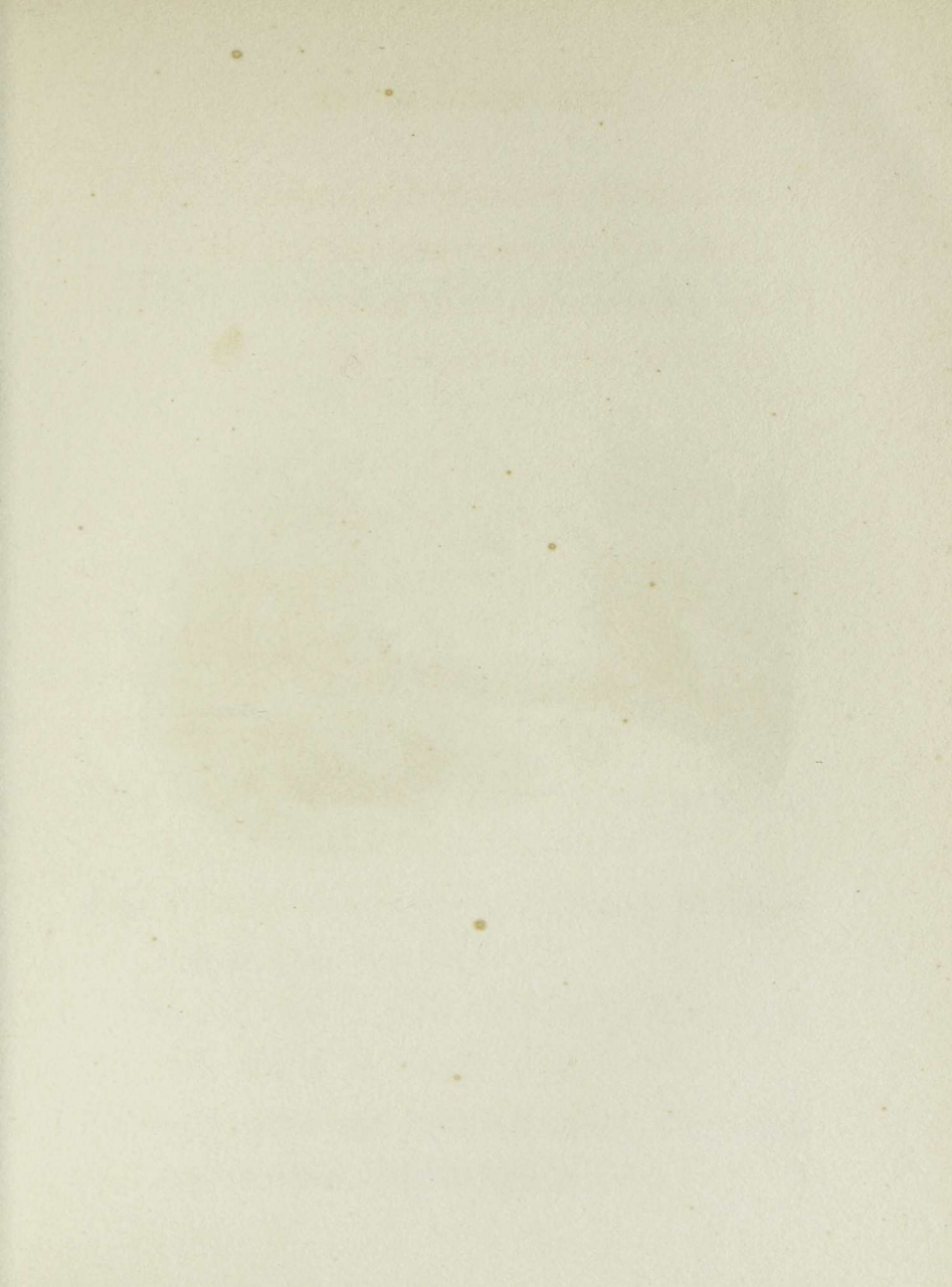
In the Hedge-Sparrow's nest he sits
When its Summer brood is fled,
And picks the berries from the bough
Of the Hawthorn over-head.

I saw a little Wood-Mouse once,
Like Oberon in his hall,
With the green, green moss beneath his
feet,
Sit under a Mushroom tall.

