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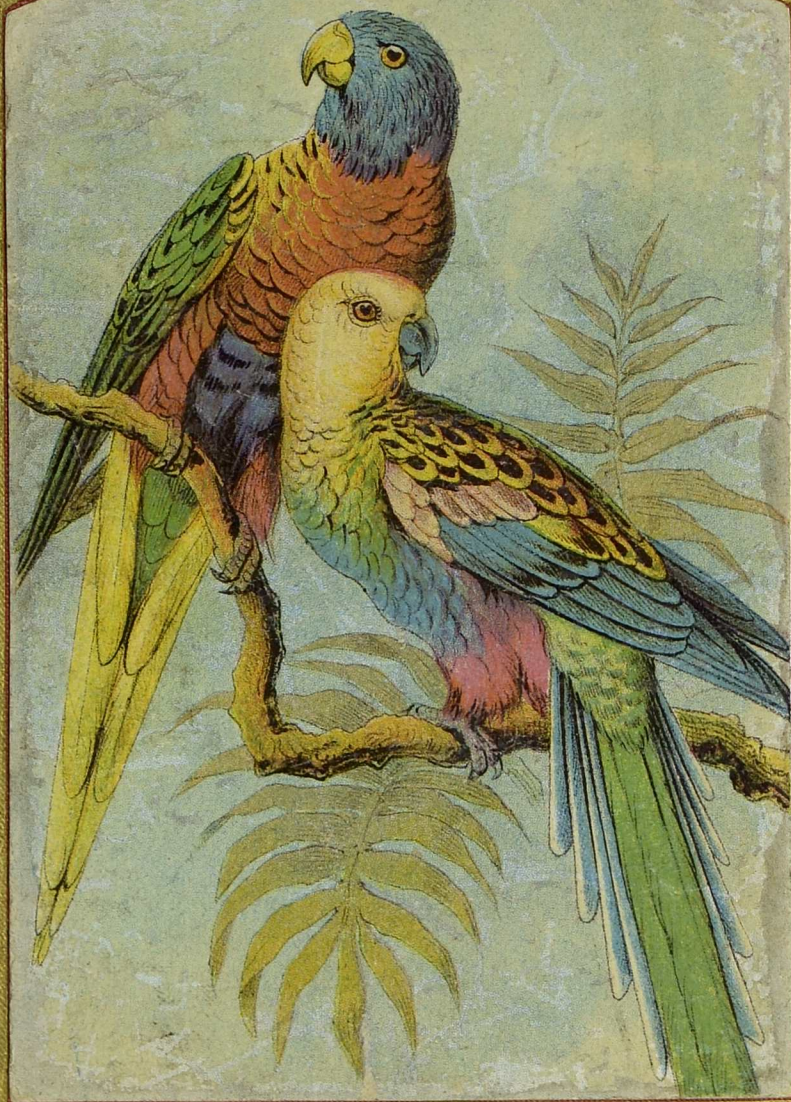
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H

OWITT'S

P

OEMS



NATURAL HISTORY

FOR THE YOUNG



West of Scotland Institution,

1, Claremont Terrace.

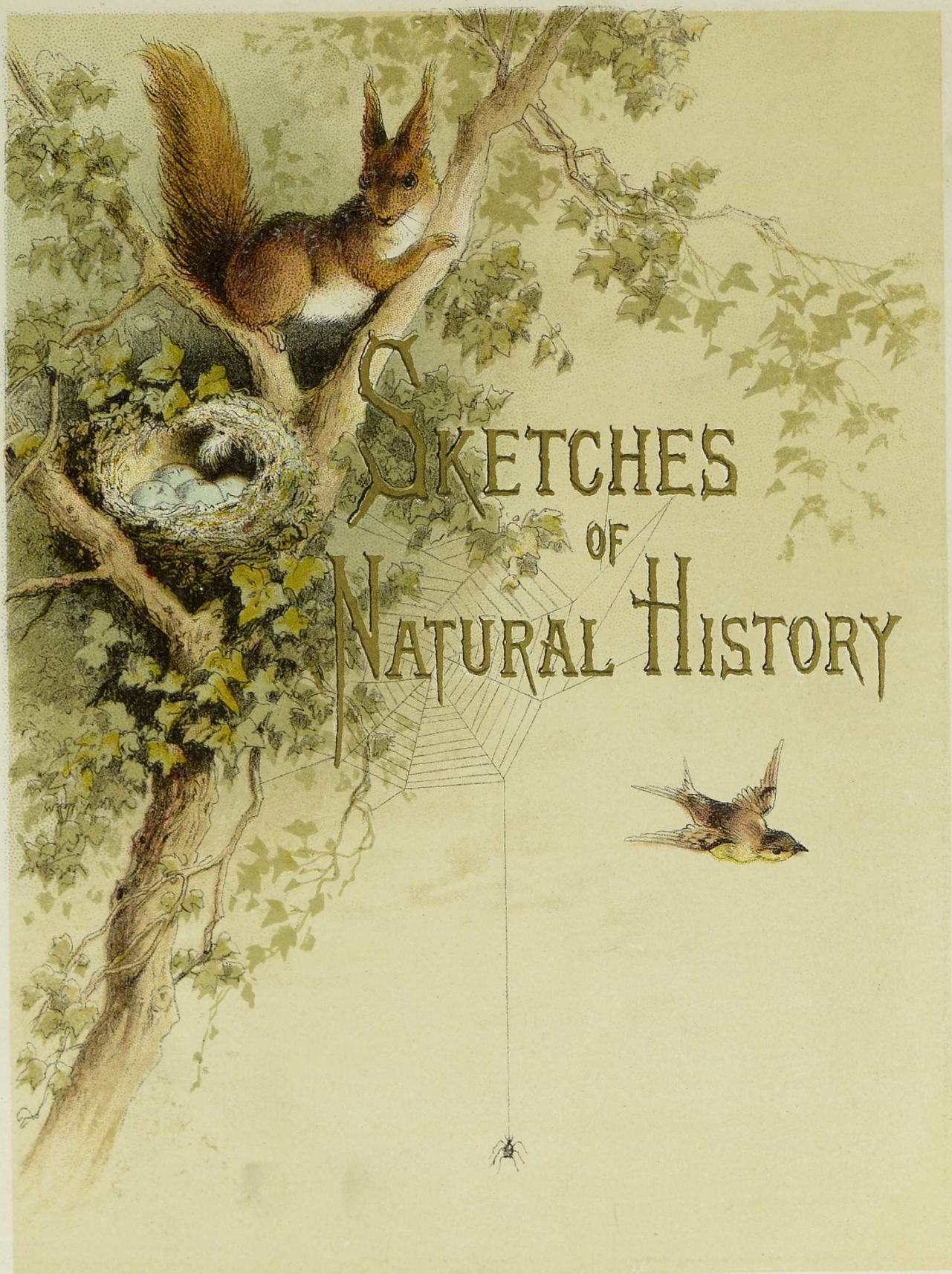
II Class 4th Div.
English, History &c
2^d Prize.

Awarded to

Miss Elizabeth Thomson.

26th May 1876

SKETCHES OF NATURAL HISTORY.



SKETCHES
OF
NATURAL HISTORY

Nelsons' Series of Juvenile Art-Books.

SKETCHES OF NATURAL HISTORY;

OR,

SONGS OF ANIMAL LIFE.

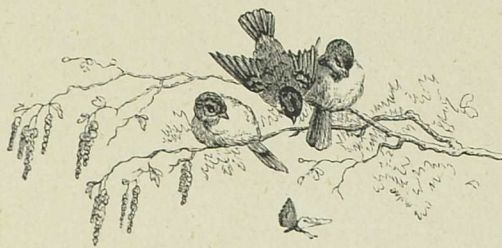
WRITTEN BY

Mary Howitt,

AND ILLUSTRATED WITH UPWARDS OF ONE HUNDRED DRAWINGS BY

H. GIACOMELLI,

ILLUSTRATOR OF "THE BIRD" BY MICHELET.



LONDON:

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1873.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.



WHEREVER the English language is spoken, it may be said, without exaggeration, that the name of Mary Howitt is familiar as a household word. Apart from her more considerable works, she is everywhere recognized as the Children's Favourite—as one of their happiest and most successful teachers ; setting before them the highest truths and most graceful fancies with all the embellishment of a polished yet simple diction.

Her “Sketches of Natural History” have long enjoyed a wide and well-deserved popularity. Seldom have the “habits” and “manners” of animals, with glimpses of rural life, and suggestions of picturesque landscapes, been brought before the young in a more attractive manner. And indeed, Mrs. Howitt being a poetess of no mean order, the following pages may be read with interest and pleasure by children of a larger growth than those for whom they were primarily intended. They are characterized by an infinite variety ; and Mrs. Howitt seems equally at home when singing of the Stormy Petrel or the Lion, or when describing in sportive verse the gambols of the Monkey or the vagaries of the Carolina Parrot. She ranges at will from grave to gay, from lively to severe, and invariably carries her reader with her.

It will be observed that two or three of the poems here included are from the pen of William Howitt, the accomplished husband of an accomplished wife. And it should be added that the pieces marked in the List of Contents with an asterisk are *entirely new*, having been written expressly by Mrs. Howitt for the present issue of the “Sketches.”

In bringing out this edition, the Publishers have been anxious to fit

it for a place in their new series of Juvenile Art-Books, and to present it as a worthy companion of the Author's "Birds and Flowers." For this purpose, they committed the task of illustrating them to one of the most distinguished of modern artists, H. GIACOMELLI, who is now so well known by his illustrations of "The Bird" and "Nature," and his share in M. Gustave Doré's "Bible." It is not for them to assume the functions of the critic, but they may be pardoned for expressing their conviction that Children's Books are seldom enriched with Engravings so poetical in conception and so finished in execution. If carefully studied by the juvenile reader, they must materially assist in educating his or her artistic taste.

It is the hope of the Publishers that the combined labours of Mary Howitt and H. Giacomelli have resulted in the production of a welcome addition to the stores of Juvenile Literature.

T. NELSON AND SONS.

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

My kind Publishers, in their preliminary Note to the present edition of this work, have expressed themselves in such obliging terms in relation to it, that I feel some diffidence in complying with their desire that I would myself add a few words before finally dismissing it from the press.

I may, however, avail myself of this opportunity of acknowledging the gratification I feel in seeing my book brought out in so beautiful a manner, and illustrated and embellished by M. Giacomelli, an artist who has studied Nature so carefully, and who possesses so peculiar a power of delineating her works, not only with rare fidelity, but, at the same time, both gracefully and poetically.

All honour has thus been done to these simple verses, which, in themselves, can but claim to be as the wild-flowers by the wayside, or the songs of the birds in the bushes; and very great pleasure does it afford me to see it permitted thus to enjoy, as it were, a second spring-time.

MARY HOWITT.

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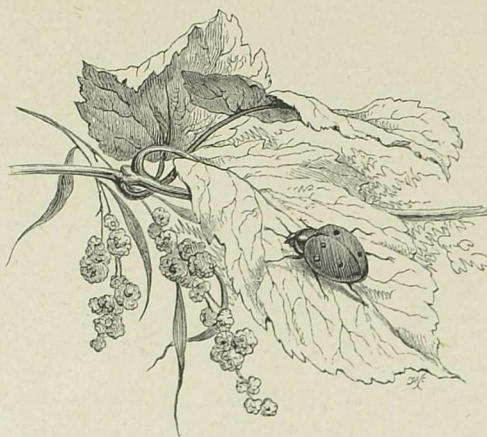
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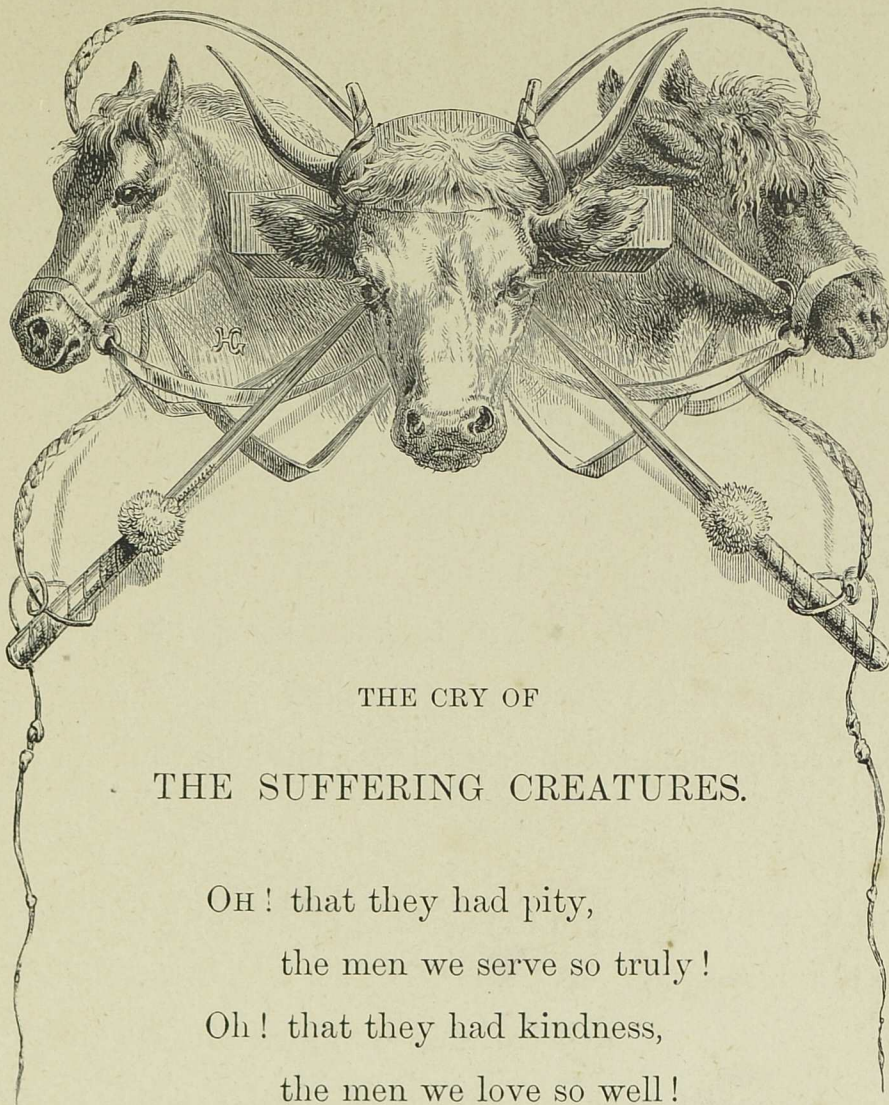
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TAIL-PIECES ENGRAVED BY G. A. MORISON.





THE CRY OF
THE SUFFERING CREATURES.

OH ! that they had pity,
the men we serve so truly !
Oh ! that they had kindness,
the men we love so well !

They call us dull and stupid, and vicious and unruly,
And think not we can suffer, but only would rebel.

They brand us, and they beat us ; they spill our blood
like water ;

We die that they may live, ten thousand in a day !

Oh ! that they had mercy ! for in their dens of slaughter
They afflict us and affright us, and do far worse than slay !

We are made to be their servants—we know it, and complain not ;
We bow our necks with meekness the galling yoke to bear.
Their heaviest toil we lighten, the meanest we disdain not ;
In all their sweat and labour we take a willing share.

We know that God intended for us but servile stations,
To toil to bear man's burdens, to watch beside his door ;
They are of earth the masters, we are their poor relations,
Who grudge them not their greatness, but help to make it more.

And in return we ask but, that they would kindly use us
For the purposes of service, for that for which we're made ;
That they would teach their children to love and not abuse us,
So each might face the other, and neither be afraid.

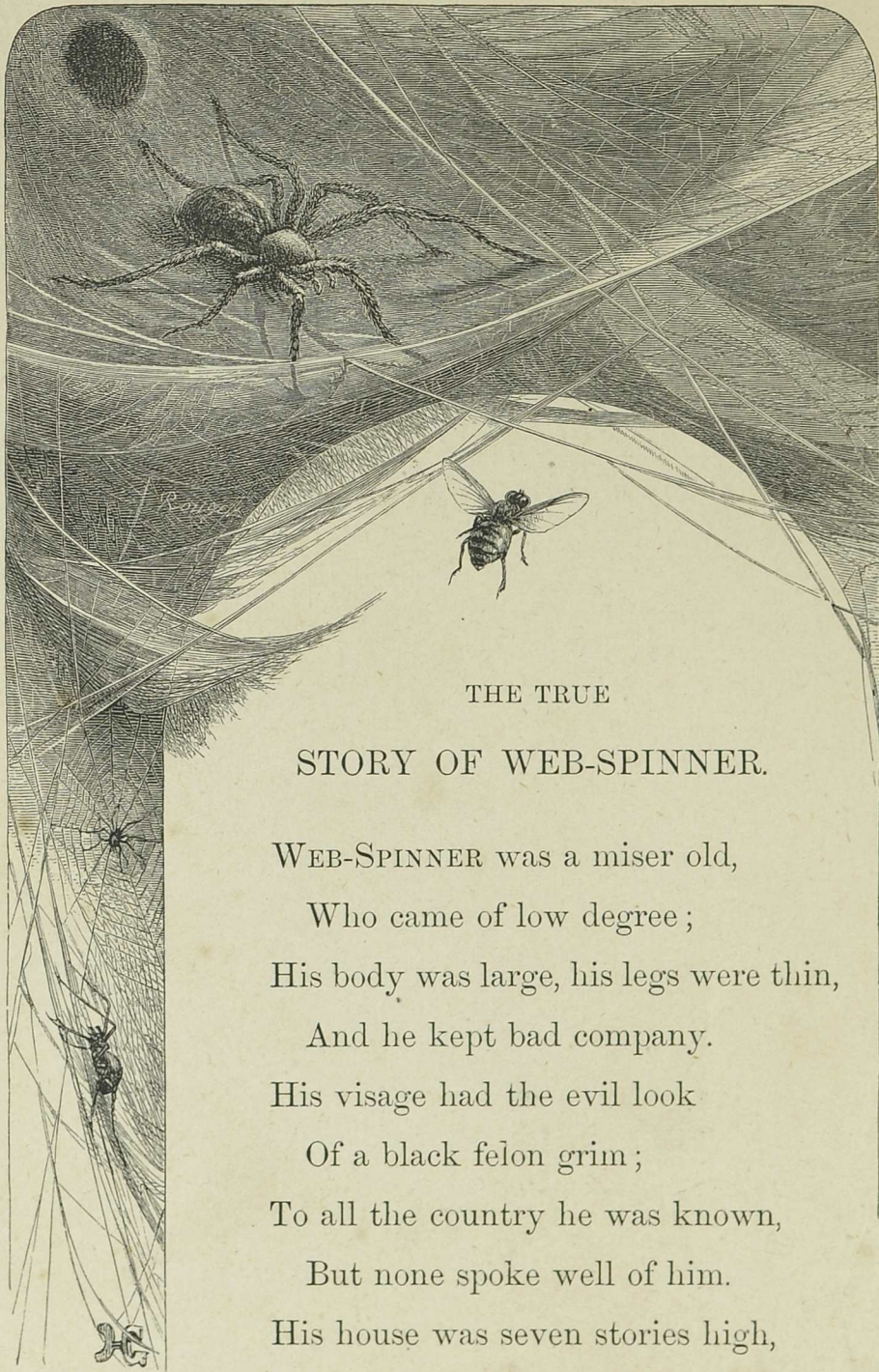
We have a sense they know not, or else have dulled by learning,
They call it instinct only, a thing of rule and plan ;
But oft when reason fails them, our clear, direct discerning,
And the love that is within us, have saved the life of man.

If they would but love us, would learn our strength and weakness,
If only with our sufferings their hearts could sympathize,
Then they would know what truth is, what patience is and meekness,
And read our heart's devotion in the softness of our eyes!

If they would but teach their children to treat the subject creatures
As humble friends, as servants who strive their love to win,
Then would they see how joyous, how kindly are our natures,
And a second day of Edèn would on the earth begin!



“BRONTE.”



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.
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 ;

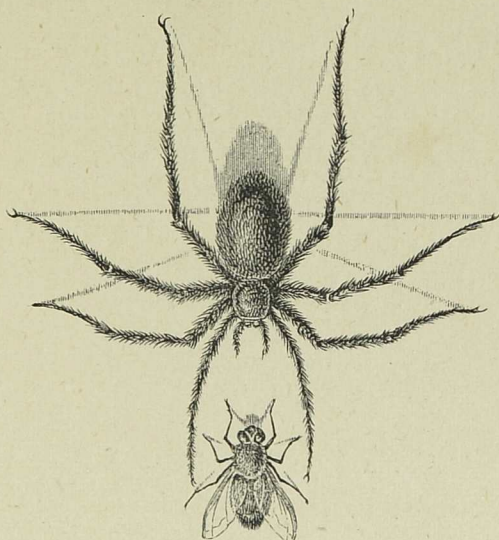
And always had a dirty look,
 Whilst other homes were neat.
Up in his garret dark he lived,
 And from the windows high
Looked out in the dusky evening
 Upon the passers-by.
Most people thought he lived alone,
 And many have averred
That dismal cries from out his house
 Were often loudly heard ;
And that 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,
"For wise men stay at home !"
Says the Baron, "Churl, what meaneth this ?
I defy you, villain base !"
And he wished the while with all his heart
He were safely from the place.
Web-Spinner ran and locked the door,
And a loud laugh laughèd 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 ;

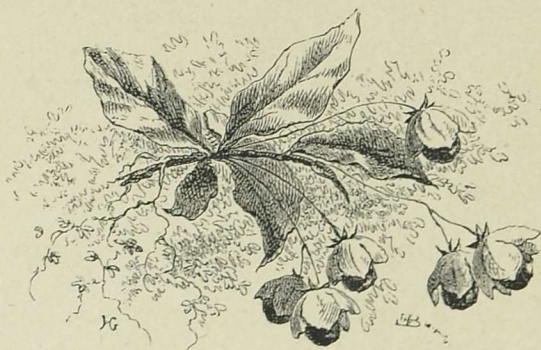
But ere he reached the garret door
Poor Bluebottle was dead !