I saw him sit and his dinner eat,
All under the forest tree ;
His dinner of Chestnut ripe and red,
And he ate it heartily.

I wish you could have seen him there ;
It did my spirit good,
To see the small thing God had made
Thus eating in the wood.

I saw that He regardeth them—
Those creatures weak and small ;
Their table in the wild is spread,
By Him who cares for all !





THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

AN APOLOGUE.

A NEW VERSION OF AN OLD STORY.

“ Will you walk into my parlour ?” said
the Spider to the Fly,

“ ’Tis the prettiest little parlour that
ever you did spy ;

The way into my parlour is up a wind-
ing stair,

And I ’ve a many curious things to shew
when you are there.”

“ Oh no, no,” said the little Fly, “ to
ask me is in vain,

For who goes up your winding stair can
ne’er come down again.”

“ I ’m sure you must be weary, dear,
with soaring up so high ;
Will you rest upon my little bed ? ” said
the Spider to the Fly.

“ There are pretty curtains drawn around ;
the sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest awhile, I ’ll
snugly tuck you in ! ”

“ Oh no, no, ” said the little Fly, “ for
I ’ve often heard it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep
upon your bed ! ”

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly,
“ Dear friend what can I do,
To prove the warm affection I ’ve always
felt for you ?
I have within my pantry, good store of
all that ’s nice ;

I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?"

"Oh no, no," said the little Fly, "kind sir, that cannot be,

I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!"

"Sweet creature!" said the Spider,

"you're witty and you're wise,

How handsome are your gauzy wings,
how brilliant are your eyes!

I've a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,

If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself."

"I thank you, gentle sir," she said,

"for what you're pleased to say,

And bidding you good morning now,
I'll call another day."

The Spider turned him round about, and
went into his den,

For well he knew the silly Fly would
soon come back again :

So he wove a subtle web, in a little
corner sly,

And set his table ready, to dine upon the
Fly.

Then he came out to his door again, and
merrily did sing,

“ Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with
the pearl and silver wing ;

Your robes are green and purple—there’s
a crest upon your head ;

Your eyes are like the diamond bright,
but mine are dull as lead !”

Alas, alas ! how very soon this silly little
Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came
slowly flitting by ;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then
near and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and
green and purple hue—
Thinking only of her crested head—poor
foolish thing ! At last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and
fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair,
into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er
came out again !

And now dear little children, who may
this story read,
To idle, silly flattering words, I pray you
ne'er give heed :
Unto an evil counsellor, close heart and
ear and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale, of the
Spider and the Fly.

THE LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE NEST.

IN books of travels I have heard
Of a wise thing, the Tailor-bird ;
A bird of wondrous skill, that sews,
Upon the bough whereon it grows,
A leaf into a nest so fair
That with it nothing can compare ;
A light and lovely, airy thing
That vibrates with the breeze's wing.
Ah well ! it is with cunning power
That little artist makes her bower ;
But come into an English wood,
And I'll shew you a work as good,

A work the Tailor-bird's excelling,
A more elaborate, snugger dwelling,
More beautiful, upon my word,
Wrought by a little English bird.

There, where those boughs of black-thorn
cross,
Behold that oval ball of moss ;
Look all the forest round and round,
No fairer nest can e'er be found ;
Observe it near, all knit together,
Moss, willow-down, and many a feather,
And filled within, as you may see,
As full of feathers as can be ;
Whence it is called by country folk,
A fitting name, the Feather-poke ;
But learned people, I have heard,
Parus caudatus, call the bird,
And others, not the learned clan,
Call it Wood-pot, and Jug, and Can.

Ay, here 's a nest ! a nest indeed,
That doth all other nests exceed,
Propped with the black-thorn twigs be-
neath,
And festooned with a wood-bine wreath !
Look at it near, all knit together,
Moss, willow-down, and many a feather ;
So soft, so light, so wrought with grace,
So suited to this green-wood place,
And spangled o'er, as with the intent
Of giving fitting ornament,
With silvery flakes of lichen bright,
That shine like opals, dazzling white !
Think only of the creature small,
That wrought this soft and silvery ball,
Without a tool to aid her skill ;
Nought but her little feet and bill—
Without a pattern whence to trace
This little roofed-in dwelling-place,

And does not in your bosoms spring
Love for this skilful little thing !

See, there 's a window in the wall,
Peep in, the house is not so small,
But snug and cozy, you shall see
A very decent family !
Now count them—one, two, three, four,
five—

Nay, *sixteen* merry things alive—
Sixteen young chirping things, all set
Where you, your little hand could not
get !

I 'm glad you 've seen it, for you never
Saw aught before so soft and clever !



THE HUMMING-BIRD.

THE Humming-bird ! the Humming-bird,
So fairy-like and bright ;
It lives among the sunny flowers,
A creature of delight !

In the radiant islands of the East,
Where fragrant spices grow,
A thousand thousand Humming-birds
Go glancing to and fro.

Like living fires they flit about,
Scarce larger than a bee,
Among the broad Palmetto leaves,
And through the Fan-palm tree.

And in those wild and verdant woods
Where stately Moras tower,
Where hangs from branching tree to tree
The scarlet Passion-flower ;

Where on the mighty river banks,
La Plate or Amazon,
The Cayman like an old tree trunk,
Lies basking in the sun ;

There builds her nest, the Humming-bird
Within the ancient wood,
Her nest of silky cotton down,
And rears her tiny brood.

She hangs it to a slender twig,
Where waves it light and free,
As the Campanero tolls his song,
And rocks the mighty tree.

All crimson is her shining breast,
Like to the red, red rose ;
Her wing is the changeful green and blue
That the neck of the Peacock shews.

Thou happy, happy Humming-bird,
No winter round thee lowers ;
Thou never saw'st a leafless tree,
Nor land without sweet flowers :

A reign of summer joyfulness
To thee for life is given ;
Thy food the honey from the flower,
Thy drink, the dew from heaven !

How glad the heart of Eve would be,
In Eden's glorious bowers,
To see the first, first Humming-bird
Among the first spring-flowers.

Among the rainbow butterflies,
Before the rainbow shone ;
One moment glancing in her sight,
Another moment, gone !

Thou little shining creature,
God saved thee from the Flood,
With the Eagle of the mountain land,
And the Tiger of the wood !

Who cared to save the Elephant,
He also cared for thee ;
And gave those broad lands for thy home,
Where grows the Cedar-tree !



THE OSTRICH.

Not in the land of a thousand flowers,
Not in the glorious Spice-wood bowers ;
Not in fair islands by bright seas embraced,

Lives the wild Ostrich, the bird of the
waste.

Come on to the Desert, his dwelling is
there,

Where the breath of the simoom is hot
in the air ;

To the Desert, where never a green blade
grew,

Where never its shadow a broad tree
threw,

Where sands rise up, and in columns are
 wheeled
By the winds of the Desert, like hosts in
 the field ;
Where the Wild Ass sends forth a lone,
 dissonant bray,
And the herds of the Wild Horse speed on
 through the day—
The creatures unbroken, with manes
 flying free,
Like the steeds of the whirlwind, if such
 there may be.
Yes, there in the Desert, like armies for
 war,
The flocks of the Ostrich are seen from
 afar,
Speeding on, speeding on o'er the deso-
 late plain,
While the fleet mounted Arab pursueth
 in vain !

But 'tis joy to the traveller who toils
through that land,
The egg of the Ostrich to find in the
sand ;

'Tis sustenance for him when his store is
low,

And weary with travel he journeyeth slow
To the well of the Desert, and finds it at
last

Seven days' journey from that he hath
passed.