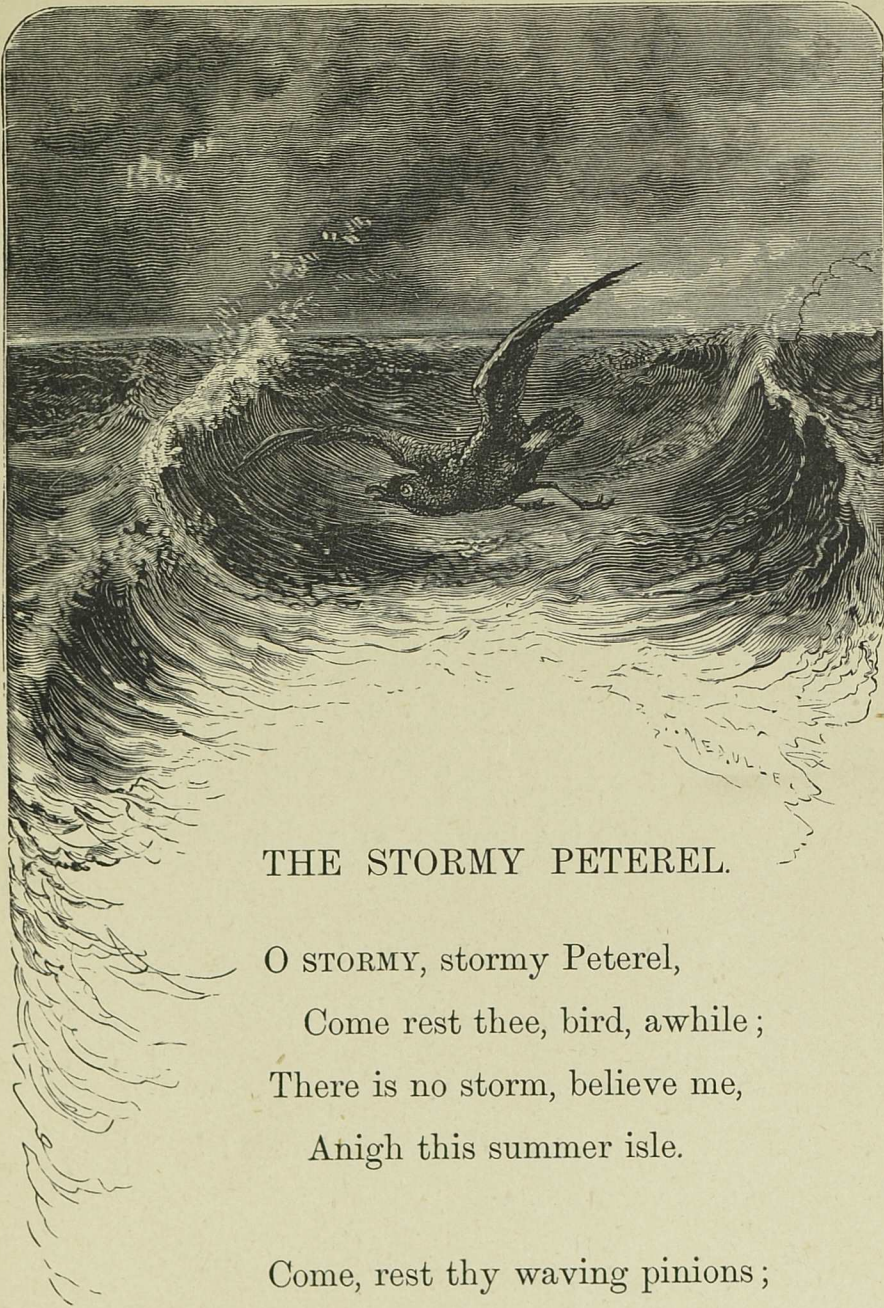


Now all this while a magistrate,
Who lived in the house hard by,
Had watched Web-Spinner's evil deeds
Through a window privily,
So in he bursts, through bolts and bars,
With a loud and thundering sound,
And vows to burn the house with fire,
And level it with the ground ;
But the wicked churl, who all his life
Had looked for such a day,
Passed through a trap-door in the wall,
And took himself away.

THE TRUE STORY OF WEB-SPINNER.

But where he went no man could tell ;
'Twas said that under-ground
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 STORMY PETEREL.

O STORMY, stormy Peterel,
Come rest thee, bird, awhile ;
There is no storm, believe me,
Anigh this summer isle.

Come, rest thy waving pinions ;
Alight thee down by me ;
And tell me somewhat of the lore
Thou learnest on the sea !

Dost hear beneath the ocean
The gathering tempest form ?
See'st thou afar the little cloud
That grows into the storm ?

How is it in the billowy depths—
Doth sea-weed heave and swell ?
And is a sound of coming woe
Rung from each caverned shell ?

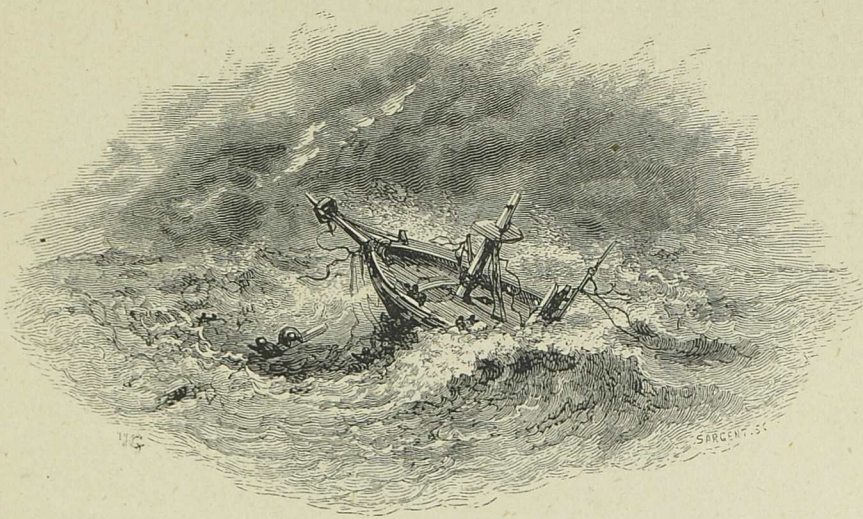
Dost watch the stormy sunset
For tempests of the west ;
And see the old moon riding slow
With the new moon on her breast ?

Dost mark the billows heaving
Before the coming gale,
And scream for joy of every sound
That turns the seaman pale ?

Are gusty tempests mirth to thee ?
Lov'st thou the lightning's flash ;
The booming of the mountain waves—
The thunder's deafening crash ?

O stormy, stormy Peterel,
Thou art a bird of woe !
Yet would I thou couldst tell me half
Of the misery thou dost know !

There was a ship went down last night,—
A good ship and a fair ;
A costly freight within her lay,
And many a soul was there !



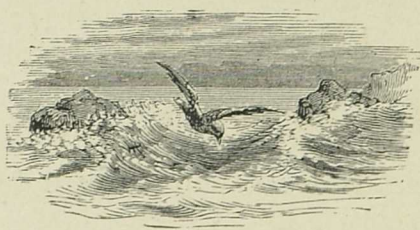
The night-black storm was over her,
And 'neath, the caverned wave :
In all her strength she perished,
Nor skill of man could save.

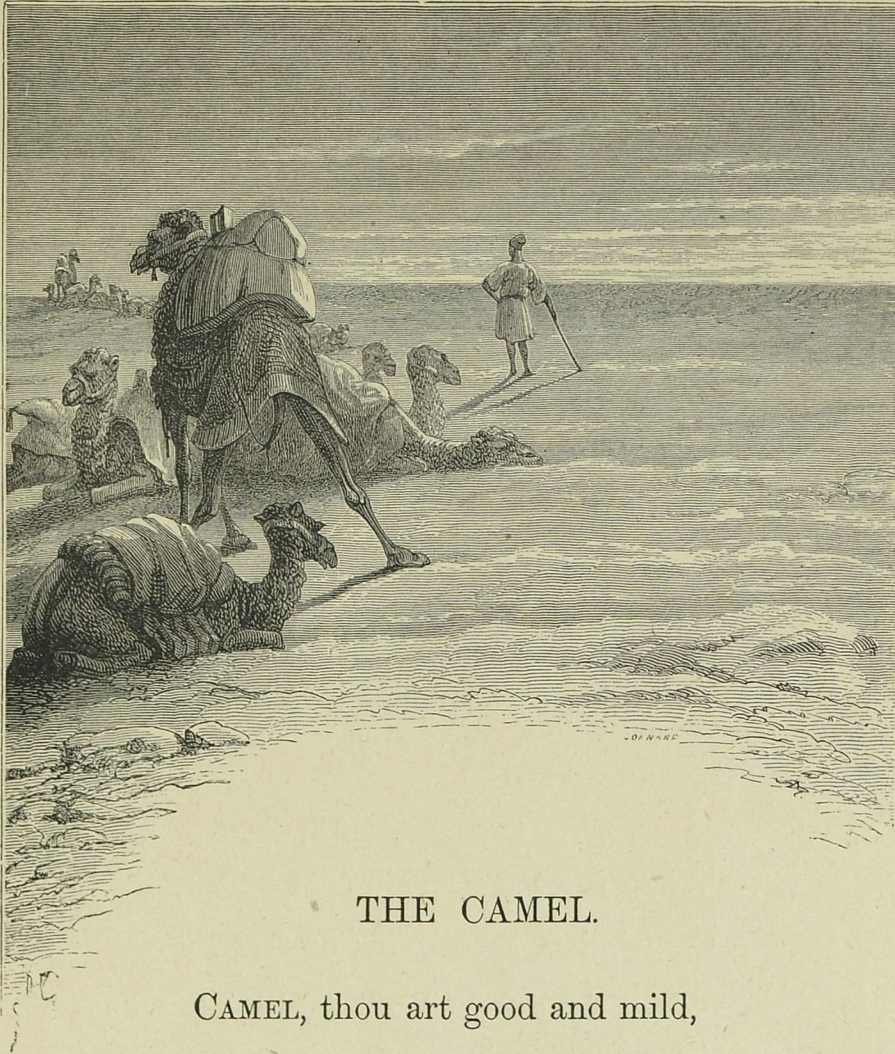
THE STORMY PETEREL.

The cry of her great agony
Went upward to the sky ;
She perished in her strength and pride,
Nor human aid was nigh.

But thou, O stormy Peterel,
Went'st screaming o'er the foam ;—
Are there no tidings from that ship
Which thou canst carry home ?

Yes ! He who raised the tempest up,
Sustained each drooping one ;
And God was present in the storm,
Though human aid was none ?





THE CAMEL.

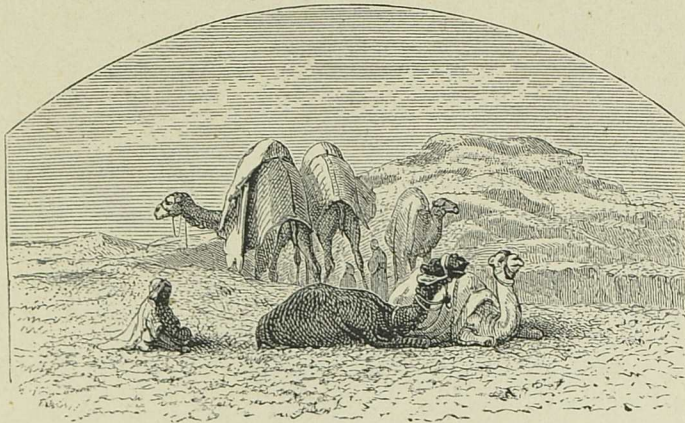
CAMEL, thou art good and mild,
Mightst be guided by a child ;
Thou wast made for usefulness,
Man to comfort and to bless :
Thou dost clothe him ; thou dost feed ;
Thou dost lend to him thy speed.
And through wilds of trackless sand,
In the hot Arabian land,

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 desert 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 dost for man
All thy generous nature can :

Thou dost 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 !

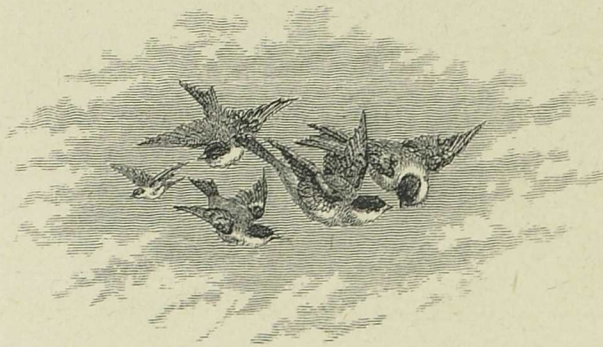
And when week by week is gone,
And the traveller journeys on
Feebly ; when his strength is fled,
And his hope and heart seem dead,

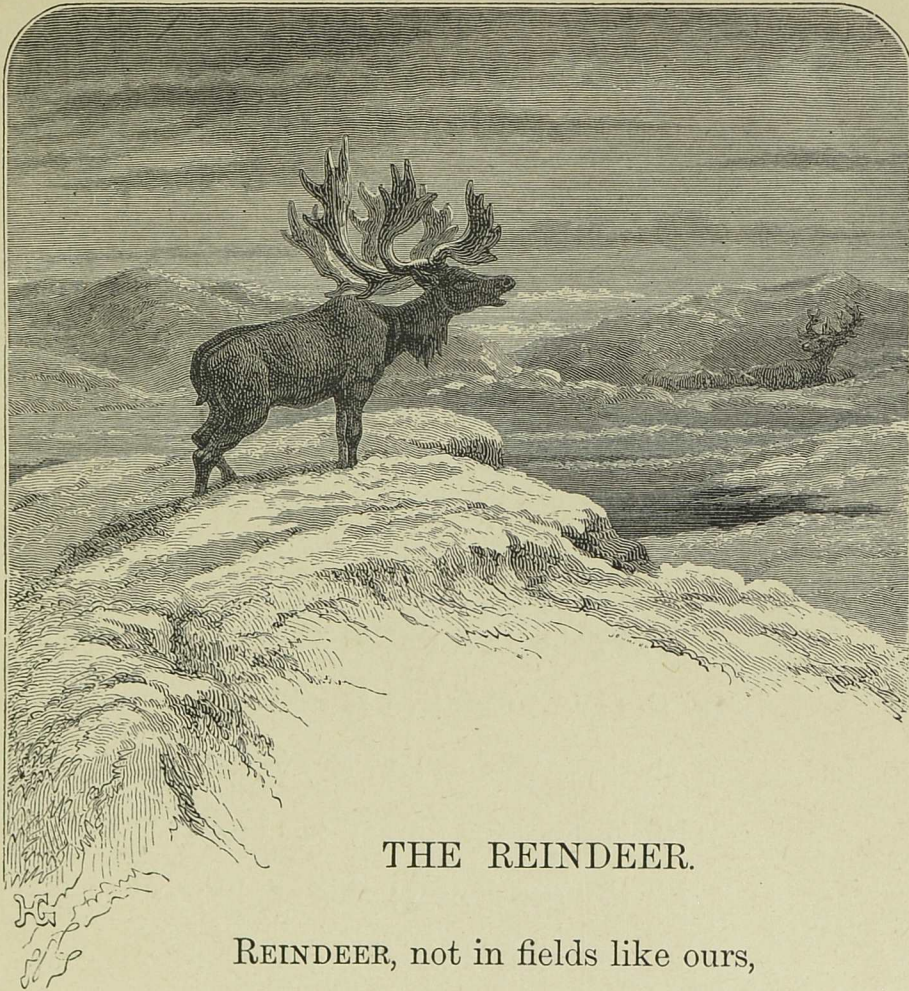


Camel, thou dost turn thine eye
On him kindly, soothingly,
As if cheeringly to say,
“ Journey on for this one day !

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,
Mightst be guided by a child ;
Thou wast made for usefulness,
Man to comfort and to bless ;
And these desert wastes must be
Untracked regions but for thee !





THE REINDEER.

REINDEER, not in fields like ours,
Full of grass and bright with flowers ;
Not in pasture-dales where glide
Never-frozen rivers wide ;
Not on hills where verdure bright
Clothes them to the topmost height,
Is thy dwelling ; nor dost thou
Feed beneath the orange-bough ;
Nor doth olive, nor doth vine

Bud or bloom in land of thine ;
Thou wast made to fend and fare
In a region bleak and bare ;
In a dreary land of snow,
Where green weeds can scarcely grow !
Where the skies are gray and drear ;
Where 'tis night for half the year ;
Reindeer, where, unless for thee,
Human dweller could not be.

When thou wast at first designed
By the great Creative Mind—
With thy patience and thy speed ;
With thy aid for human need ;
With thy gentleness ; thy might ;
With thy simple appetite ;
With thy foot so framed to go
Over frozen wastes of snow ;
Thou wast made for sterner skies
Than horizoned paradise ;
Thou for frozen lands wast meant,
Ere the winter's frost was sent ;
And in love God sped thee forth
To thy home, the barren North,

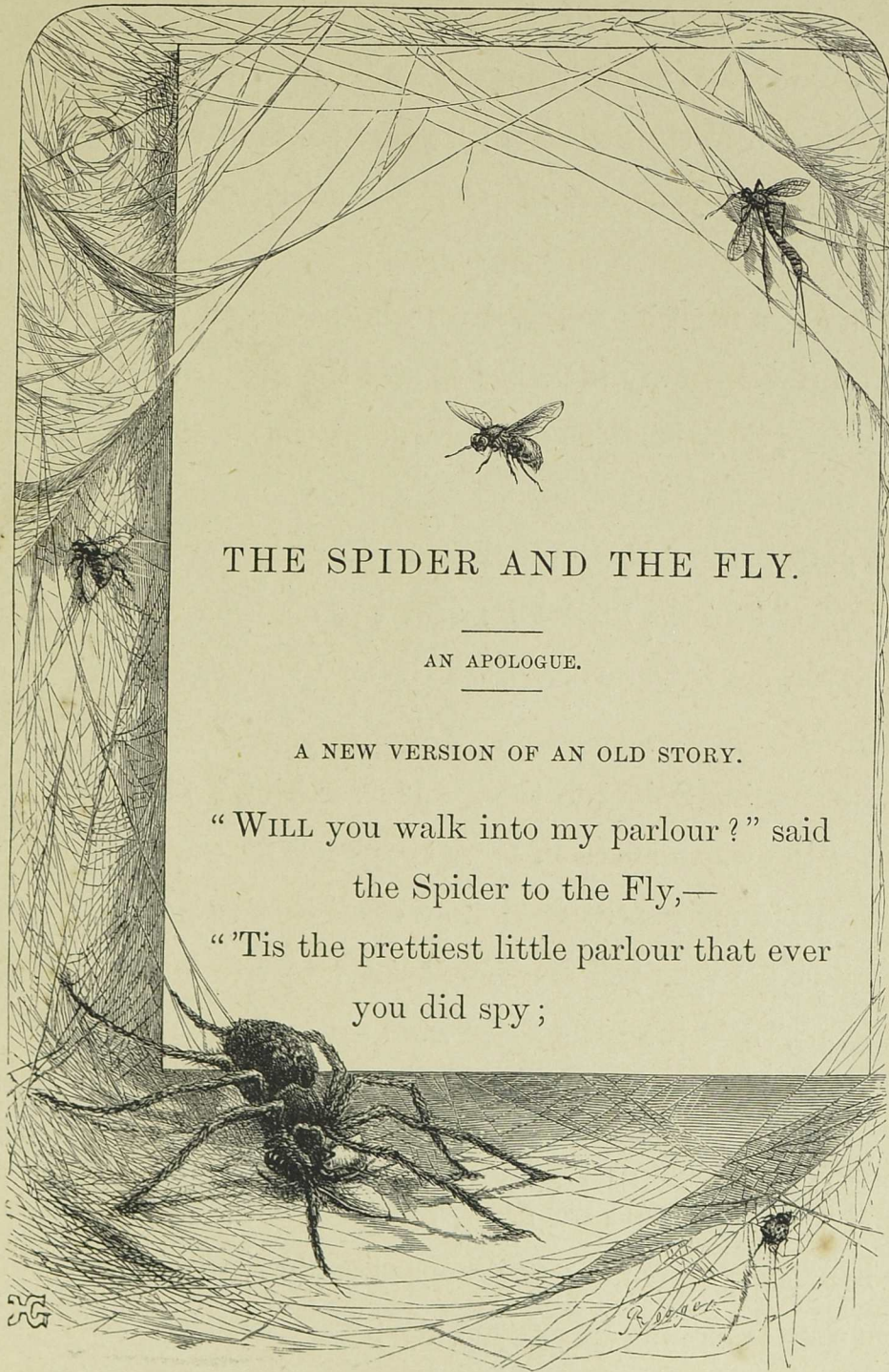
Where he bade the rocks produce
Bitter lichens for thy use.

What the camel is, thou art,—
Strong of frame, and strong in heart !
Peaceful ; steadfast to fulfil ;
Serving man with right good will ;
Serving long, and serving hard ;
Asking but a scant reward ;
Of the snow a short repast,
Or the mosses cropped in haste :
Then away ! with all thy strength,
Speeding him the country's length,—
Speeding onward, like the wind,
With the sliding sledge behind.
What the camel is, thou art,—
Doing well thy needful part :
O'er the burning sand he goes,
Thou upon the Arctic snows ;—
Gifted each alike, yet meant
For lands and labours different !

More than gold mines is thy worth,
Treasure of the desert North,

Which, of thy good aid bereft,
Ten times desert must be left !
Flocks and herds in other lands,
And the labour of men's hands ;
Coinèd gold and silver fine,
And the riches of the mine,—
These, elsewhere, as wealth are known ;
Here, 'tis thou art wealth alone !





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 winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show 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!"

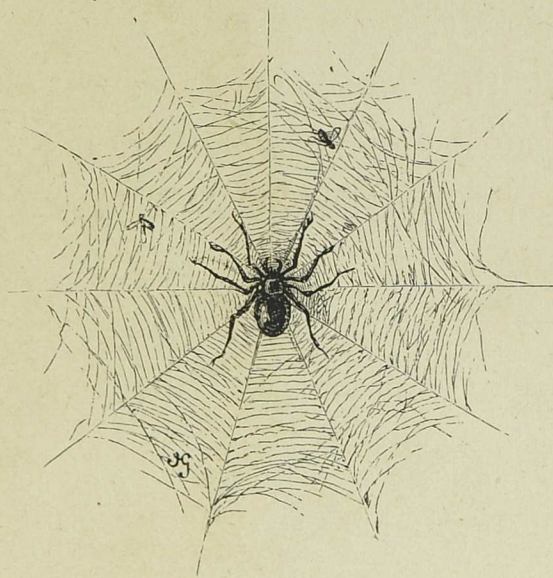
Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, "Dear friend, what can I do
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have within my pantry good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?"
"Oh no, no," said the little Fly, "kind sir, that cannot be,
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!"