Or go to the Caffre-land,—what if you
meet

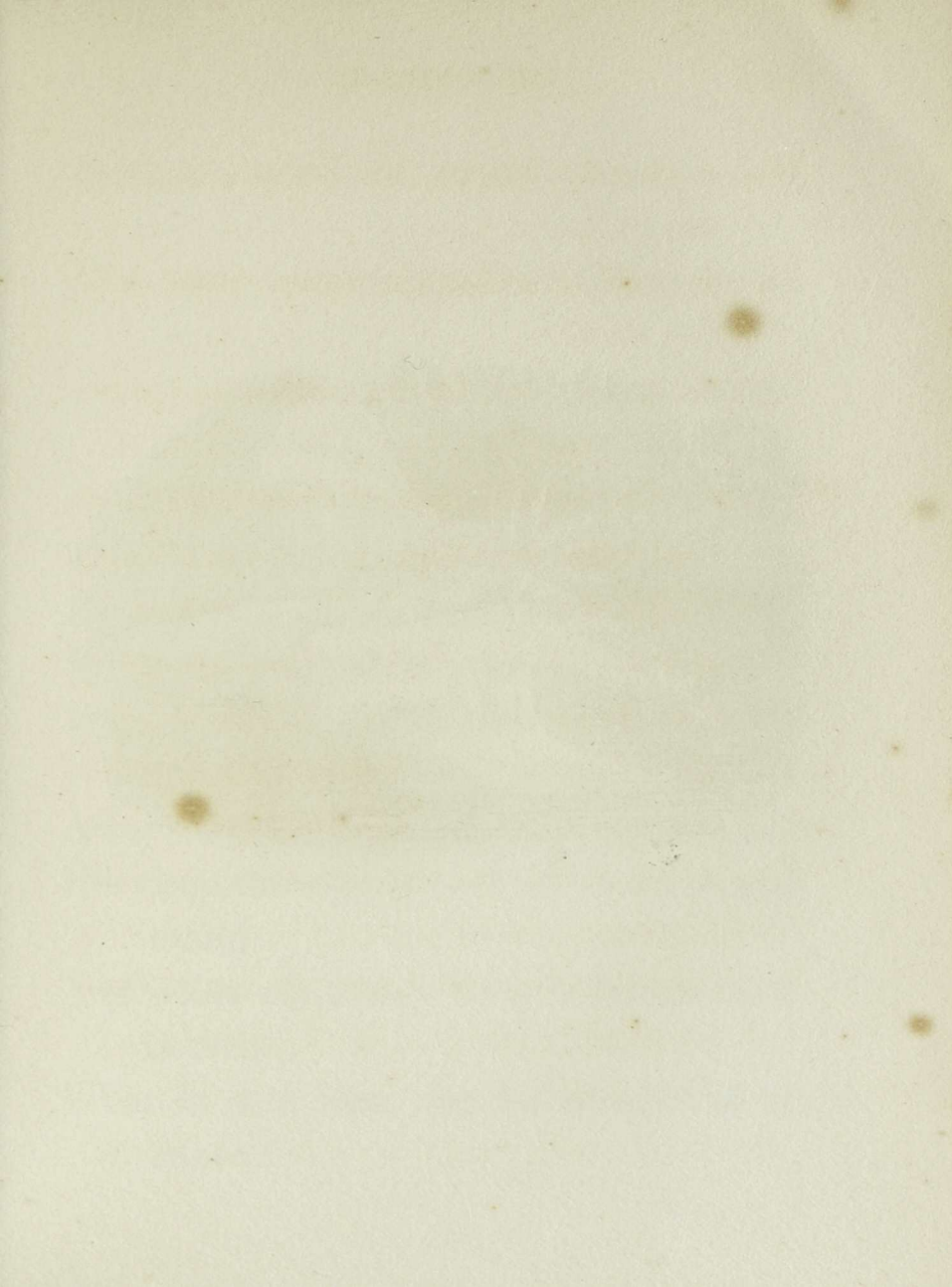
A print in the sand, of the strong Lion's
feet !

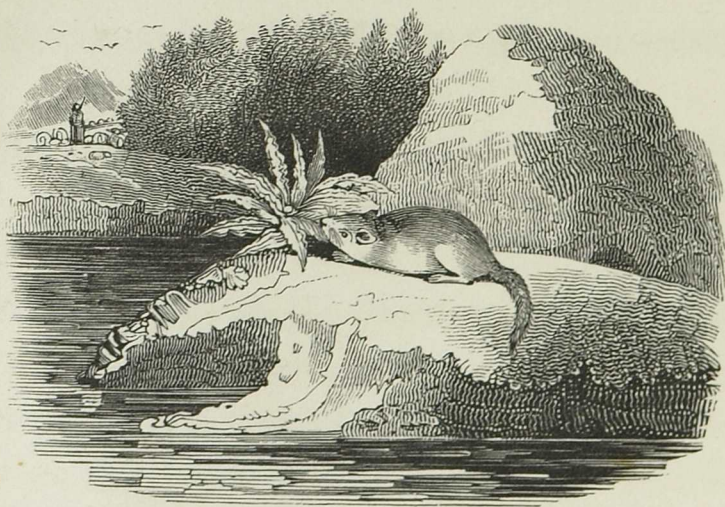
He is down in the thicket, asleep in his
lair ;

Come on to the Desert, the Ostrich is
there—

There, there ! where the Zebras are fly-
ing in haste,
The herd of the Ostrich comes down o'er
the waste—
Half running, half flying—what progress
they make !
Twang the bow ! not the arrow their
flight can o'ertake !

Strong bird of the Wild, thou art gone
like the wind,
And thou leavest the cloud of thy speed-
ing behind ;
Fare thee well ! in thy desolate region,
farewell,
With the Giraffe and Lion, we leave thee
to dwell !





THE DORMOUSE.

THE little Dormouse is tawny red ;
He makes against winter a nice snug bed,
He makes his bed in a mossy bank,
Where the plants in the summer grow
tall and rank.

Away from the daylight, far underground,
His sleep through the winter is quiet and
sound,

And when all above him it freezes and
snows,

What is it to him, for he nought of it
knows?

And till the cold time of the winter is
gone,
The little Dormouse keeps sleeping on.

But at last, in the fresh breezy days of
the spring,
When the green leaves bud, and the
merry birds sing,
And the dread of the winter is over and
past,
The little Dormouse peeps out at last.
Out of his snug, quiet burrow he wends,
And looks all about for his neighbours
and friends ;
Then he says, as he sits at the foot of a
larch,
“ ’Tis a beautiful day, for the first day
of March !

The Violet is blowing, the blue sky is
clear ;

The Lark is upspringing, his carol I
hear ;

And in the green fields are the Lamb and
the Foal ;

I am glad I 'm not sleeping now down in
my hole !”

Then away he runs, in his merry mood,
Over the fields and into the wood,
To find any grain there may chance to
be,

Or any small berry that hangs on the
tree.

So, from early morning, till late at
night,

Has the poor little creature its own de-
light,

Looking down to the earth and up to the
sky,
Thinking, “ what a happy Dormouse
am I ! ”

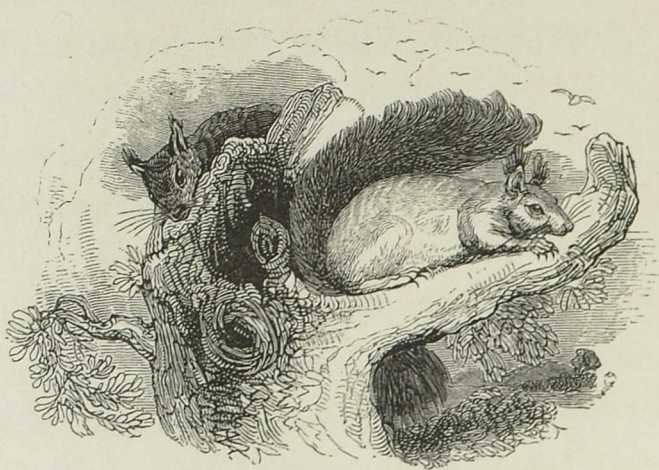
THE WILD FRITILLARY.

FAMILIARLY CALLED THE WEEPING WIDOW,
OR THE MOURNING BRIDE.

LIKE a drooping thing of sorrow,
Sad today, more sad tomorrow ;
Like a widow dark weeds wearing,
Anguish in her bosom bearing ;
Like a nun in raiment sable,
Sorrow-bowed, inconsolable ;
Like a melancholy fairy,
Art thou, Meadow-Fritillary !

Like the head of snake enchanted,
Where whilom the life hath panted,
All its purple checquerings scaly
Growing cold and dim and paly ;
Like a dragon's head half moulded,
Scaly jaws together folded,
Is the bud so dusk and airy
Of the wild Field-Fritillary !

Like a joy my memory knoweth—
In my native fields it groweth ;
Like the voice of one long parted,
Calling to the faithful-hearted ;
Like an unexpected pleasure
That hath neither stint nor measure ;
Like a bountiful good fairy,
Do I hail thee, Fritillary !