"Sweet creature!" said the Spider, "you're witty and your wise,
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I have 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,—

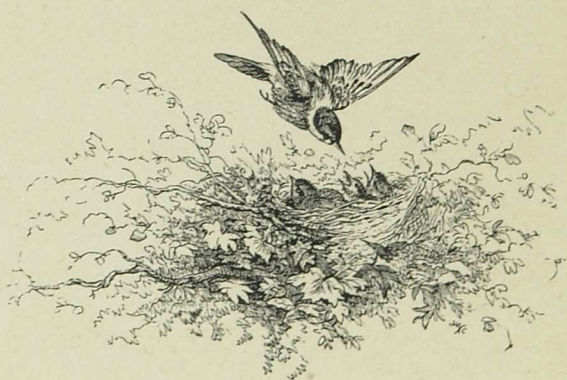
"Come hither, hither, pretty Fly with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple, there's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead !"

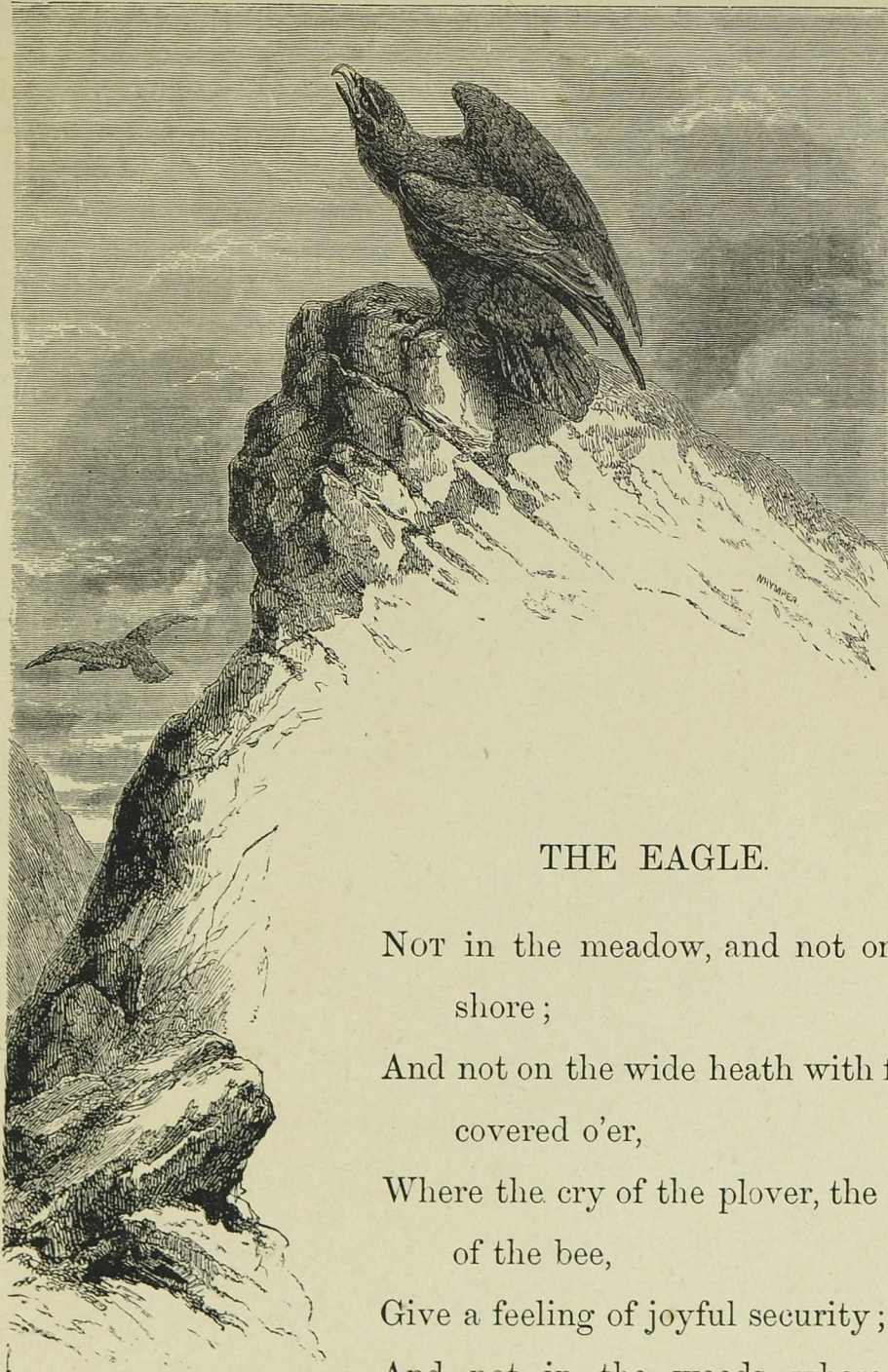
Alas ! alas ! how very soon this silly little Fly,

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 EAGLE.

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,

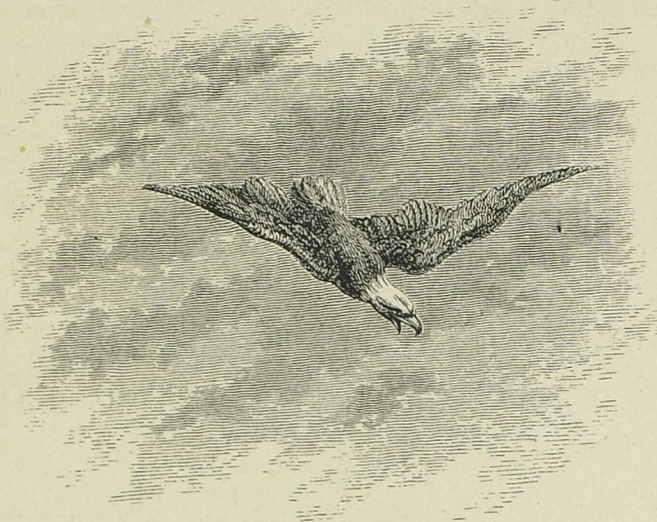
Give a feeling of joyful security ;

And not in the woods, where the
nightingale's song

From the chestnut and orange pours all the day long ;
And not where the martin has built in the eaves,
And the redbreast once covered the children with
leaves,
Shall ye find the proud Eagle ! Oh no, come away ;
I will show you his dwelling, and point out his prey !
Away ! let us go where the mountains are high,
With tall splintered peaks 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 outspreading 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 !
And see how he soars ! like a speck in the height
Of the blue vaulted sky, and now lost in the light !
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 reascends 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 showed His power in the lion and thee !





THE COOT.

O Coot ! O 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 steeredst 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.

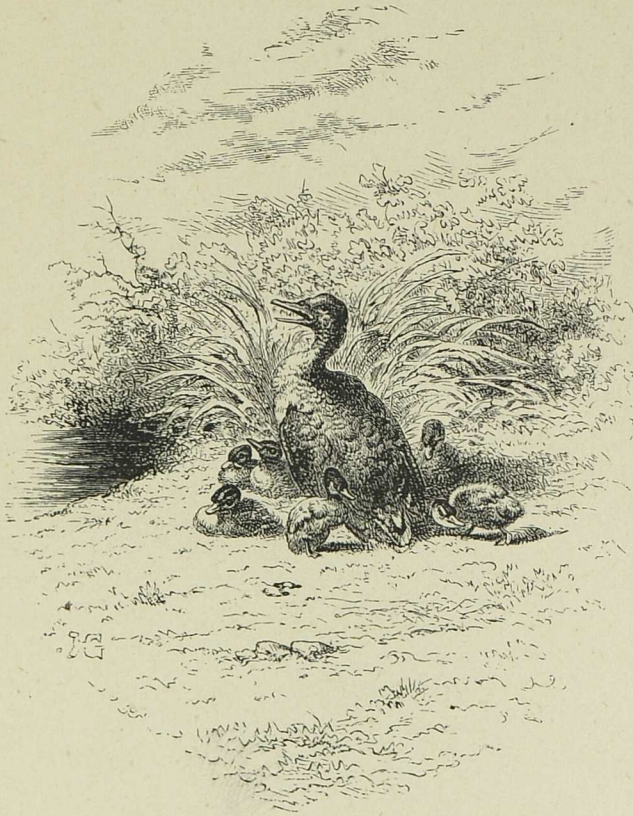
O Coot ! O bold, adventurous Coot !
I pray thee tell to me
The perils of that stormy voyage
That bore thee to the sea !

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

Didst thou not see the falcon grim
Swoop down as thou passed by ?
And 'mongst 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 ?

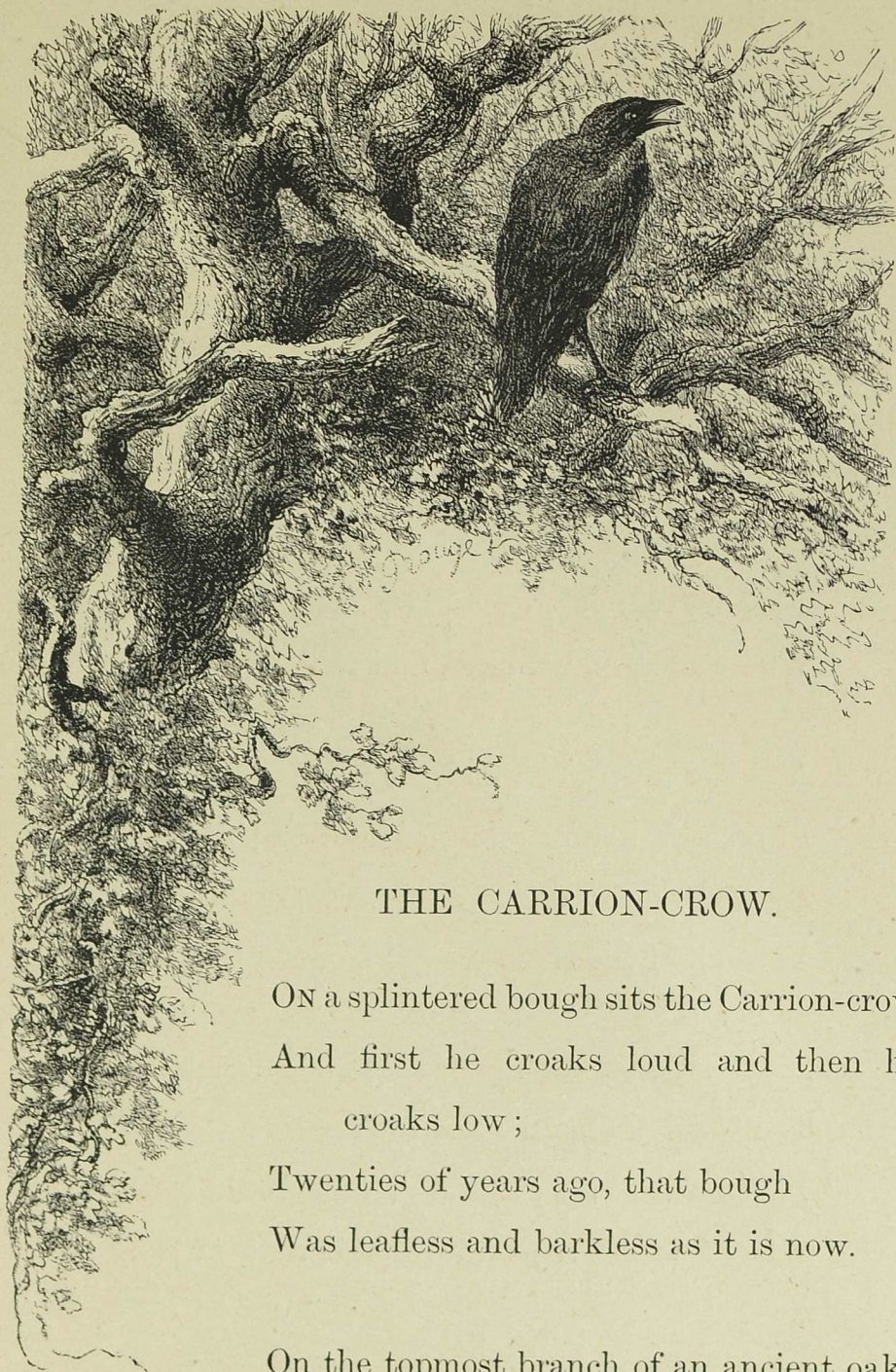
And down the foaming waterfall,
As thou wast borne along,
Hadst thou no dread? O daring bird,
Thou hadst a spirit strong!



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 CARRION-CROW.

On a splintered bough sits the Carrion-crow,
And first he croaks loud and then he
croaks low ;

Twenties of years ago, that bough
Was leafless and barkless as it is now.

On the topmost branch of an ancient oak
The Carrion-crow has perched to croak ;

In the gloom of a forest the old oak grows,—
When it was young, there's nobody knows.

'Tis but half alive, and up in the air
You may see its branches splintered and bare;
You may see them plain in the cloudy night,
They are so skeleton-like and white.

The old oak trunk is gnarled and gray,
But the wood has rotted all away;
Nothing remains but a cave-like shell,
Where bats, and spiders, and millepedes dwell;

And the tawny owl and the noisy daw,
In many a hollow and many a flaw;
By night or by day, were you there about,
You might see them creep in, or see them creep out.

And there, on the top of that ancient oak,
The Carrion-crow he sits to croak.
The words of his croaking I fain would know;
What does he say—that Carrion-crow?

He says—and he's merry as he can be—
“To-night there's a famous feast for me;

For me and my mate so beautiful,
Where the hound lies dead by the forest pool.

“ His master he knows not where he lies,
So we shall go down to peck out his eyes ;
His master he mourneth, early and late ;
But 'tis joy to me and my beautiful mate !



“ And the miller last week he killed his mare,—
She lies in a hollow, I know where,—
There's an ancient cross of crumbling stone
Down in that hollow, dank and lone !

“The mare was blind, and lame, and thin ;
She had not a bone but it pierced her skin ;
For twenty years did she come and go,—
We’ll be with her anon !” croaked the Carrion-crow.

“And there bleats a lamb by the thundering linn ;
The mother ewe she has tumbled in.
Three days ago and the lamb was strong ;
Now he is weak with fasting long.

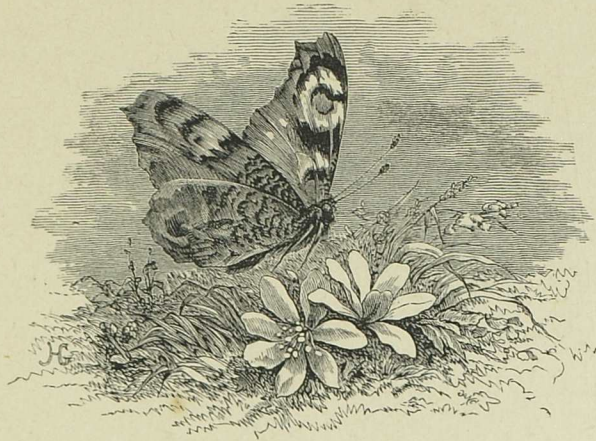
“To the rocks and trees he moans and calls,
And over his mother the water falls ;
He can see his mother down below,
But why she tarries he does not know.

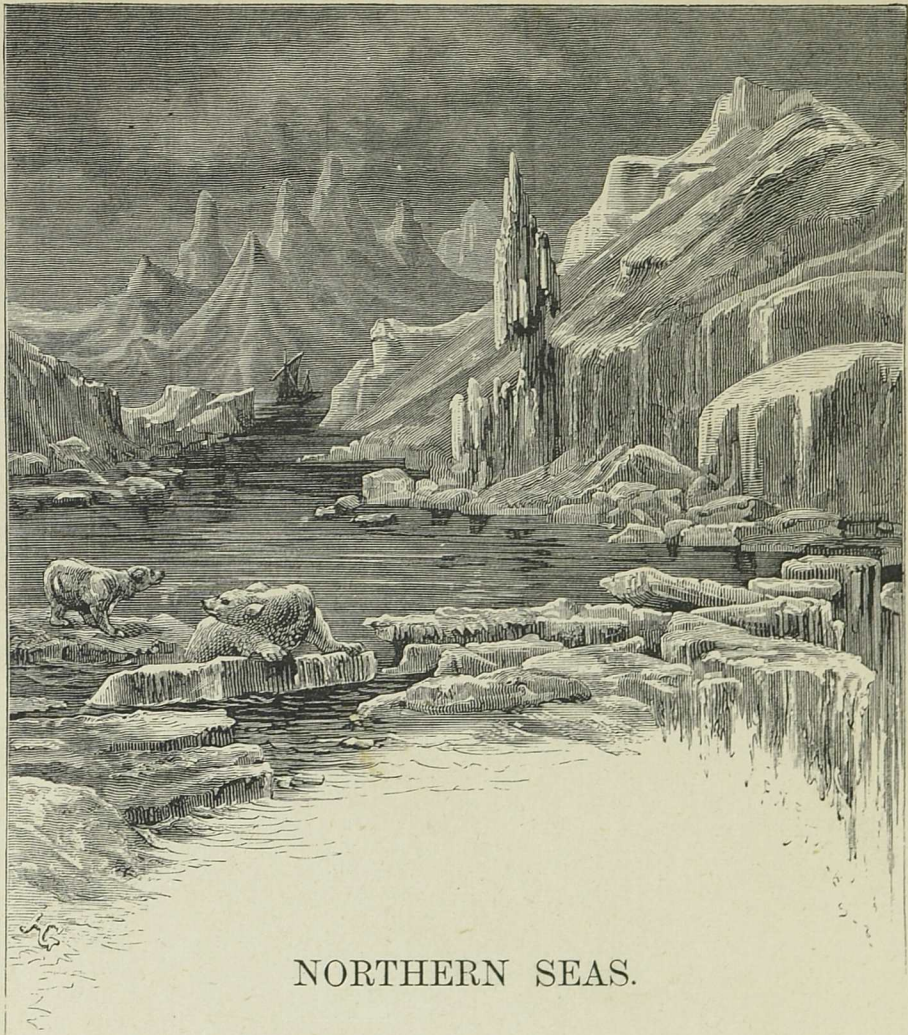
“His little heart doth pine away,
And fainter and fainter he bleats to-day ;
So loud o’er the linn the waters brawl,
That the shepherd heareth him not at all !

“Twice I’ve been down to look at him,
But he glanced on me his eyeballs dim ;
And among the stones so cold and bare
I saw the raven watching there.

“He’ll have the first peck at his black eye,
And taste of his heart before it die :—
Aha ! though the hungry raven is there,
As soon as he’s ready we’ll have our share !”

These are the words of the Carrion-crow,
As he first croaks loud and then croaks low ;
And the spiders and millepedes hear him croak,
As he sits up aloft on the ancient oak.





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 icebergs 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 aground;
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 whilst 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 prowl;
And away to the rocky isles of mist,
To rouse the northern fowl.

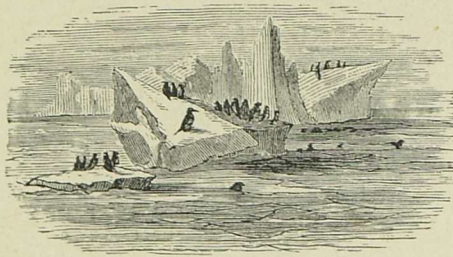
Up there shall start ten thousand wings,
With a rushing, whistling din;
Up shall the auk and fulmar start,—
All but the fat penguin.

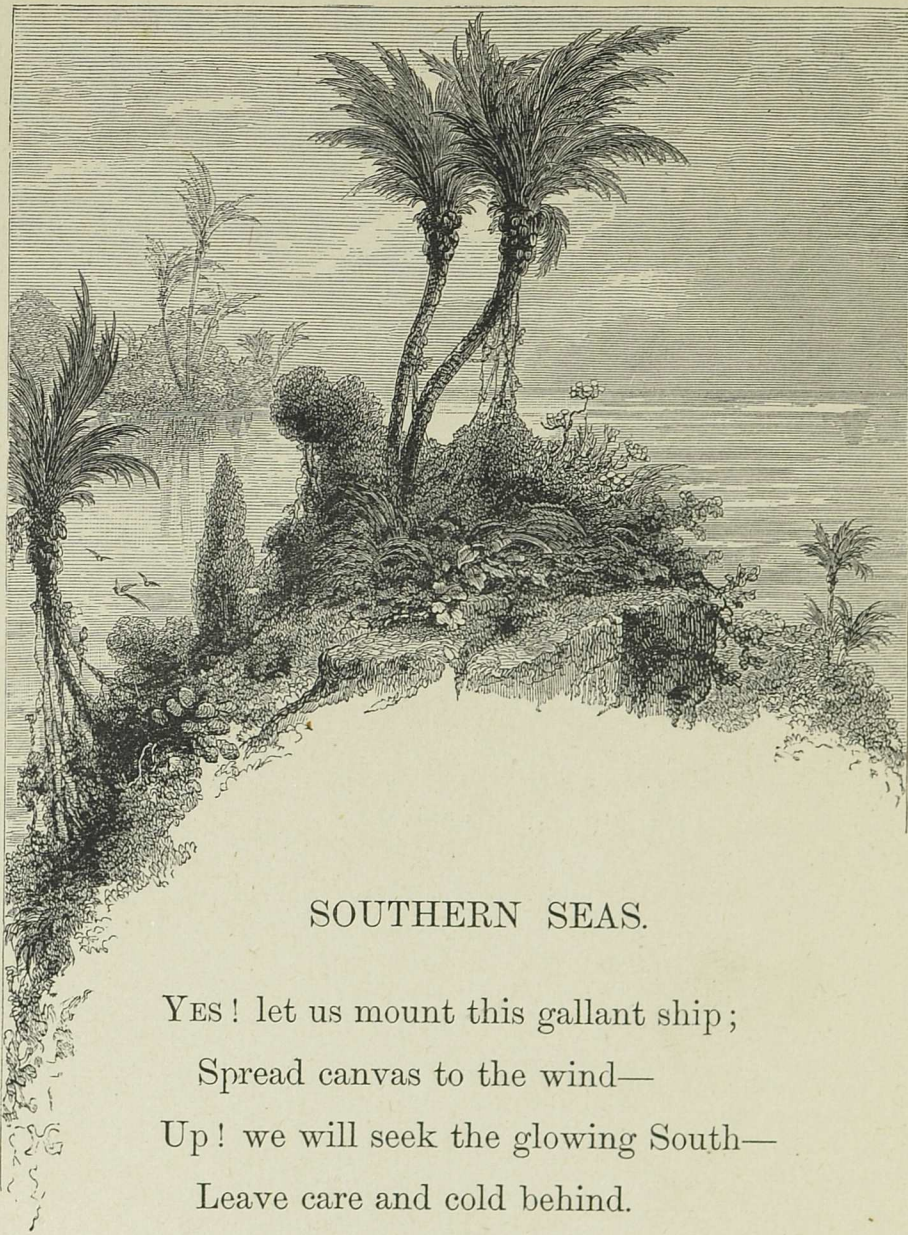
And there, in the wastes of the silent sky,
With the silent earth below,
We shall see, far off to his lonely rock,
The lonely eagle go.

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 canvas 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 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.
Whilst all about the ship, below,
Strange fiery billows play,—
The ceaseless keel through liquid fire
Cuts wondrously its way.
But oh, 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 amongst the roseate 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,

As it were 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 !

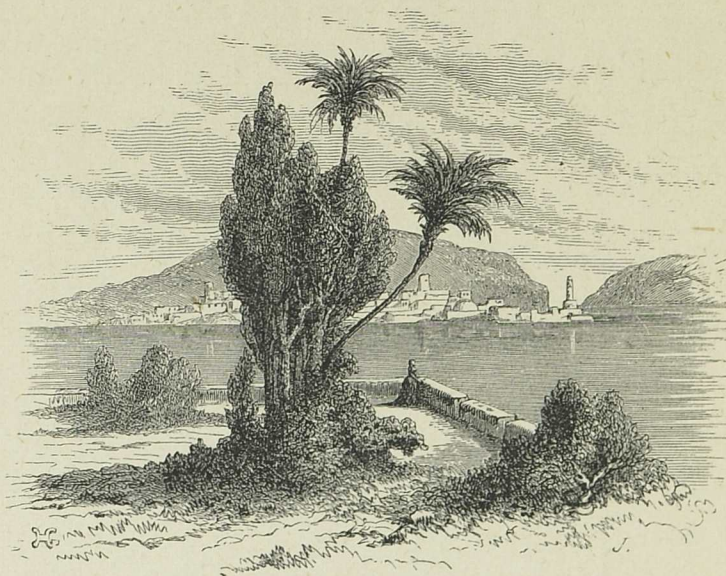
For monstrous shapes are here,—

Monsters of dark and wallowing bulk,

And horny eyeballs drear :

The tuskèd 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 !—'tis a long and a narrow cloud,
 Betwixt the sea and sky.
" 'Tis land ! 'tis 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,

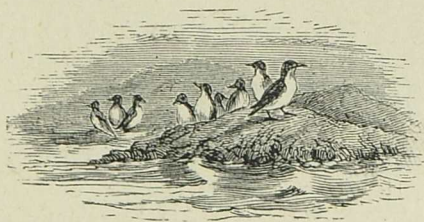


Push out the boat, for in this land
A little we must rove !
We'll wander on through wood and field,
We'll sit beneath the vine ;
We'll drink the limpid cocoa-milk,
And pluck the native pine.

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 'tis 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!

W. H.





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 joyfully run
Awhile in the shadow, and then in the sun.

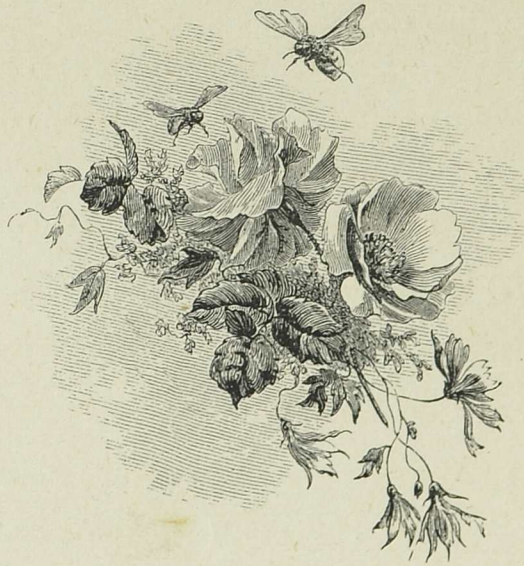
He lives in a hole that is quite to his mind,
With the green mossy hazel-roots firmly entwined ;
Where the dark alder-bough waves gracefully o'er,
And the sword-flag and arrow-head grow at his door.

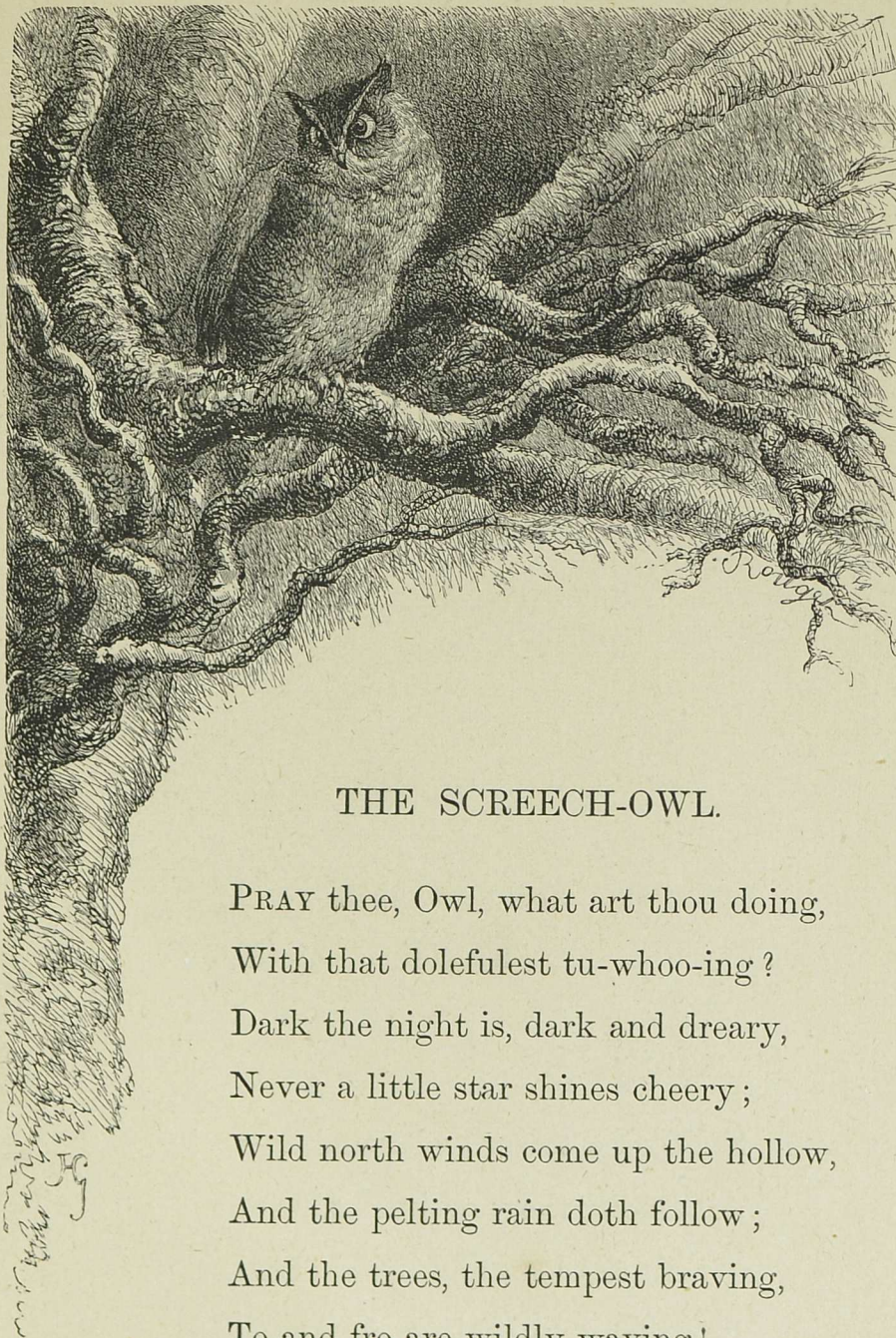


There busily, busily, all the day long,
He seeks for small fishes the shallows among ;
For he builds his nest of the pearly fish-bone,
Deep, deep in the bank, far retired and alone.

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 can 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 !

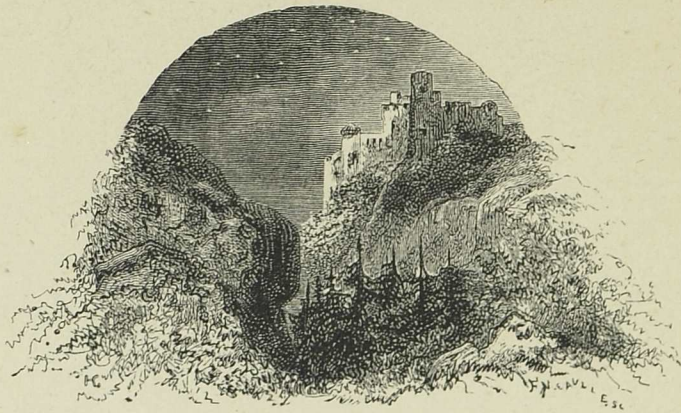




THE SCREECH-OWL.

PRAY thee, Owl, what art thou doing,
With that dolefullest tu-whoo-ing ?
Dark the night is, dark and dreary,
Never a little star shines cheery ;
Wild north winds come up the hollow,
And the pelting rain doth follow ;
And the trees, the tempest braving,
To and fro are wildly waving !
Every living thing is creeping
To its den, and silence keeping,

Saving thou, the night hallooing
With thy dismalest tu-whoo-ing !
Nought I see, so black the night is,
Black the storm, too, in its might is ;
But I know there lies the forest,
Peril ever there the sorest,
Where the wild deer-stealers wander ;
And the ruin lieth yonder,



Splintered tower and crumbling column
All among the yew-trees solemn,
Where the toad and lizard clamber
Into many an ancient chamber,
And below, the black rocks under,
Like the muttering, coming thunder,

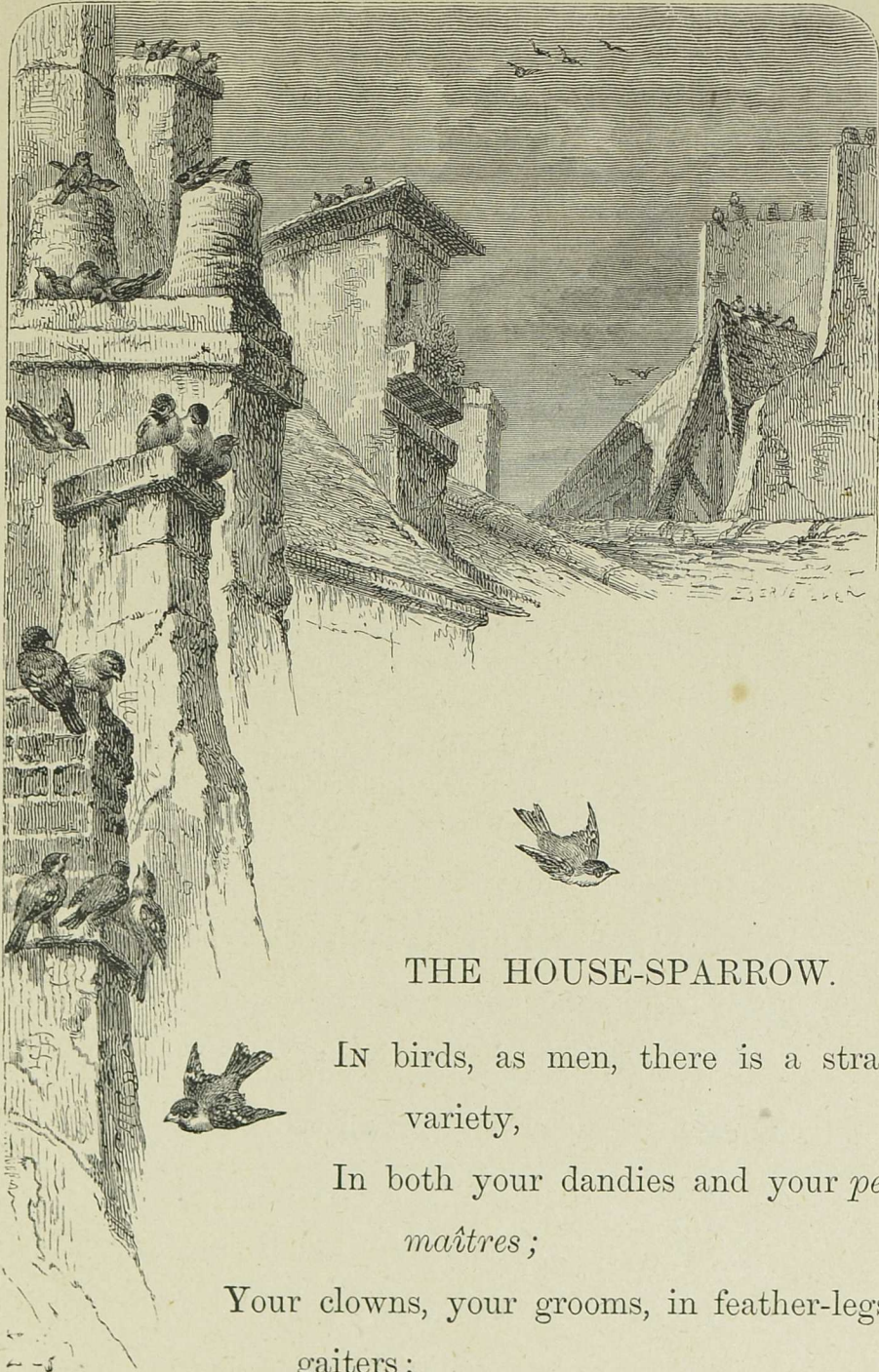
Lowly muttering, rolling ever,
Passes on the fordless river :—
Yet I see the black night only,
Covering all, so deep and lonely !

Prithee, Owl, what art thou saying,
So terrific and dismaying ?
Dost thou speak of loss and ruin,
In that ominous tu-whoo-ing ?
While the tempest yet was stiller,
Homeward rode the kindly miller,
With his drenchèd meal-sacks o'er him,
And his little son before him ;
Dripping wet, yet loud in laughter,
Rode the jolly hunters after ;
And sore wet, and blown, and wildern,
Went a huddling group of children,
And each, through the tempest's pother,
Got home safely to its mother ;
And ere afternoon was far on,
Up the mountain spurred the baron.
How can evil then betide 'em ?
In their houses warm they hide 'em ;
In his chimney-corner smoking,
Sits the miller, spite thy croaking ;

And the children, snug and cosy,
In their beds sleep warm and rosy;
And the baron, with his lady,
Plays at chess sedate and steady.

Hoot away, then, if it cheer thee,—
Only I and darkness hear thee.
Trusting Heaven, we'll fear no ruin,
Spite thy ominous tu-whoo-ing!





THE HOUSE-SPARROW.

IN birds, as men, there is a strange
variety,

In both your dandies and your *petits*
maîtres ;

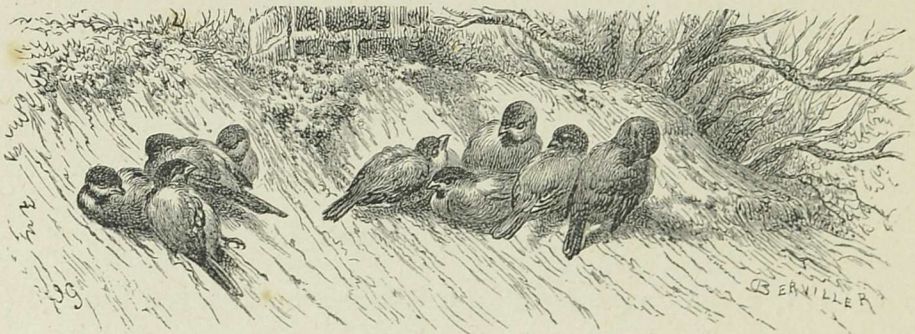
Your clowns, your grooms, in feather-legs or
gaiters ;

Your hawks, and gulls, and harpies to satiety.

On sea or land, it matters not an ace,
You find the feathered or unfeathered race
Of bipeds, showing every form and figure,
But everywhere the sharp-clawed and the bigger—
Falcons that shoot, and men that pull the trigger—
Still pressing on the lesser and forlorn !
'Tis hard to bear, and yet it must be borne,
Although we walk about in wrath and scorn,
To see the hectoring, lording, and commotion
For ever going on in earth or ocean !
The conquerors fierce ; those thievish chaps, the
 lawyers,
That chirp and gabble, wheedle and bamboozle ;
The jackdaw race of pleaders, the pert cawyers,
In their gray wigs, the sober rooks that puzzle ;
Land-sharks, and pirates both of sea and land ;
Your cormorants acting the sedate and grand ;
The singers, and the Paganinis,
Who filch your fruit, and pocket up your
 guineas ;
The tomit, mime ; the wren, small poet ;
The silly creatures that by scores
Nurse cuckoo-imps, that out of doors
Have turned their children, and they never know it !

I walk in cities, 'mong the human herds,
And then I think of birds :
I walk in woods among the birds, and then
I think of men !
'Tis quite impossible in one or other
To walk and see not—man and bird are brother.
The owl can't see in daylight ;—
Oh no ! he's blind and stupid—
A very fool—a blockhead plain to see !
But just step out and look at him at night,
When all the world is slumbering save he—
My word, you'll find him then as brisk as Cupid !
With open eyes, and beak that has the knack
To snap up mouse or rabbit by the back !
The owl in hollow oak—the man in den,
Chamber, or office, dusky and obscure,
Are creatures very heavy and demure ;
But soon their turn comes round, and then,
Oh, what sharp claw and pitiless beak have they
To feather, fleece, and worry up their prey !
“ A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind,”
So sang the noble bard, who, like the swallow,
Flew through far climes and soared where few can follow.
'Tis true ; and therefore still we find

That gentle spirits love the robin,
That comes, as Wordsworth says, "when winds are
sobbing ;"
Pecks at your window ; sits upon your spade,
And often thanks you in a serenade.
But what is it that brings about you
That pert, conceited, good-for-nothing Sparrow,
Which seems to say—"I'd do as well without you ;"
Yet never for a second,
Night nor day,
Will be away,
Though hooted, shot at, nor once coaxed nor beckoned ?



In town or country—in the densest alley
Of monstrous London—in the loneliest valley—
On palace-roof—on cottage-thatch—

On church or chapel—farm or shop,
The Sparrow's still "the bird on the house-top."
I think 'twas Solomon who said so,
And in the Bible having read so,
You find that his ubiquity
Extends far up into antiquity.
Yes, through all countries and all ages,
While other birds have sung in woods or cages,
This noisy, impudent, and fearless varlet,
Though neither noble, rich, nor clad in scarlet,
Would have the highest place without the asking.
Upon your roof the lazy imp is basking—
Chirping, scuffling, screaming, fighting,
Flying and fluttering up and down
From peep of day to evening brown.
You may be sleeping, sick, or writing,
And needing silence; there's the Sparrow
Just at your window—and enough to harrow
The soul of Job in its severest season.
There, as it seemeth, for no other reason
But to confound you;—he has got,
Up in the leaden gutter burning hot,
Every low scapegrace of the Sparrow clan,
Loons of all ages—grandsire, boy, and man,

Beldame and madame, noisy, pert, and bold ;
All met to wrangle, raffle, rant, and scold.
Send out your man ! shoot ! blow to powder
The villanous company, that fiercer, louder,
Drive you distracted. There—bang ! goes the gun,
And all the little lads are on the run
To see the slaughter ;—not a bird is slain ;
There were some feathers flew—a leg was broke,
But all went off as if it were a joke—
In comes your man—and there they are again !

Of all the creatures that were ever set
Upon two legs, there's nothing to be met,
Save some congeners in our own sweet race,
Made of such matter, common, cocket, base,
As are these Sparrows ! Would that some magician,
Philosopher, or chemist, would but show us
What 'tis that constitutes the composition
Of certain men in town, who drive or row us,—
Cads, jarvies, porters of a low degree,
Haunters of theatre, tavern, and coach doors,—
Men all alert in dust and misery ;
Men made to elbow, bustle, cheat, or steal,
Careless of scorn, incapable to feel

Indignity or shame—vulgar and vain,
Hunger and cold their only sense of pain !

Just of this class, amongst all feathered
things,
Is this Jack Sparrow. He's no bird that sings ;
He makes no grand pretences ; has no fine
Airs of high breeding—he but wants to dine.
His dress is brown, his body stiff and stout,
Coarse in his nature, made to prog about.
What are his delicate fancies ? Who e'er sees
The Sparrow in his sensibilities ?
There are the nightingales, all soul and song,
Moaning and warbling the green boughs among.
There are the larks that, on ethereal wing,
Sing to high Heaven as heavenly spirits sing.
There are the merle, the mavis, birds whose lays
Inspired the minstrel songs of other days.
There are the wandering tribes, the cuckoo sweet ;
Swallows that singing on your chimneys meet,
Through spring and summer, and anon are flown
To lands and climes to sages yet unknown.
Those are your poets ;—birds of genius—those
That have their nerves and feel refinèd woes.



But these Jack Sparrows; why, they love
far more

Than all this singing nonsense your barn-
door!

They love your cherry-tree, your rows of
pease,

Your ripening corn crop, and to live at ease!

You find no Sparrow in the far-off woods—

No; he's not fond of hungry solitudes.

He better loves the meanest hamlet;—
where

Aught's to be had, the Sparrow will be
there,

Sturdy and bold, and wrangling for his
share.