THE SQUIRREL.

THE pretty, red Squirrel lives up in a
tree,
A little blithe creature as ever can be ;
He dwells in the boughs where the Stock-
dove broods,
Far in the shades of the green summer
woods ;
His food is the young juicy cones of the
Pine,
And the milky Beech-nut is his bread
and his wine.
In the joy of his nature he frisks with a
bound
To the topmost twigs, and then down to
the ground ;

Then up again, like a winged thing,
And from tree to tree with a vaulting
spring ;

Then he sits up aloft, and looks waggish
and queer,

As if he would say, “ Ay, follow me
here ! ”

And then he grows pettish, and stamps
his foot ;

And then independently cracks his nut ;
And thus he lives the long summer
thorough,

Without a care or a thought of sorrow.

But small as he is, he knows he may
want,

In the bleak winter weather, when food
is scant,

So he finds a hole in an old tree's core,
And there makes his nest, and lays up
his store ;

Then when cold winter comes, and the
trees are bare,

When the white snow is falling, and keen
is the air,

He heeds it not, as he sits by himself,
In his warm little nest, with his nuts on
his shelf.

O, wise little Squirrel ! no wonder that
he,

In the green summer woods is as blithe
as can be !

THE DRAGON-FLY.

WITH wings like crystal air,
Dyed with the rainbow's dye ;
Fluttering here and there,
Pr'ythee tell me, Dragon-fly,
Whence thou comest,
Where thou roamest,
Art thou of the earth or sky ?

'Mong plumes of Meadow-sweet
I see thee glance and play,
Or light with airy feet
Upon a nodding spray,

Or sailing slow,
I see thee go
I' th' sunshine far away.

Tell me, pr'ythee, Dragon-fly,
What and whence thou art ?
Whether art of earth or sky,
Or of flowers a part ?
And who, together
This fine weather
Put thee, glorious as thou art ?

He maketh no reply,
But all things answer loud,
“ Who formed the Dragon-fly,
Formed sun and sea and cloud ;
Formed flower and tree ;
Formed me and thee,
With nobler gifts endowed ! ”

Save for the Eternal Thought,
Bright shape thou hadst not been,
He from dull matter wrought
Thy purple and thy green ;
And made thee take,
E'en for my sake,
Thy beauty and thy sheen !

THE WILD SPRING-CROCUS.

AN, though it is an English flower,
It only groweth here and there :
Through merry England you might ride ;
Through all its length, from side to side ;
Through fifty counties, nor have spied
This flower so passing fair.

But in our meadows it is growing,
And now it is the early Spring ;
And see from out the kindly earth
How thousand thousands issue forth,
As if it gloried to give birth
To such a lovely thing.

Like lilac-flame its colour glows,
Tender, and yet so clearly bright,
That all for miles and miles about,
The splendid meadow shineth out ;
And far-off village children shout
To see the welcome sight.

I love the odorous Hawthorn flower,
I love the Wilding's bloom to see ;
I love the light Anemonies.
That tremble to the faintest breeze ;
And hyacinth-like Orchises,
Are very dear to me !

The Star-wort is a fairy-flower ;
The Violet is a thing to prize ;
The Wild-pink on the craggy ledge ;
The waving sword-like Water-sedge,
And e'en the Robin-run-i'th'-hedge,
Are precious in mine eyes.

Yes, yes I love them all, bright things !

But then, such glorious flowers as these
Are dearer still—I'll tell you why,
There's joy in many a thousand eye
When first goes forth the welcome cry,
Of " lo, the Crocuses ! "

Then little, toiling children leave

Their care, and here by thousands
throng,

And through the shining meadow run,

And gather them, not one by one,

But by grasped handfuls, where are none

To say that they do wrong.

They run, they leap, they shout for joy ;

They bring their infant brethren here ;

They fill each little pinafore ;

They bear their baskets brimming o'er ;

Within their very hearts they store
This first joy of the year.

Yes, joy in these abundant meadows
Pours out like to the earth's o'erflowing;
And, less that they are beautiful,
Than that they are so plentiful,
So free for every child to pull,
I love to see them growing.

And here, in our own fields they grow—
An English flower, but very rare;
Through all the kingdom you may ride,
O'er marshy flat, on mountain side,
Nor ever see, outstretching wide,
Such flowery meadows fair!