The tender linnet bathes her sides and wings

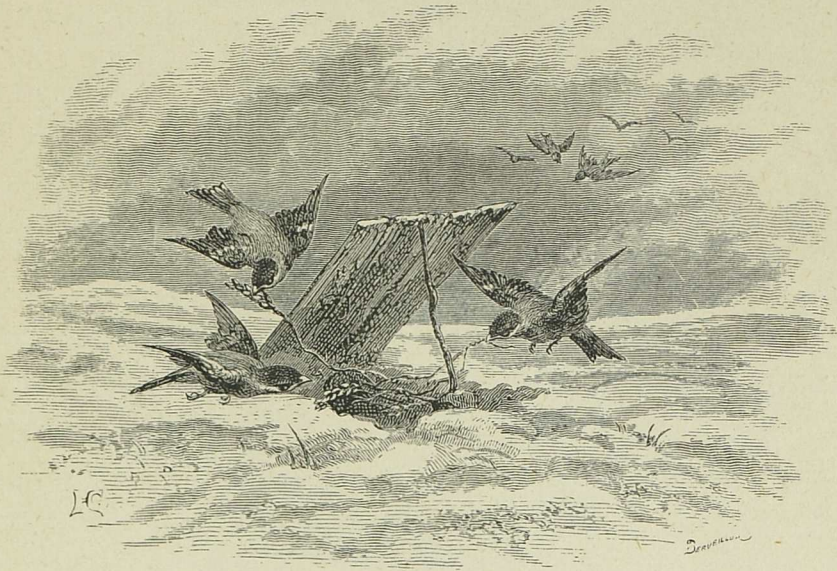
In running brooks and purest forest springs;

The Sparrow rolls and scuffles in the dust—

That is his washing, or his proper rust.

Before your carriage as you drive to town
To his base meal the Sparrow settles down;
He knows the safety-distance to an inch,
Up to that point he will not move or flinch;—

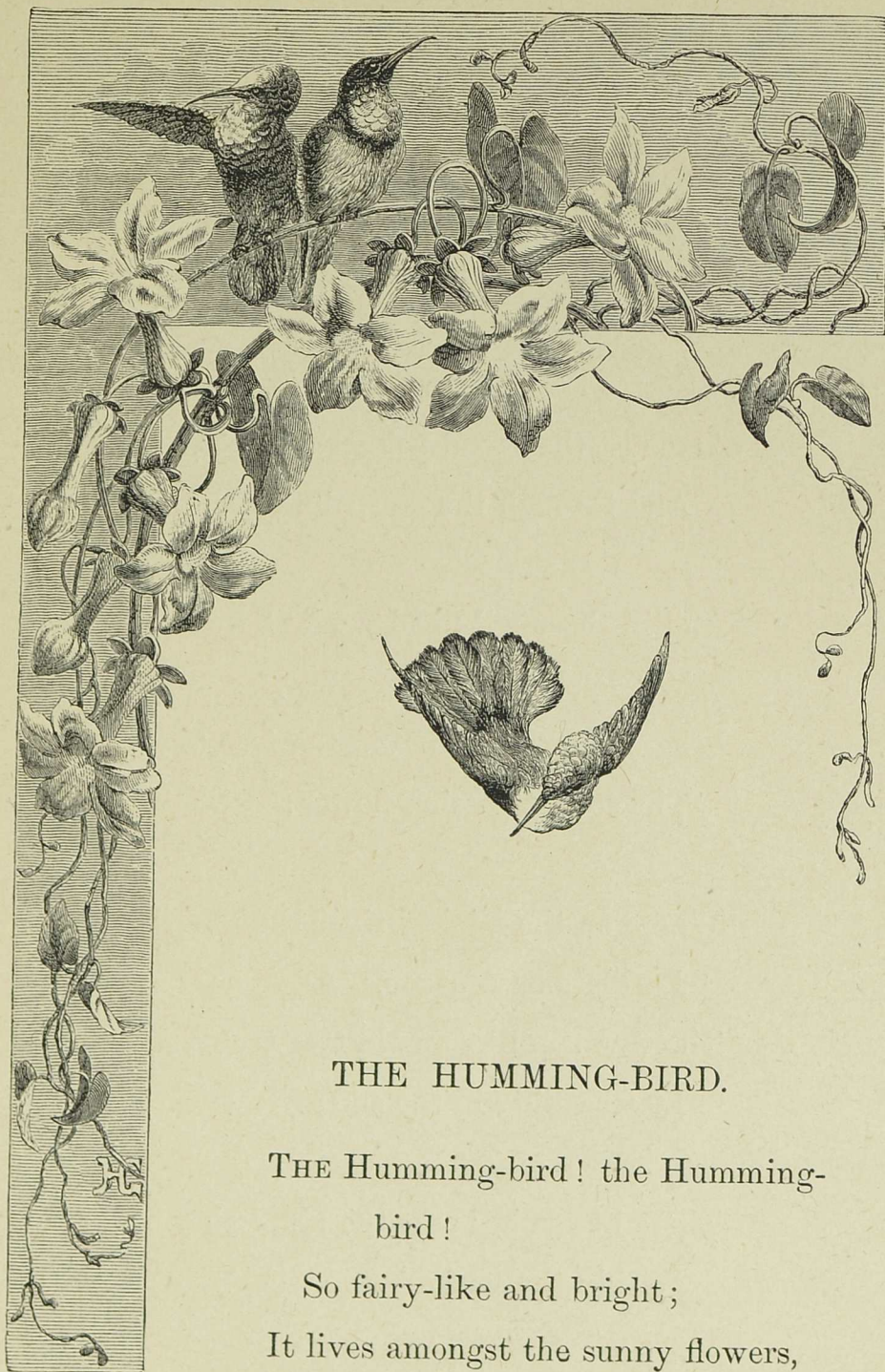
You think your horse will crush him—no such thing—
That coachman's whip might clip his fluttering wing,
Or take his head off in a twink ; but he
Knows better still, and liveth blithe and free.



At home he plagues the martins with his noise—
They build, he takes possession and enjoys ;
Or if he want it not, he takes it still,
Just because teasing others is his will.
From hour to hour, from tedious day to day,
He sits to drive the rightful one away.
At home, abroad, wherever seen or heard,
Still is the Sparrow just the self-same bird ;

Thievish and clamorous, hardy, bold, and base,
Unlike all others of the feathered race ;
The bully of his tribe—to all beyond,
The gipsy, beggar, knave, and vagabond !





THE HUMMING-BIRD.

THE Humming-bird ! the Humming-
bird !

So fairy-like and bright ;
It lives amongst 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,
Amongst 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 shows.

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

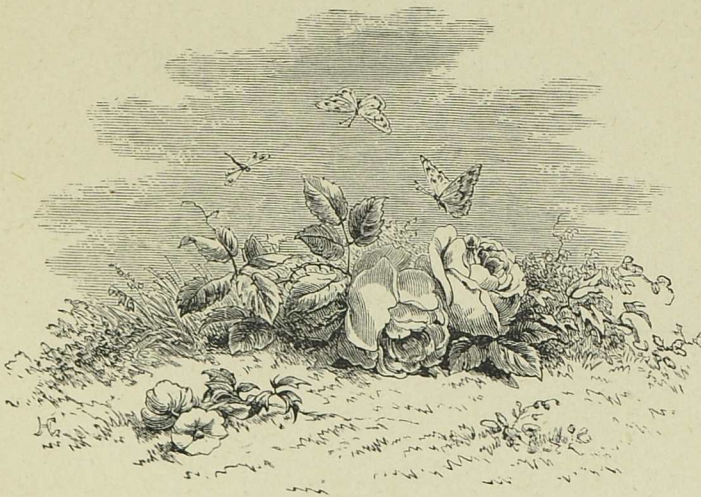
A reign of summer joyfulness
To thee for life is given ;
Thy food the honey from the flower,
Thy drink the dew from heaven !

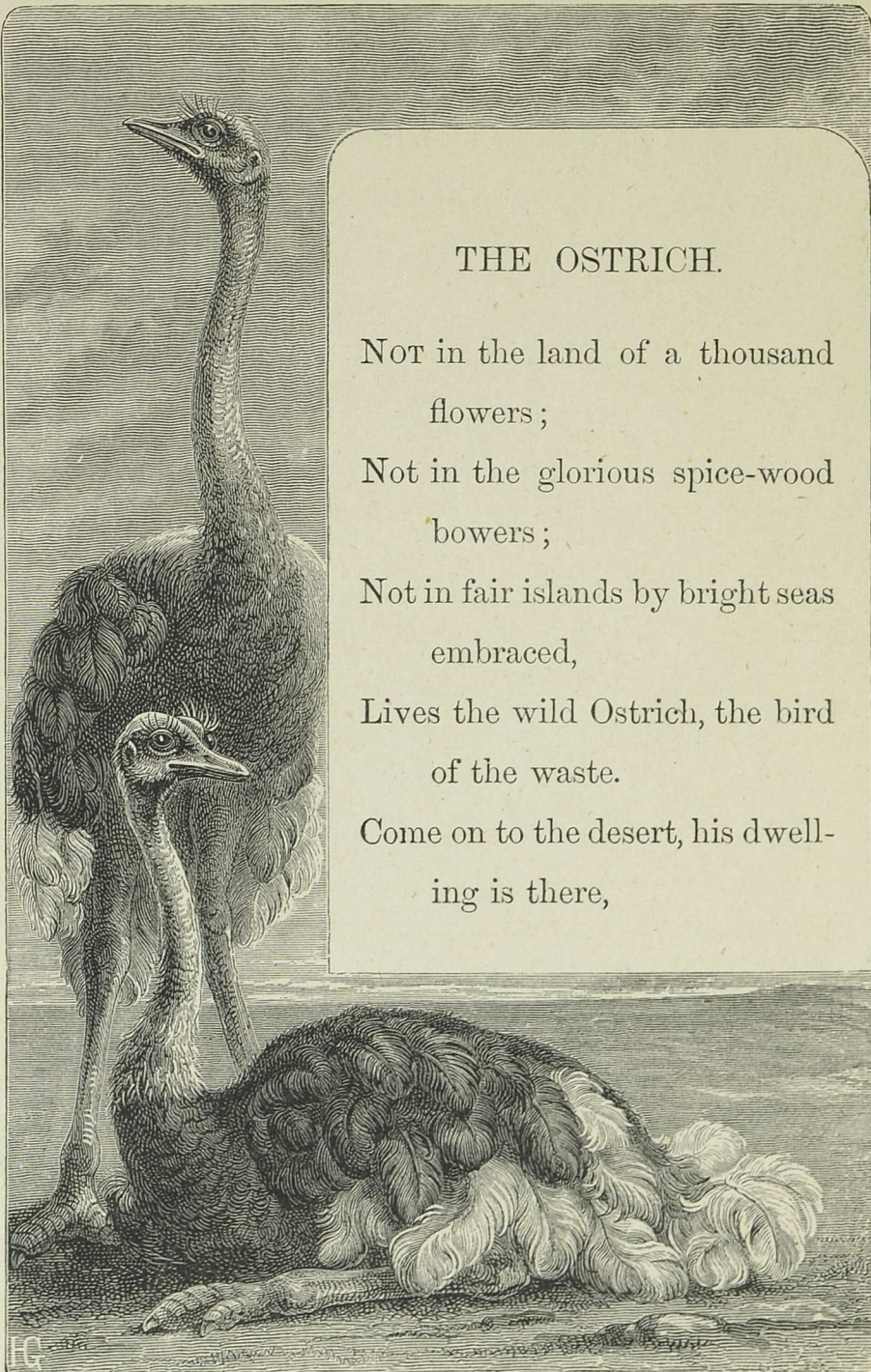
How glad must Eve's young heart have been,
In Eden's glorious bowers,
To see the first, first Humming-bird
Amongst the first spring-flowers :

Amongst 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.

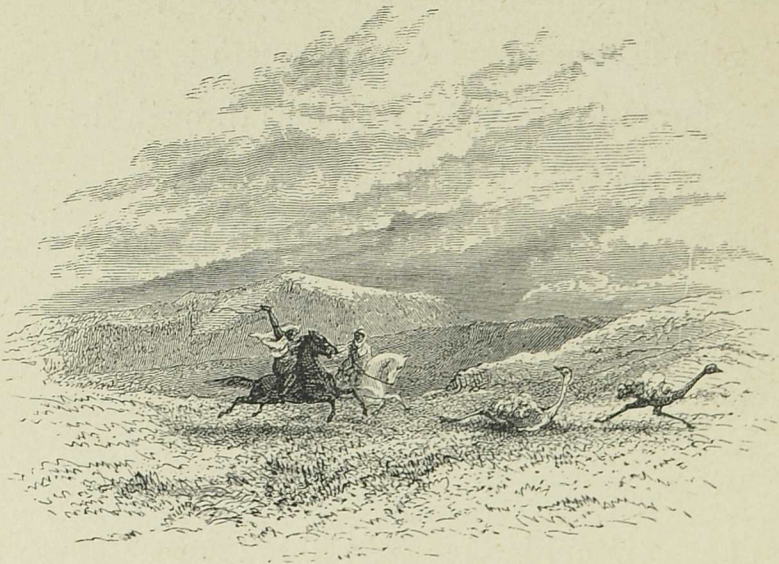
Come on to the desert, his dwell-
ing is there,

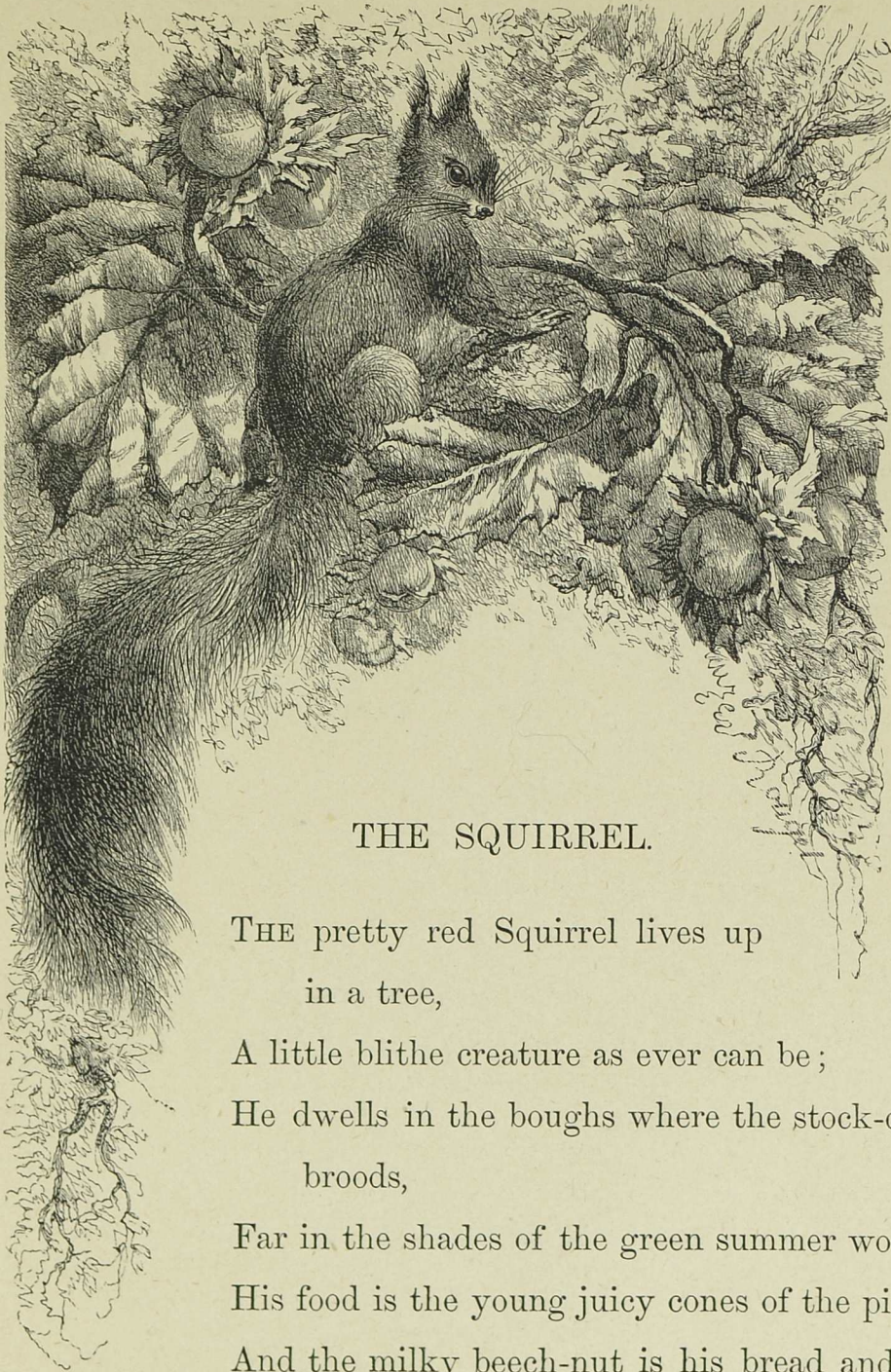
Where the breath of the simoom is hot in the air ;
To the desert, where never a green blade grew,
Where never its shadow a broad tree threw,
Where sands rise up, and in columns are wheeled
By the winds of the desert, like hosts in the field ;
Where the wild ass sends forth a lone, dissonant bray,
And 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 desolate plain,
Whilst 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 ;
For the egg of an Ostrich sustaineth him wholly,
When weary with travel he journeyeth slowly
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 flying 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 speeding behind.
Fare thee well ! in thy desolate region, farewell,—
With the giraffe and lion we leave thee to dwell !





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.

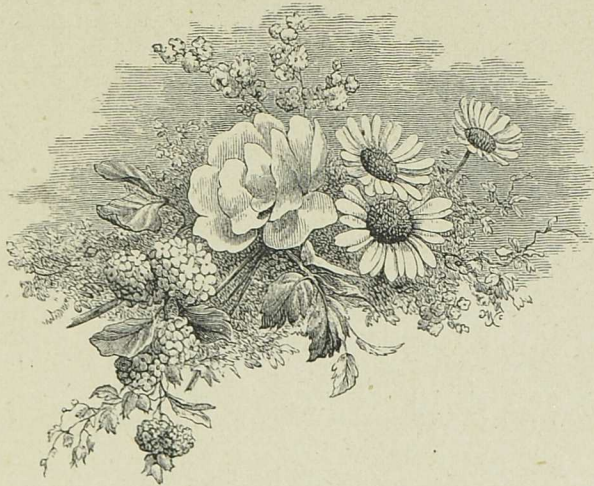
In the joy of his nature he frisks with a bound
To the topmost twigs, and then down to the ground ;
Then up again like a wingèd thing,
And from tree to tree with a vaulting spring ;
Then he sits up aloft, and looks waggish and queer,
As if he would say, " Ay, follow me here !"
And then he grows pettish, 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 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.
I know in the wood where the columbine grows,
And the climbing clematis and pink apple-rose ;
I know where the buglos grows blue as the sky,
And the deep crimson vetch like a wild vine runs high.

But I'll show 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 crownèd butomus is gracefully growing,
Where the long purple spikes of the loose-strife are blowing,
And the rich, plummy crests of the meadow-sweet seem
Like foam which the current has left on the stream ;
There I'll show you the brown Water-Rat at his play—
You will see nothing blither this blithe summer-day ;
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 sunbeam !
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 ;—
'Tis his home, and a snug little home it must be !

'Tis 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 brook yields him no longer supply,
Down into his burrow he cosily 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 BEAVER.

FAR in the north, if thou sail with me,
A wonderful creature I'll show 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 ;
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 'mongst 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 are kind and good,
Hath felt his stubborn soul subdued ;

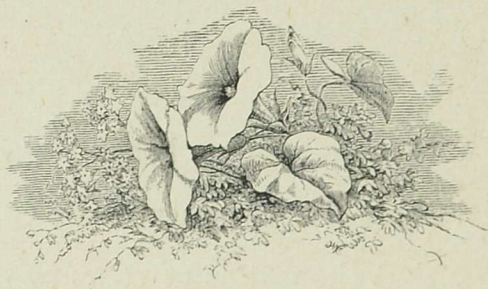
And the very sight of the young at play
Hath put his hunter's heart away ;
And a mood of pity hath o'er him crept,
As he thought of his own dear babes, and wept.

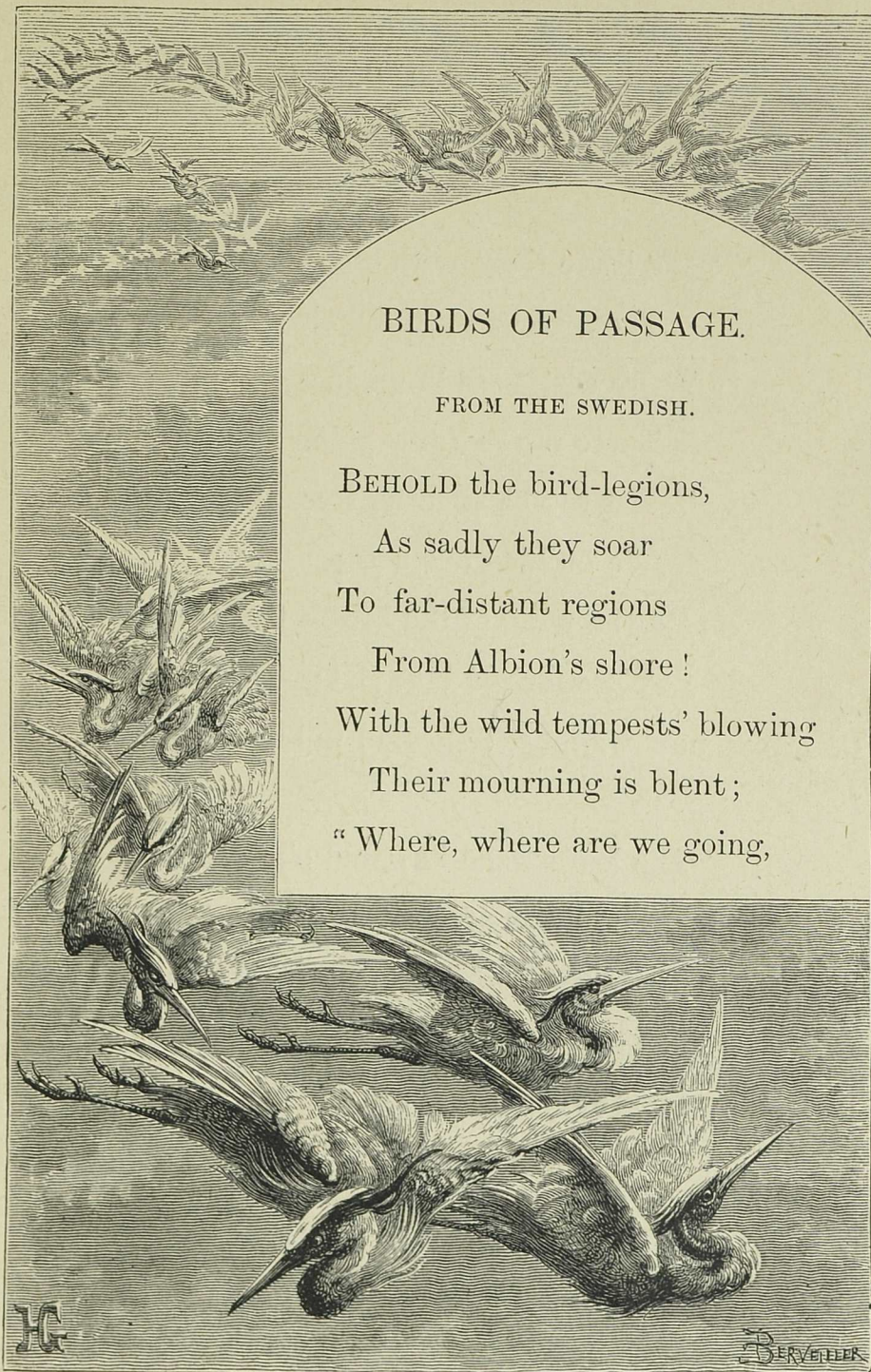
I know ye are but the Beavers small,
Living at peace in your own mud-wall ;



I know that ye have no books to teach
The lore that lies within your reach.
I know that thousands of 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 !
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 learned what was not known of yore ;—
Yet after all, though wise he be,
He hath no better skill than ye !





BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

FROM THE SWEDISH.

BEHOLD the bird-legions,
As sadly they soar
To far-distant regions
From Albion's shore !
With the wild tempests' blowing
Their mourning is blent ;
" Where, where are we going,

Who has for us sent ?”

It is thus unto God that they make their
lament.

“ We leave them with sadness,
These rocks by the main ;
There dwelt we in gladness,
There never knew pain.
'Midst the blossoming trees there
We builded our nest ;
By the wing of the breeze there
Were rocked into rest ;

Now, now we must follow an unknown behest !

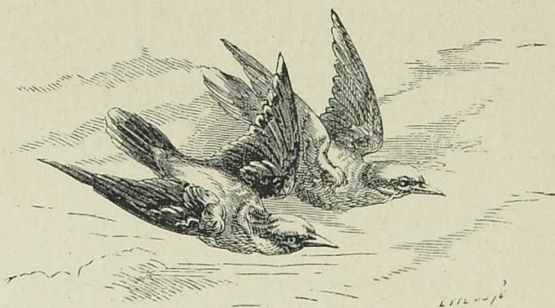
“ The leafy wood bowered o'er
The home of the dove ;
The dew-drops were showered o'er
The moss-rose for love.
Now green leaves are searing,
Now roses have blown,
And soft winds' careering
To tempest hath grown,
And with white hoar-frost flowers, the meadows
are strewn.

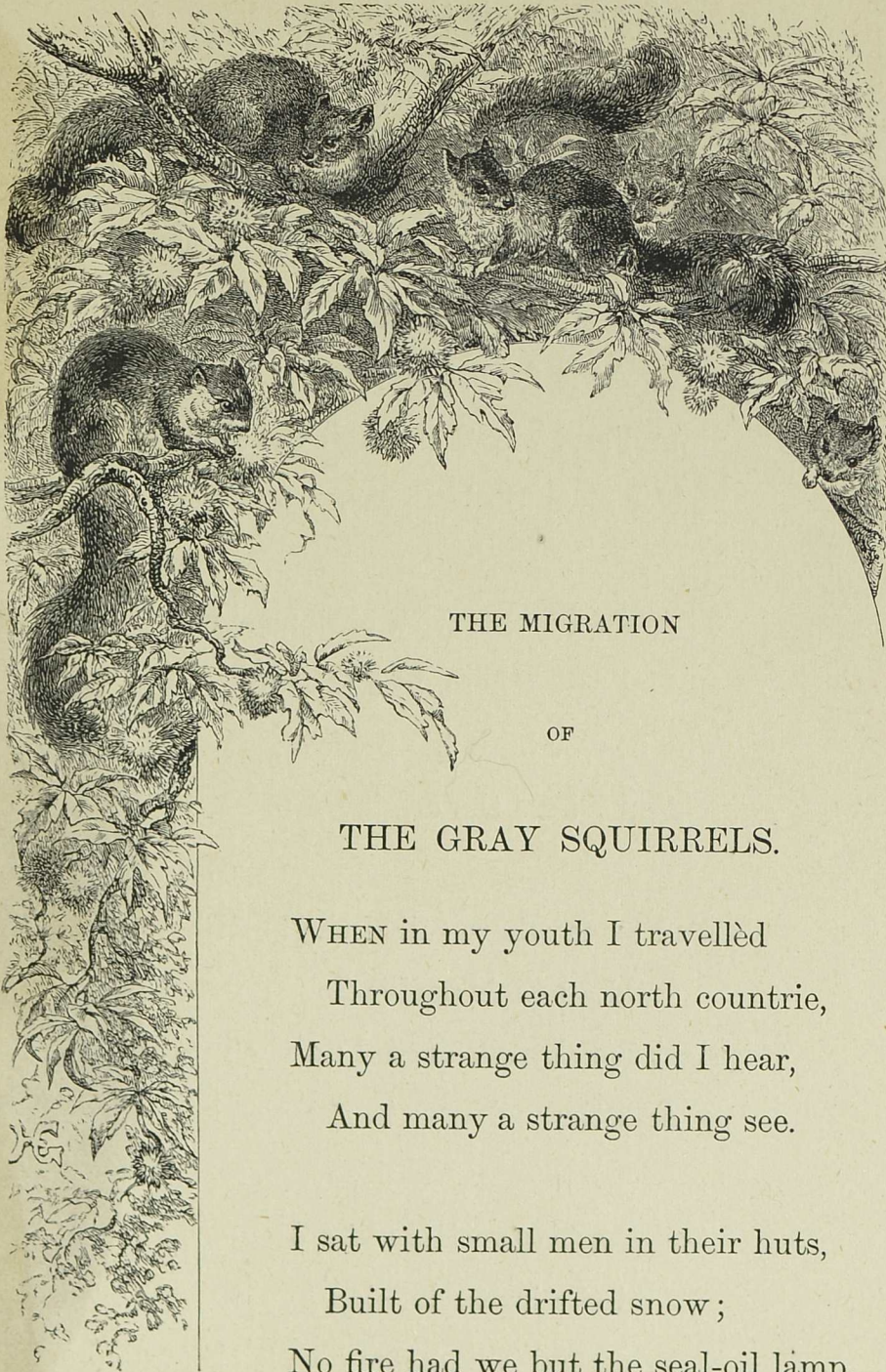
“Why tarry we longer,
Now summer is done,
Now cold groweth stronger,
And darkens the sun?
What boots it, our singing?
Here leave we a grave;
For far-away winging
God wings to us gave;
So hail to thee, hail to thee, wild ocean-wave!”

Thus sang the bird-legions
As onward they fled;
And soon brighter regions
Around them are spread,
Where vine-tendrils vagrant
The elm-trees have crowned,
And 'midst myrtles fragrant
The bright waters bound,
And with songs of rejoicing the woodlands resound.

When life's hope shall fail thee,
And dark billows roll;
When tempests assail thee,
Mourn not, O my soul!

The bird finds green meadows
Beyond the sea's roar ;
And passing death's shadows
For thee is a shore
Illumined by a sun that will set never more !





THE MIGRATION

OF

THE GRAY SQUIRRELS.

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

I sat 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 icy 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.

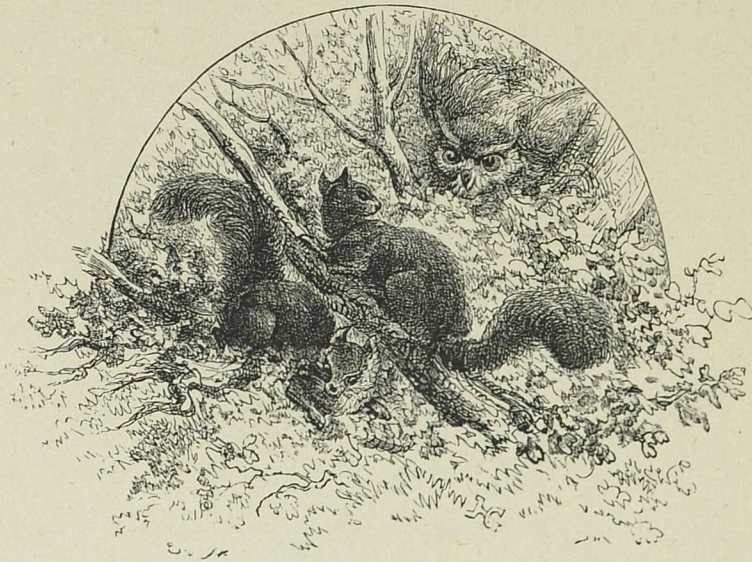
But nothing was there that pleased me more
Than when, in autumn brown,
I came, in the depths of the pathless woods,
To the Gray Squirrel's town.

There were hundreds that in the hollow boles
Of the old, old trees did dwell,
And laid up 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 further the Gray 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 show
His cunning and bravery ;

With a piece of the pine-bark in his mouth
Unto the stream came he,

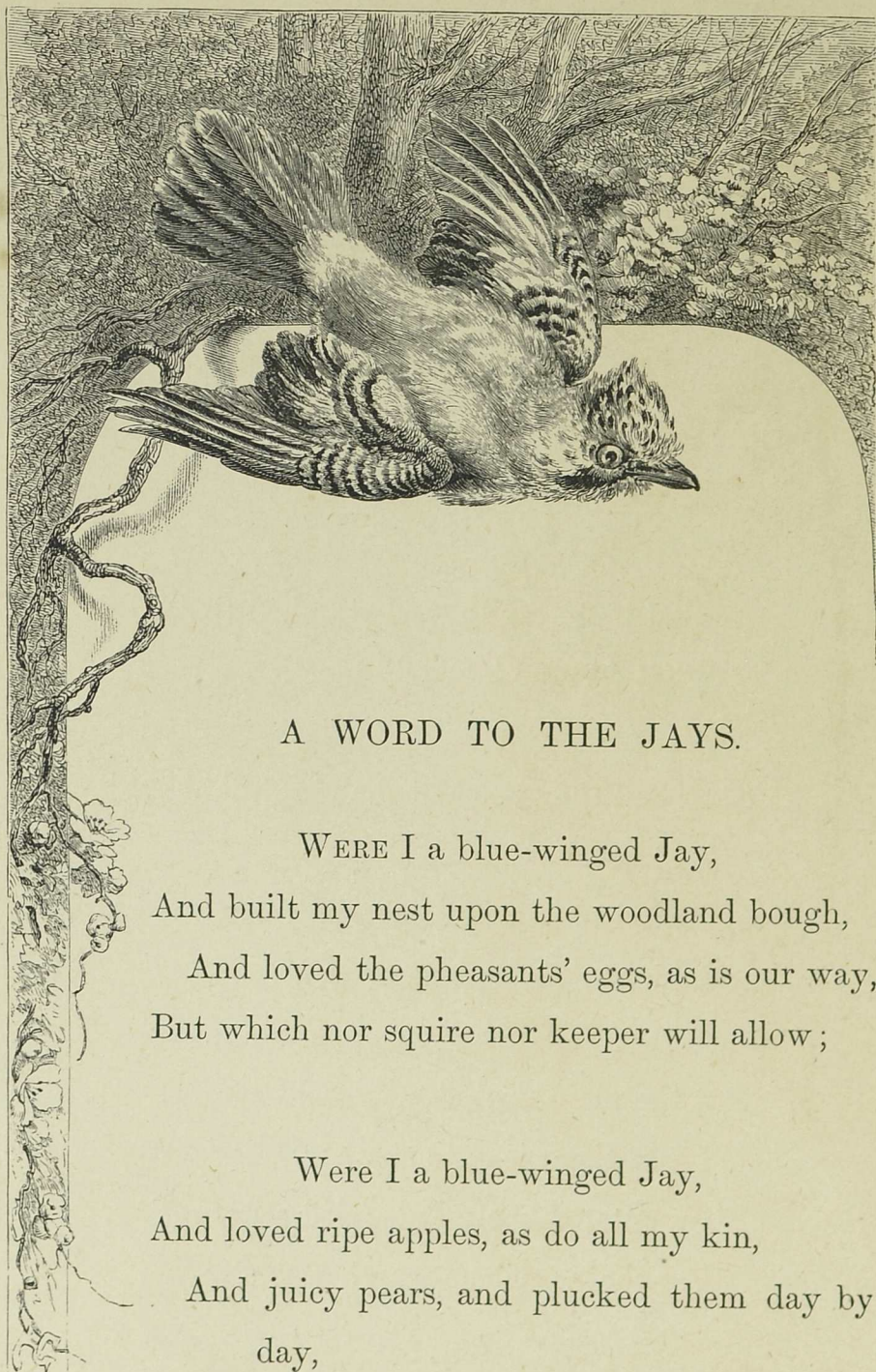
And boldly his little bark he launched,
Without the least delay ;
His bushy tail was his upright sail,
And he merrily steered away.

Never was there a lovelier sight
Than that Gray 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.



A WORD TO THE JAYS.

WERE I a blue-winged Jay,
And built my nest upon the woodland bough,
And loved the pheasants' eggs, as is our way,
But which nor squire nor keeper will allow ;

Were I a blue-winged Jay,
And loved ripe apples, as do all my kin,
And juicy pears, and plucked them day by
day,
Which in a bird the gardener thinks a sin ;

Were I a blue-winged Jay,
Who from old times lived 'mongst the forest trees,
And now must see my kindred waste away,
From many a happy score, to twos and threes ;

And in the jocund spring
Be caught within the prowling keeper's springes,
And cruel traps, which snap the delicate wing
And break the slender leg with iron hinges ;

If for their pheasants' eggs
The price I pay be agony and blood,
A lingering death with broken wings and legs,—
I would not stop in any English wood !

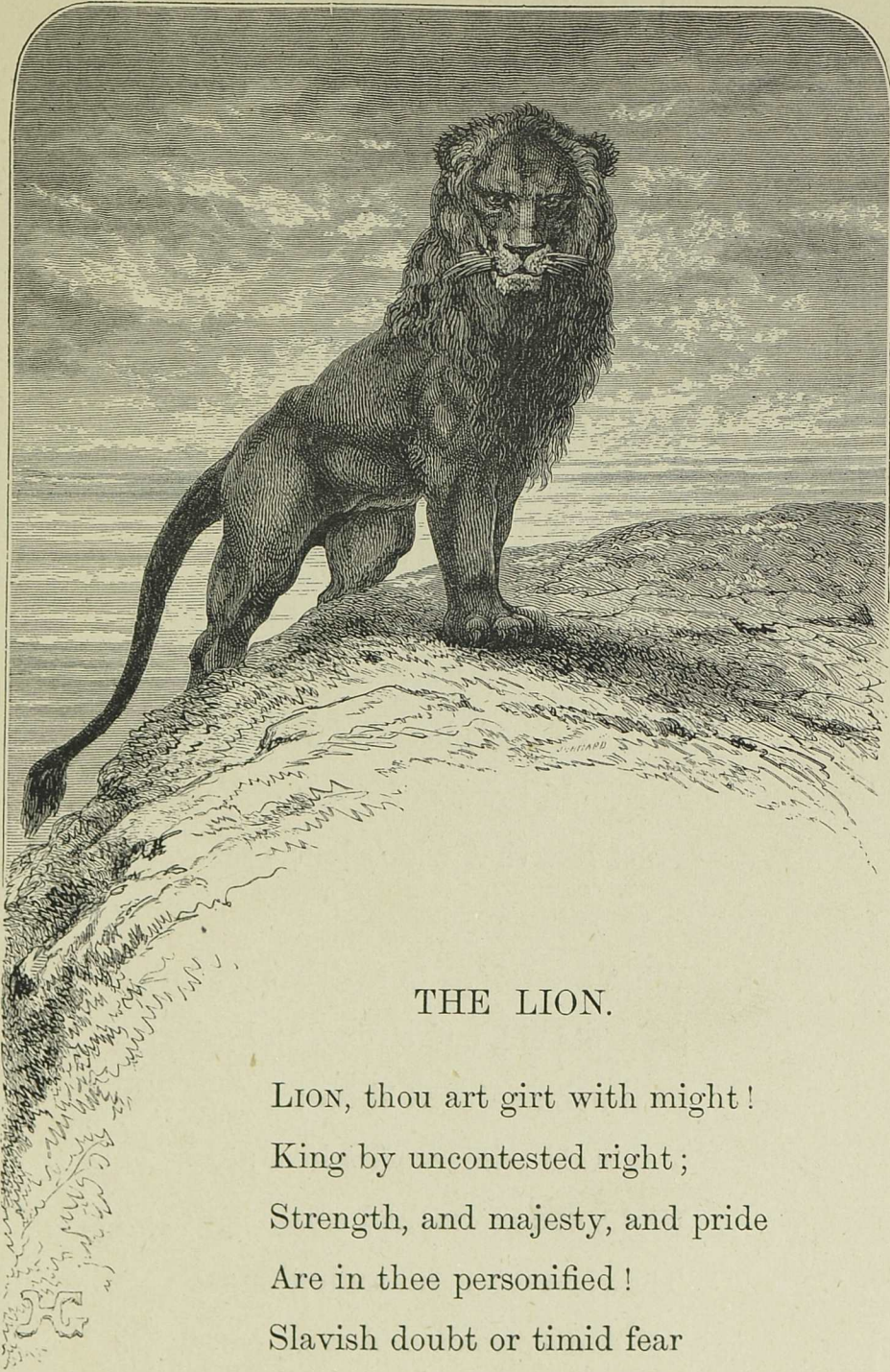
But with the break of day
I would be off to those benign Swiss valleys,
Where woodland orchards in the blossoming May
Make paradises of the lonely châteaux.

There would our race increase,
Made kindly welcome by the friendly peasant,
Who, living by his toil, has joy in peace,
And loves the Jay, but does not need the pheasant.

Where Hans in vast delight
Says, "Father, look ! the Jays are come again,
Laughing and screaming round the pear-trees tall !"
And he replies, "Wish them good appetite ;
For the dear God who made both birds and men,
Has given enough for us, and for them all !"

The Jays have a merry time amongst the fruit-laden trees of the Swiss orchards, where no one molests them or begrudges them their share ; whilst in the district of the Freiberge, in the canton of Glarus, not only Jays, but every other species of wild animal are protected by law, any person being subjected to a heavy penalty who destroys them.





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-mailed 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,

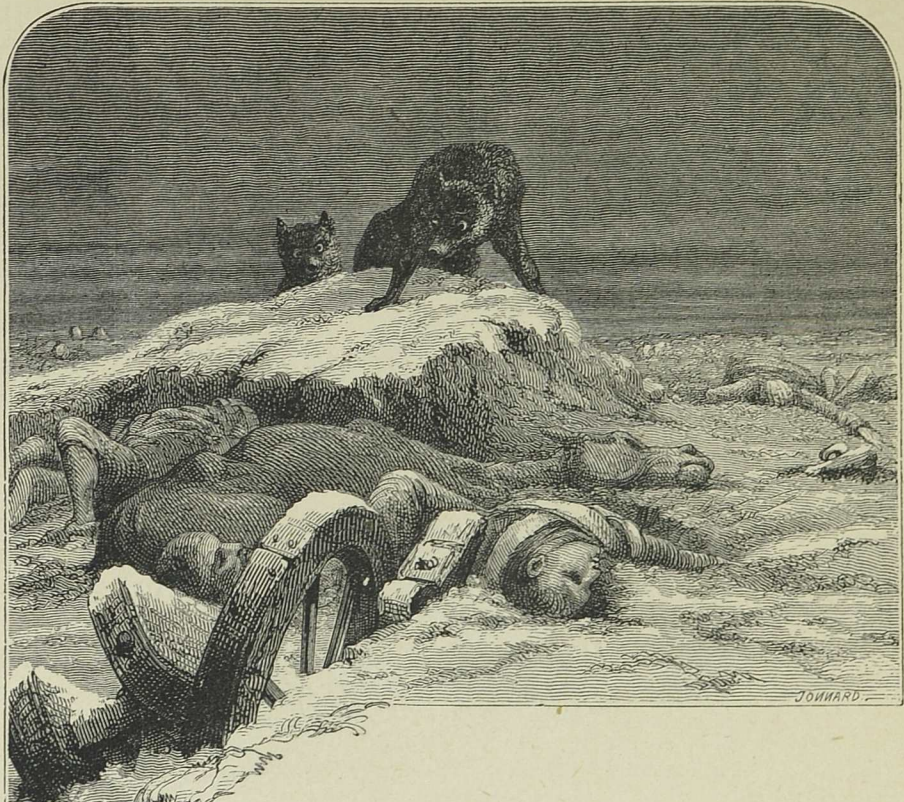
All that makes man's nature tremble,
Doth the desert-king resemble !

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 WOLF.

THINK of the lamb in the fields of May,
Cropping the dewy flowers for play ;
Think of the sunshine, warm and clear ;
Of the bending corn in golden ear ;
Of little children singing low
Through flowery meadows as they go ;
Of cooing doves, and the hum of bees
In the lime-trees' yellow racemes ;

Of the pebbly waters gliding by,
Of the wood-birds' peaceful sylvan cry ;
Then turn thy thought to a land of snow
Where the cutting, icy wind doth blow—
A dreary land of mountains cold,
With ice-crag's splintered, hoar, and old,
Jagged with woods of storm-beat pines,
Where a cold moon gleams, a cold sun shines !
And all through this dismal land we'll go
In a dog-drawn sledge, o'er frozen snow,
On either hand the ice-rocks froze,
And a waste of trackless snow before !

Where are the men to guide us'on ?
Men ! in these deserts there are none.
Men come not here unless to track
The ermine white or marten black.,
Here we must speed alone.—But hark !
What sound was that ? The wild Wolf's bark !
The terrible Wolf !—Is he anigh,
With his gaunt, lean frame and blood-shot
eye ?

Yes !—across the snow I saw the track
Where they have sped on, a hungry pack ;

And see how the eager dogs rush on,
For they scent the track where the Wolf has
gone.

And beast and men are alike afraid
Of that cruellest creature that e'er was made !