THE SWALLOW.

 TWITTERING Swallow, fluttering Swallow,
 Art come back again ?
Come from water-bed or hollow,
 Where thou, winter-long hast lain ?
Nay, I 'll not believe it, Swallow,
Not in England hast thou tarried ;
 Many a day
 Far away
Has thy wing been wearied,
Over continent and isle,
Many and many and many a mile !
Tell me, pr'ythee bird, the story,
Of thy six months migratory !

If thou wert a human traveller,
We a quarto book should see ;
Thou wouldst be the sage unraveller
Of some dark, old mystery ;
Thou wouldst tell the wise men, Swallow,
Of the rivers' hidden fountains ;
Plain and glen,
And savage men,
And Afghauns of the mountains ;
Creatures, plants, and men unknown,
And cities in the Deserts lone :
Thou wouldst be, thou far-land dweller,
Like an Arab story-teller !

Was it in a temple, Swallow ;
In some Moorish minaret,
In some cavern's gloomy hollow,
Where the Lion and Serpent met,
That thy nest was builded, Swallow ?

Did the Negro people meet thee
 With a word
 Of welcome, bird,
Kind as that with which we greet thee ?
Pr'ythee tell me how and where
Thou wast guided through the air ;
Pr'ythee cease thy building-labour,
And tell thy travel-story, neighbour !

Thou hast been among the Caffres ;
 Seen the Bushman's stealthy arm,
Thou hast heard the lowing heifers
 On some good Herrnhuter's farm ;
Seen the gold-dust-finder, Swallow,
Heard the Lion-hunters' holla !

 Peace and strife,
 And much of life
Hast thou witnessed, wandering Swallow.

Tell but this, we 'll leave the rest,
Which is wisest, which is best ;
Tell, which happiest, if thou can,
Hottentot or Englishman ?—
Nought for answer can we get,
Save twitter, twitter, twitter, twet !



LANDELL'S

THE SEA.

THE Sea it is deep, the Sea it is wide ;
And it girdeth the earth on every side,
On every side it girds it round,
With an undecaying, mighty bound.

When the Spirit of God came down at
first,
Ere the day from primal night had burst,
Before the mountains sprung to birth,
The dark, deep waters veiled the earth.
Like a youthful giant roused from sleep,
At Creation's call uprose the Deep,

And his crested waves tossed up their
spray,
As the bonds of his ancient rest gave
way ;
And a voice went up in that stillness
vast,
As if life through a mighty heart had
passed.
Oh ancient, wide, unfathomed Sea,
Ere the mountains were, God fashioned
thee ;
And he gave in thine awful depths to
dwell
Things like thyself untameable—
The Dragons old, and the Harpy brood,
Were the lords of thine early solitude !
But night came down on that ancient
day,
And that mighty race was swept away ;

And death thy fathomless depths passed
through ;

And thy waters were meted out anew ;
And then on thy calmer breast were seen
The verdant crests of islands green ;
And mountains in their strength came
forth,

And trees and flowers arrayed the earth ;
Then the Dolphin first his gambols played,
In his rainbow-tinted scales arrayed ;
And down below all fretted and frore,
Was wrought the coral and madrepore ;
And among the sea-weeds green and red,
Like flocks of the valley the Turtles fed ;
And the sea-flowers budded and open'd
wide

In the lustre of waters deepened and
dyed ;

And the little Nautilus set afloat
On thy bounding tide his pearly boat ;

And the Whale sprang forth in his vigorous play ;

And shoals of the Flying-fish leaped into day ;

And the Pearl-fish under thy world of waves

Laid up his store in the old sea-caves.

Then man came down, and with silent awe

The majesty of waters saw ;

And he felt like an humbled thing of fear,

As he stood in that Presence august, severe,

Till he saw how the innocent creatures played

In the billowy depths and were not afraid ;

Till he saw how the Nautilus spread his sail,

And caught as it blew the favouring gale ;

And great and small through the watery
realm

Were steered as it were by a veering
helm ;

Then his heart grew bold, and his will
grew strong,

And he pondered in vigilant thought not
long

Ere he fashioned a boat of a hollow tree,
And thus became lord of the mighty Sea.

THE END.

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