Oh, the horrible Wolves ! methinks I hear
The sound of their barking drawing near ;
Down from their dismal caves they drive,
And leave behind them nought alive.
Down from their caves they come by day,
Savage as mad dogs for their prey ;
Down on the tracks where the hunters roam,
Down to the peasant's hut they come.
The peasant is waked from his pine-branch bed
By the direst, fiercest sound of dread,—
A snuffing scent, a scratching sound,
Like a dog that rendeth up the ground ;
Up from his bed he springs in fear,
For he knows that the cruel Wolf is near.
A moment's pause—a moment more—
And he hears them snuffing 'neath his door.
Beneath his door he hears them mining,
Snuffing, snarling, scratching, whining !

Horrible sight ! no more he sees,
With terror his very senses freeze ;
Horrible sounds ! he hears no more,
The wild Wolves bound across his floor,
And the next moment lap his gore !
And ere the day comes o'er the hill,
The Wolves are gone, the place is still,
And to none that dreadful death is known,
Save to some ermine hunter lone,
Who in that death foresees his own !

Or think thee now of a battle-field,
Where lie the wounded with the killed ;
Hundreds of mangled men they lie—
A horrible mass of agony !
The night comes down,—and in they bound,
The ravening Wolves from the mountains round ;
All day long have they come from far,
Snuffing that bloody field of war ;
But the rolling drum and the trumpet's bray,
And the strife of men through the livelong day,
For awhile kept the prowling Wolves away.
But now, when the roaring tumults cease,
In that dreadful hush which is not peace,

The Wolves rush in to have their will,
And to lap of living blood their fill.
Stark and stiff the dead men lie,
But the living—oh, woe, to hear their cry,
When they feel the teeth of these cruel foes,
And hear them lap up the blood that flows!
Oh, shame, that ever it hath been said,
That bloody war is a glorious trade,
And that soldiers die upon glory's bed!
Let us hence, let us hence, for horrible war
Than the merciless Wolf is more merciless far!





THE HEDGEHOG.

THOU poor little English porcupine,
What a harassed and weary life is thine !
And thou art a creature meek and mild,
That wouldst not harm a sleeping child.

Thou scarce canst stir from thy tree-root,
But thy foes are up in hot pursuit ;
Thou mightst be an asp, or hornèd snake,
Thou poor little martyr of the brake !

Thou scarce canst put out that nose of thine,
Thou canst not show a single spine,
But the urchin-rabble are in a rout,
With terrier curs to hunt thee out.

Poor old beast ! one would think he knew
His foes so many, his friends so few,
For when he comes out, he's in a fright,
And hurries again to be out of sight.

How unkind the world must seem to him,
Living under the thicket dusk and dim ;
And finding his food of dry hedge-fruits,
And insects small amongst the roots.

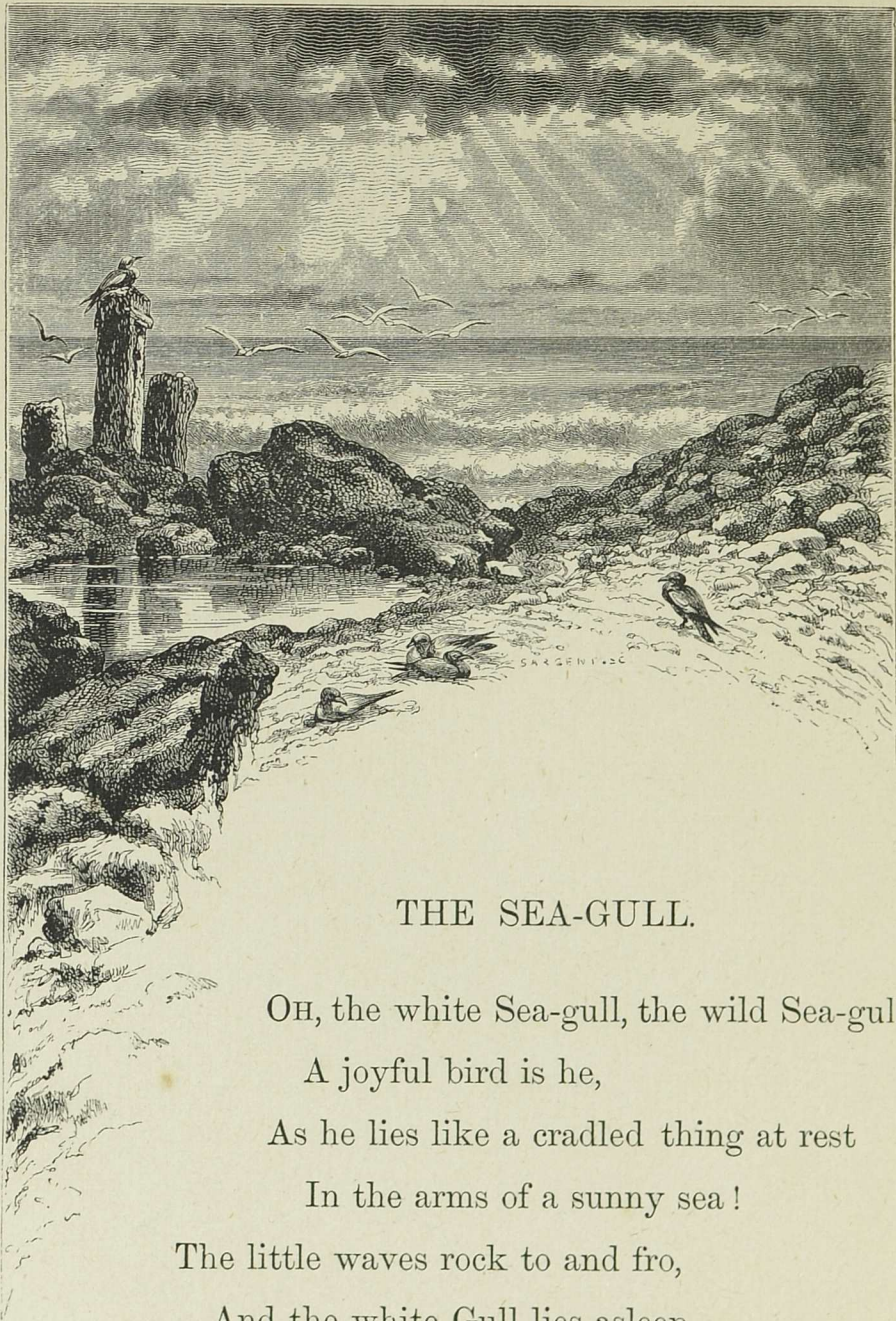
How hard it must be to be kicked about,
If by chance his prickly back peeps out ;
To be all his days misunderstood,
When he *could* not harm us if he *would* !

He's an innocent thing living under the blame,
That he merits not, of an evil name ;
He is weak and small,—and all he needs
Lies under the hedge amongst the weeds.

He robs not man of rest or food,
And all that he asks is quietude ;
To be left by him, as a worthless stone,
Under the dry hedge-bank alone !

Poor little English porcupine,
What a troubled and weary life is thine !
I would that my pity thy foes could quell,
For thou art ill-used, and meanest well !





THE SEA-GULL.

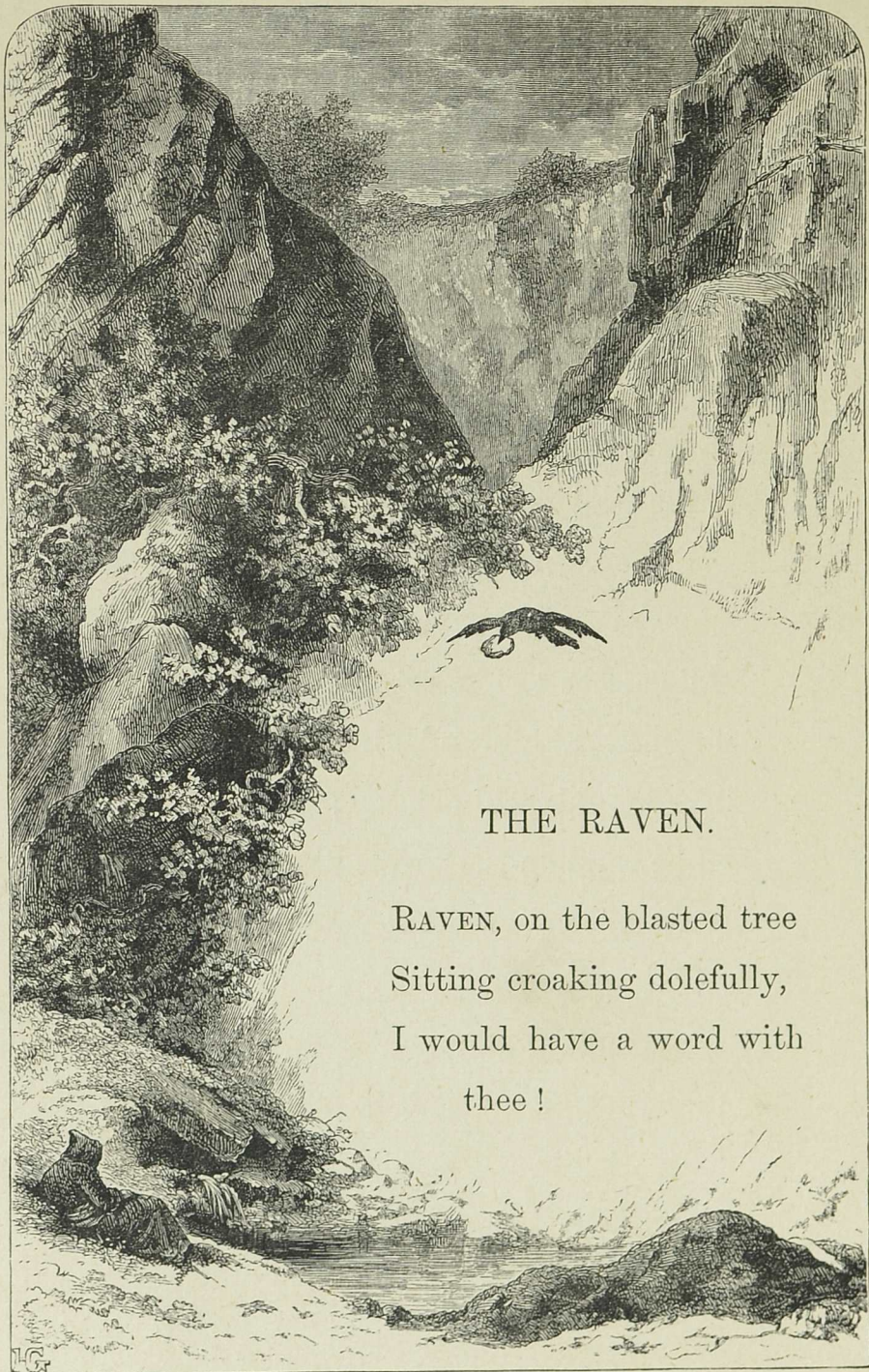
OH, the white Sea-gull, the wild Sea-gull,
A joyful bird is he,
As he lies like a cradled thing at rest
In the arms of a sunny sea !
The little waves rock to and fro,
And the white Gull lies asleep,
As the fisher's bark, with breeze and tide,
Goes merrily over the deep.

The ship, with her fair sails set, goes by,
And her people stand to note
How the Sea-gull sits on the rocking waves,
As if in an anchored boat.
The sea is fresh, the sea is fair,
And the sky calm overhead,
And the Sea-gull lies on the deep, deep sea,
Like a king in his royal bed !
Oh, the white Sea-gull, the bold Sea-gull,
A joyful bird is he,
Throned like a king, in calm repose
On the breast of the heaving sea !
The waves leap up, the wild wind blows,
And the Gulls together crowd,
And wheel about, and madly scream
To the deep sea roaring loud.
And let the sea roar ever so loud,
And the winds pipe ever so high,
With a wilder joy the bold Sea-gull
Sends forth a wilder cry,—
For the Sea-gull he is a daring bird,
And he loves with the storm to sail ;
To ride in the strength of the billowy sea,
And to breast the driving gale !

The little boat she is tossed about,
Like a sea-weed, to and fro ;
The tall ship reels like a drunken man,
As the gusty tempests blow.
But the Sea-gull laughs at the fear of man,
And sails in a wild delight
On the torn-up breast of the night-black sea,
Like a foam-cloud, calm and white.
The waves may rage and the winds may roar,
But he fears not wreck nor need ;
For he rides the sea, in its stormy strength,
As a strong man rides his steed !
Oh, the white Sea-gull, the bold Sea-gull !
He makes on the shore his nest,
And he tries what the inland fields may be ;
But he loveth the sea the best !
And away from land a thousand leagues,
He goes 'mid surging foam ;
What matter to him is land or shore,
For the sea is his truest home !
And away to the north, 'mid ice-rocks stern,
And amid the frozen snow,
To a sea that is lone and desolate,
Will the wanton Sea-gull go.

For he careth not for the winter wild,
Nor those desert regions chill ;
In the midst of the cold, as on calm blue seas,
The Sea-gull hath his will !
And the dead whale lies on the northern shores,
And the seal, and the sea-horse grim,
And the death of the great sea-creatures makes
A full, merry feast for him !
Oh, the wild Sea-gull, the bold Sea-gull !
As he screams in his wheeling flight :
As he sits on the waves in storm or calm,
All cometh to him aright !
All cometh to him as he liketh best ;
Nor any his will gainsay ;
And he rides on the waves like a bold, young king,
That was crowned but yesterday !





THE RAVEN.

RAVEN, on the blasted tree
Sitting croaking dolefully,
I would have a word with
thee !

Raven, thou art silent now
On the splintered forest bough.
Glancing on me thy bright eye :
I shall ask—do thou reply !
In that far gone, awful time,
When the earth was purged of crime,
And old Noah and the seven
In the gopher ark were driven,—

RAVEN.

I was there.

POET.

I know it, bird.

And when rain no more was heard
Plashing down in torrents wild ;
When the face of heaven grew mild,
And from mountain summits brown
The subsiding floods went down,
And the prisoned creatures fain
Scented the young earth again ;
Wherefore, when the patriarch forth
Sent thee to look round the earth
And bring tidings to his door,
Cam'st thou to the ark no more ?

RAVEN.

Narrow was the ark, but wide
The fair earth on every side ;
And all round in glens and plains
Lay of life the lorn remains ;
Man, and beast, and bird, like seed
Scattered on the harvest mead :
How could I return to bear
Tidings ? I was feasting there !

POET.

Raven, ha ! I thought the same.
But in after-times ye came
To the exiled prophet good,
Bringing him his daily food.

RAVEN.

Yes ; by Cherith brook there grew
Mighty cedars not a few ;
And a raven tree was there
Spreading forth its branches bare.
'Twas our home, when thither ran
From the king an awful man,

Robed and sandalled as in haste,
With a girdle round his waist;
Strongly built, with brow severe,
And the bearing of a seer.
Down by Cherith brook he lay;
And at morn and set of day
Thus a voice unto us said,
“By you must this man be fed;
Bring him flesh, and bring him bread!”



And by us he was supplied,
Duly morn and eventide,
Until Cherith brook was dried!

POET.

Wondrous miracle of love !

RAVEN.

Doth it thus thy spirit move ?
Deeper truth than this shall reach thee,—
Christ He bade the raven teach thee :
They plough not, said He, nor reap,
Nor have costly hoards to keep ;
Storehouse none, nor barn have they,
Yet God feeds them every day !
Fret not then your souls with care
What to eat, or what to wear,
He who hears the ravens' cry
Looketh with a pitying eye
On His human family.

POET.

Raven, thou art spirit-cheering ;
What thou say'st is worth the hearing ;
Never more be it averred
That thou art a doleful bird !

THE HERON.

Lo, there the hermit of the waste,
The ghost of ages dim,
The fisher of the solitudes,
Stands by the river's brim !

Old Heron, in the feudal times,
Beside the forest stream,
And by the moorland waters,
Thus didst thou love to dream.

And over towers and castles high,
And o'er the armèd men,
Skirmishing on the border-lands,
Or crouching in the glen,

Thy heavy wings were seen to flit;
Thy azure shape was known
To pilgrim and to anchorite,
In deserts scorched and lone.

Old Heron, in those feudal times
Thou wast in dangerous grace,
Secured by mandates and by laws
All for the royal chase.

No meaner head might plot thy death
Than one which wore a crown;
No meaner hand might loose the shaft,
From the skies to strike thee down.

And out came trooping courtly dames,
And men of high degree,
On steeds caparisoned in gold,
With bridles ringing free.

Came king and queen ; came warrior
stout ;

Came lord and lady fair,
All gallant, beautiful, and bold,
Into the autumn air.

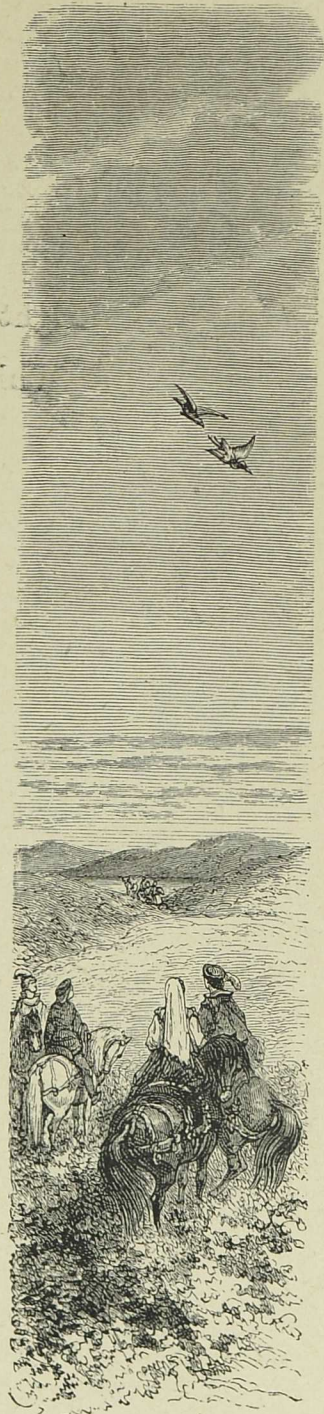
The abbot and the bishop grave,
The monk with crown new-shorn,
Who sore did rue their ravaged stew*
In the last Lent forlorn.

The keepers with their dogs in leash ;
The falconers before,
Who proudly on their sturdy wrists
The hooded tercel bore.

And in thy solitary haunts
By stream or sedgy mere,
The laugh, the shout, the cries of dogs
And men, came to thine ear.

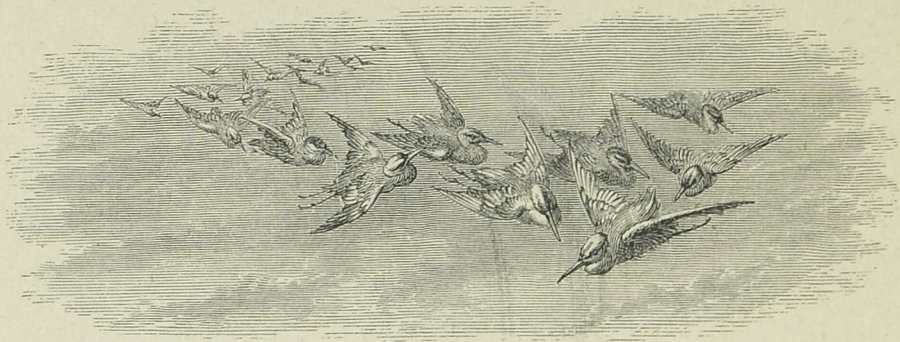
And starting from thy reverie,
And springing from the bent,

* Fish-pond.



Into the air, from joyous hearts,
Another shout was sent.

Up, up into the azure skies
On circling pinions strong,
Bright eyes pursued thy mounting course
While the falcon sped along.



Up, up into the azure skies
Thy strenuous pinions go ;
While shouts and cries, and wondering eyes,
Still reach thee from below ;

But higher and higher, like a spirit of fire,
Still o'er thee hangs thy foe ;

Thy cruel foe, still seeking,
With one down-plunging aim,
To strike thy precious life
For ever from thy frame !

But doomed perhaps, as down he darts
Swift as the rushing wind,
Impaled upon thy upturned beak,
To leave his own behind.

Old Heron, all those times are past,
Those jocund troops are fled ;
The king, the queen, the keepers green,
The dogs, the hawks are dead !

In many a minster's solemn gloom,
In shattered abbeyes lone,
Lie all thy crownèd enemies,
In midnight vaults of stone !

The towers are torn, the gates outworn,
Portcullis, moat, and mound
Are vanished all, or faintly mark
Some rarely-trodden ground.

O'er all those abbeys, convents, all
Those chantries and crosses,
Where thou didst glide past in thy pride,
Grow tawny ferns and mosses.

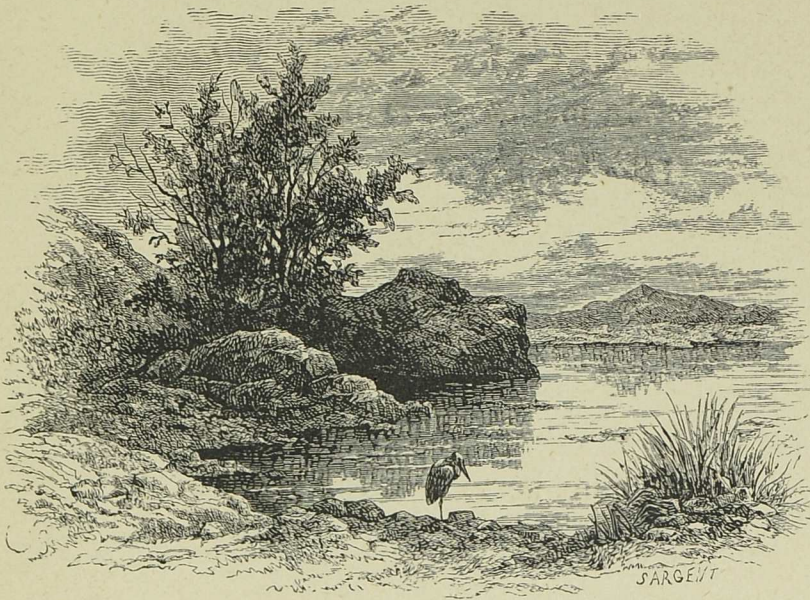
Where banners waved, the ivy grows;—
Baronial times are o'er!
The forests now are corn-fields green,
Green is the lakelet's shore.

Where grew the furze, now runs the fence;
Where waved the wild-rush free,
And whistled moorland-grasses sere,
Fat cattle roam the lea.

The bow is gone, the hawk is thrown
For ever from the hand;
And now we live a bookish race,
Amid a cultured land.

Yet here and there some remnant
Of those old woodland times;
Some waste lies brown; some forest spreads;
Some rocky streamlet chimes.

And there, beside the waters,
On moorland and on wold,
I find thee watching silently,
Thou fisherman of old.



Whene'er I meet thee, Heron,
By river broad and deep,
Where mountain-torrents run and moan,
Or ponded waters sleep;

By tarns upon the naked hills;
In stony regions gray;
Or wading in the sounding sea,
Amid the hissing spray.

Whene'er I see thee, Heron,
Thy cheer is silent still ;
Solemnly watching by the wave,
Or o'er the dusky hill,

Waving thy shadowy pinions
In motion grave and slow,
Like a spirit of the solemn Past
That museth on its woe !

Like one that in all present joy
Finds no congenial tone,
For his heart is in the perished Past,
And seeketh that alone !

Then hail to thee, old Heron,
Flit on from dream to dream ;
Be yet the watcher on the shore,
The spirit of the stream ;

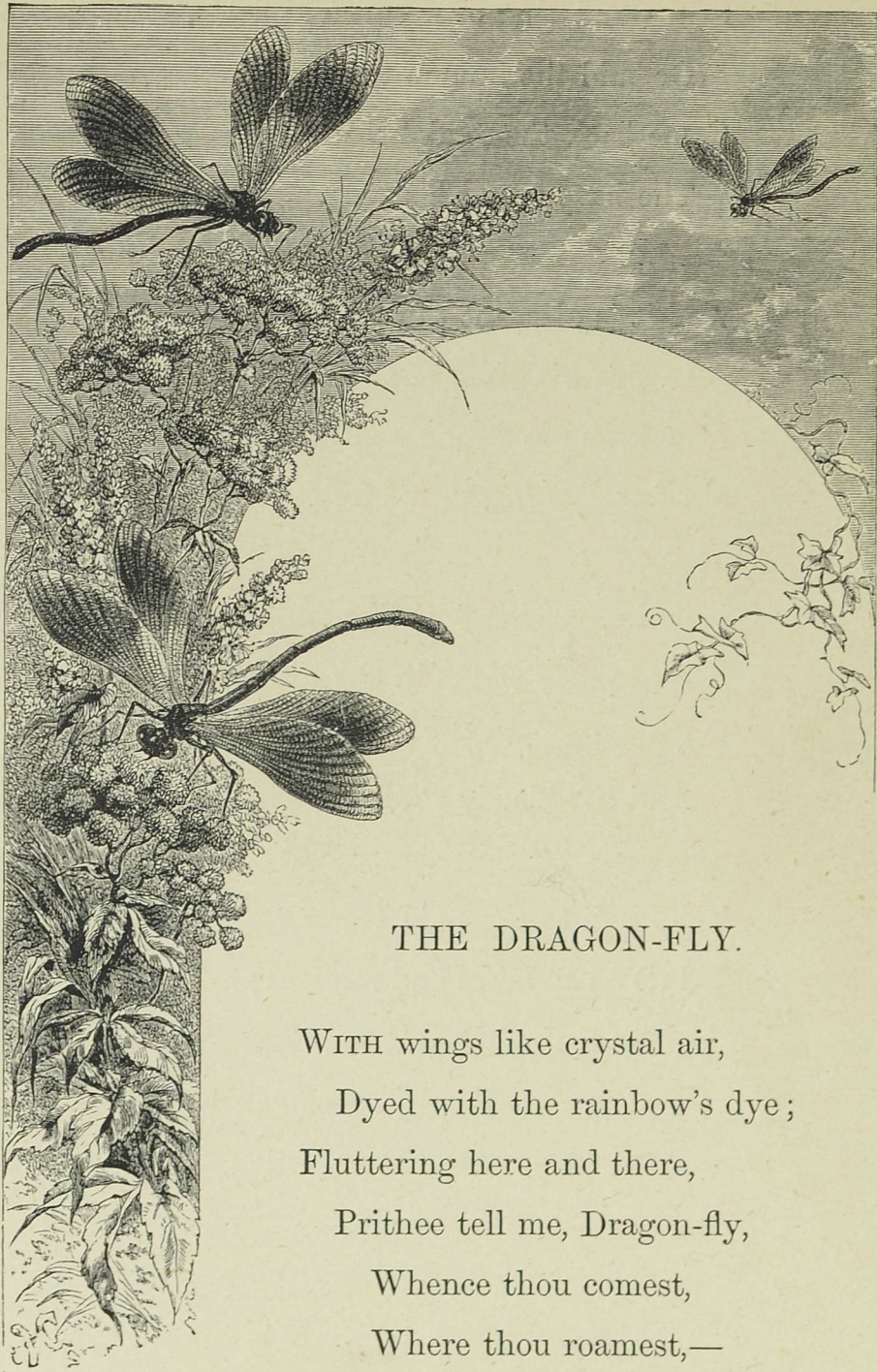
For still at sight of thee come back
The storied times of old ;
The jovial hawking-train, the chase,
The sturdy bowmen bold.

Still wandering over cultured fields,
Or 'mid the human throng,
Come back the feudal castle,
The harper and his song.

And it is pleasant thus to dream,
In this kingdom of the free,
Now laws are strong and roads are good,
Of outlaw 'neath his tree.

Now knowledge falls like sunshine,
And peace walks in our towns,
Oh, pleasant are the feudal days,
And the bloody strife of crowns !

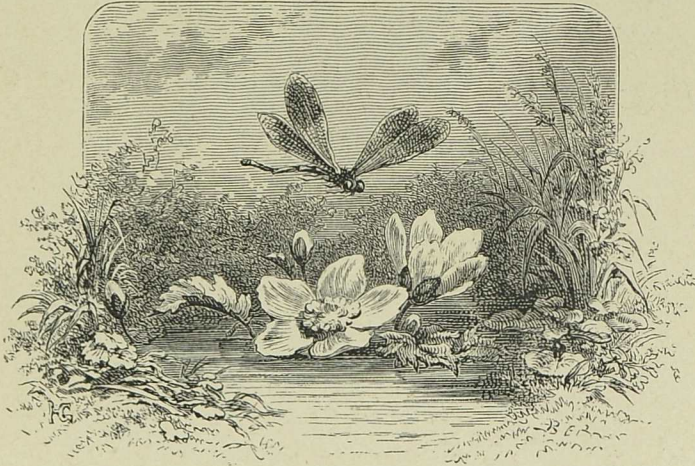
Then hail to thee, old Heron !
Flit on to lakes and streams ;
And by their waters dreaming,
Still prompt these pleasant dreams.



THE DRAGON-FLY.

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

'Mongst 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
In sunshine far away.

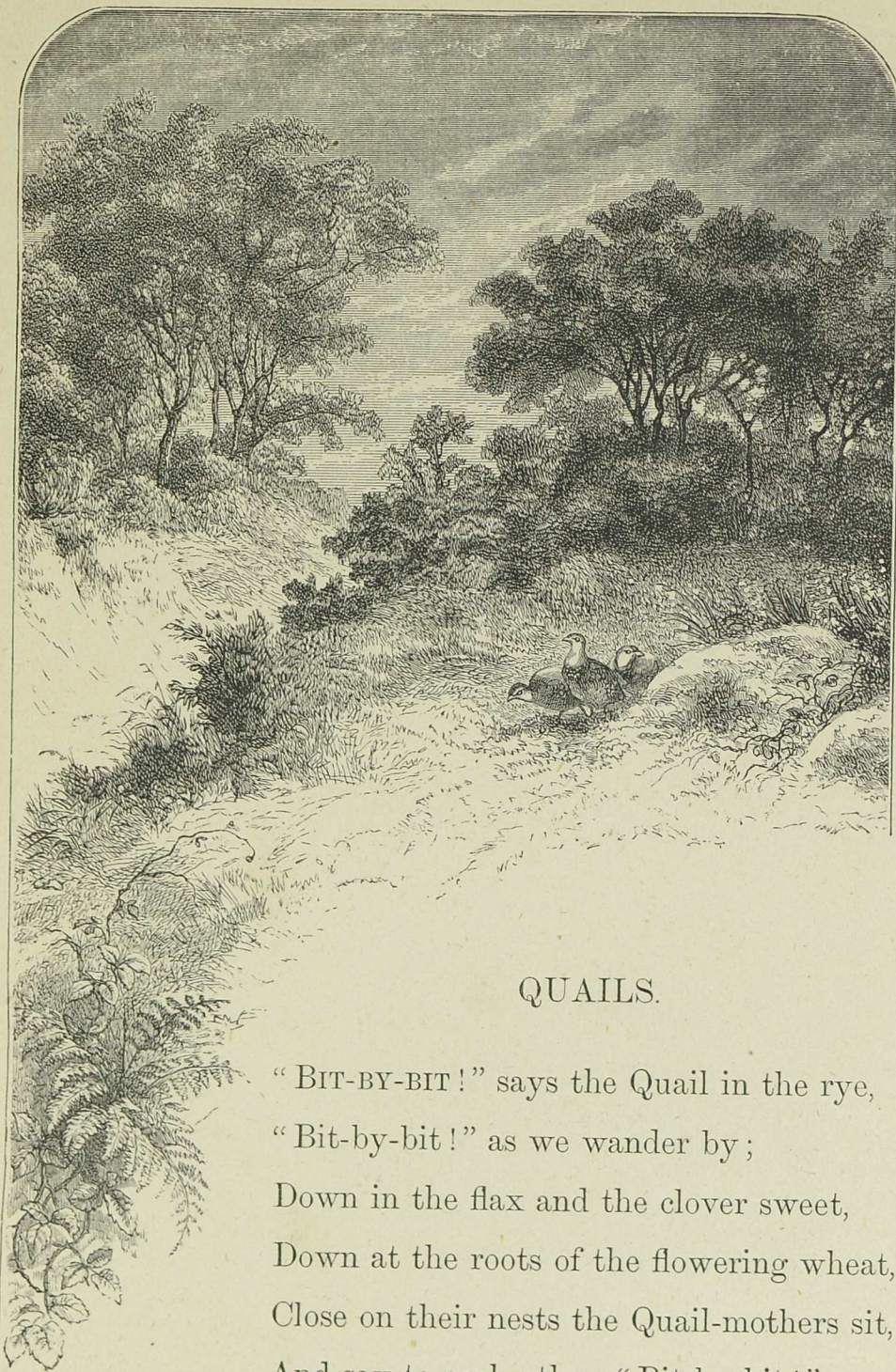


Tell me, prithee, Dragon-fly,
What and whence thou art ?
Whether of the earth or sky,
Or of flowers a part ?
And who together,
This fine weather,
Put thee, glorious as thou art ?

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 !



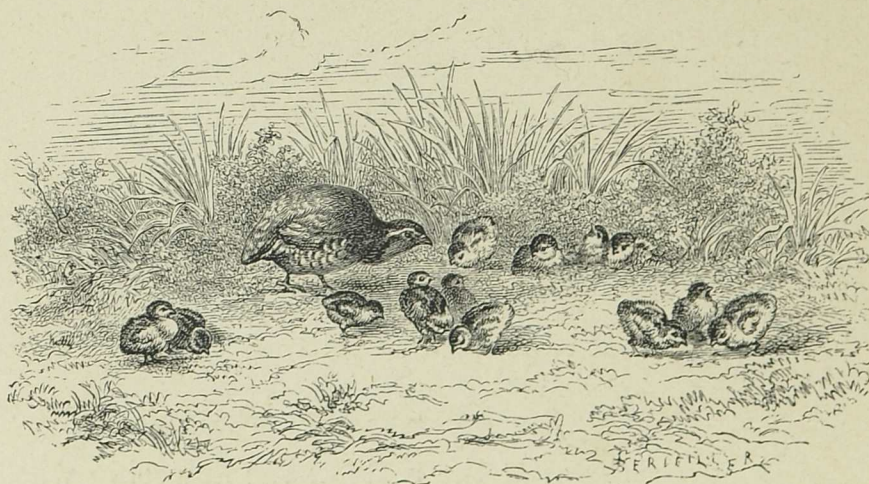


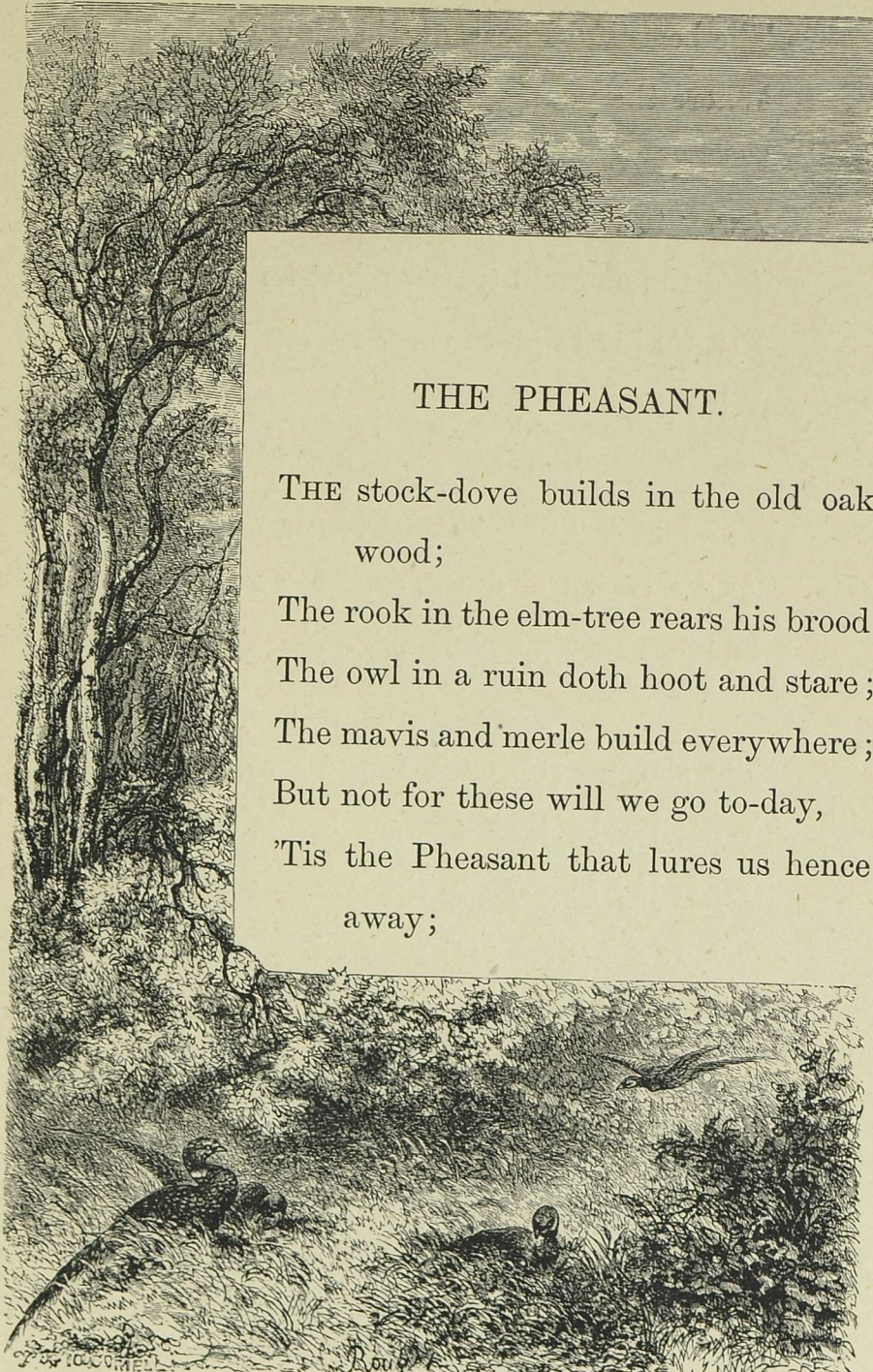
QUAILS.

“BIT-BY-BIT!” says the Quail in the rye,
“Bit-by-bit!” as we wander by;
Down in the flax and the clover sweet,
Down at the roots of the flowering wheat,
Close on their nests the Quail-mothers sit,
And say to each other, “Bit-by-bit!”

And bit-by-bit is wrought the spell
Which wakens life and bursts the shell.

In the early summer's new-mown swath,
In the flowers of the later aftermath,
Still the Quail-fathers' simple wit
Is ever repeating—"Bit-by-bit!"
And bit-by-bit the year moves on,
Day after day, and summer is gone;
Then winter comes, and skewer and spit
Make an end of the poor Quails bit-by-bit!





THE PHEASANT.

THE stock-dove builds in the old oak
wood;

The rook in the elm-tree rears his brood ;

The owl in a ruin doth hoot and stare ;

The mavis and merle build everywhere ;

But not for these will we go to-day,

'Tis the Pheasant that lures us hence
away ;

The beautiful Pheasant, that loves to be
Where the young green birches are waving free.

Away to the woods with the silvery rind,
And the emerald tresses afloat on the wind !
For 'tis joy to go to those sylvan bowers
When summer is rich with leaves and flowers ;
And to see, 'mid the growth of all lovely things,
The joyous Pheasant unfold his wings,
And then cower down, as if to screen
His gorgeous purple, gold, and green !

The streams run on in music low.
What joy by their flowery banks to go !
What joy to come to the calamus beds,
Where a broken root such odour sheds ;
And to see how the water-sedge uplifts
Its spires and crowns—the summer's gifts ;
To see the loose-strife's purple spear,
And the wind through the waving reeds to
hear !

Then on through hazelly lanes, away
To the light green fields all clear of hay,

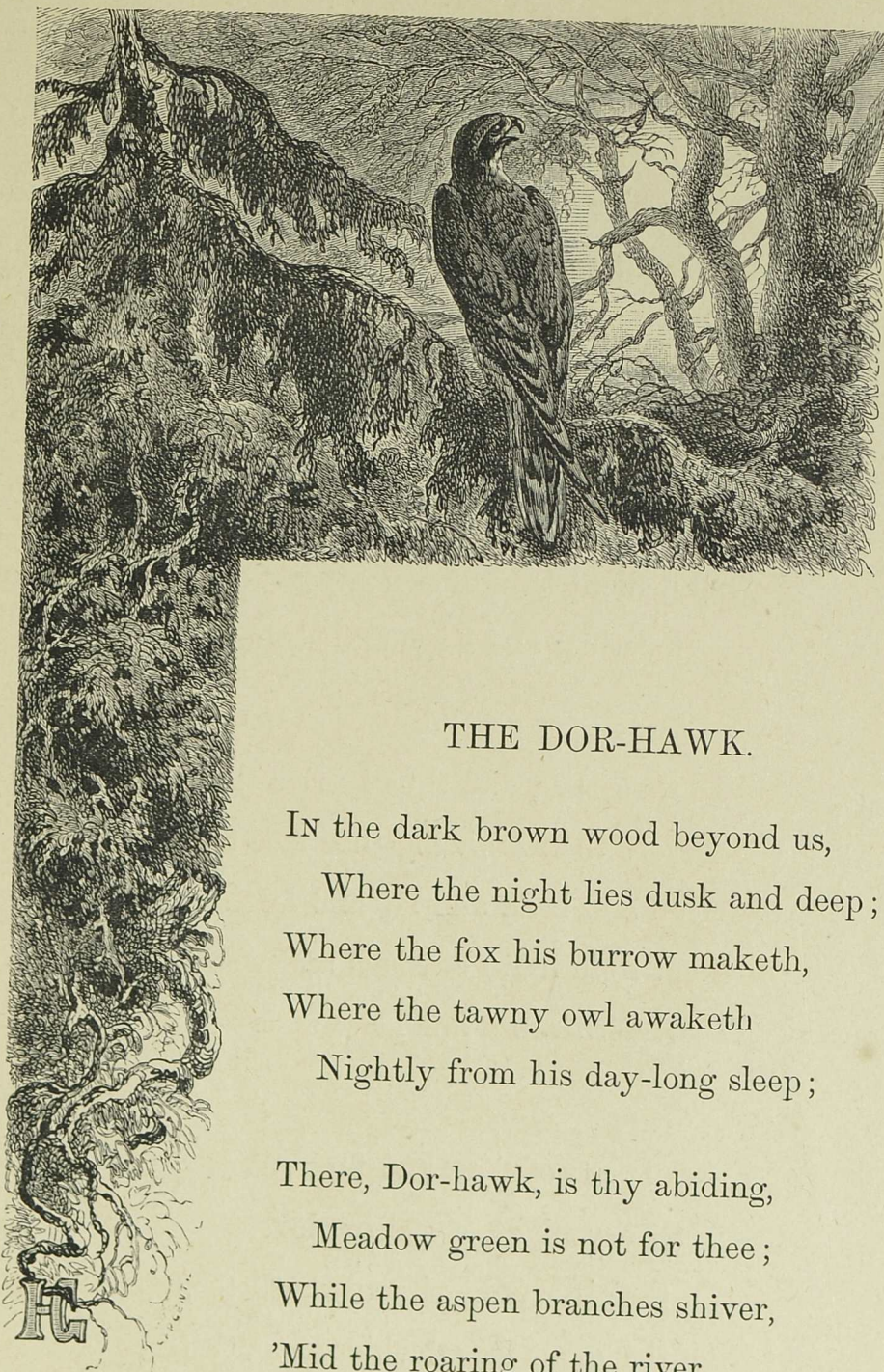
Where, along the thick hedge-side, we greet
Tall purple vetch and meadow-sweet ;
Past old farm-house and water-mill,
Where the broad-leaved colt's-foot grows at will ;
Where the water-rat swims calm and cool,
And pike bask in the deep mill-pool.

So on and away to the mossy moor,
Stretching on for many a mile before ;
A far seen wild, where all around
Some rare and beautiful thing is found :
Green mosses many, and sundew red,
And the cotton-rush, with its plummy head ;
The spicy sweet-gale loved so well,
And golden wastes of the asphodel !

Yet on and on, o'er the springy moss,—
We have yet the bog-rush bed to cross ;
And then anigh, all shimmering green
To the sunny breeze, are the birch woods seen,—
Than the green birch wood, a lovelier spot
In the realms of fairy-land is not !
And the Pheasant is there all life, all grace,
The lord of this verdurous dwelling-place.

O beautiful bird ! in thy stately pride,
Thou wast made in a waste of flowers to hide,
And to fling to the sun the glorious hues
Of thy rainbow-gold, thy greens and blues !
Yes, beautiful Pheasant, the birch wood bowers,
Rich many-formed leaves, bright-tinted flowers,
Broad masses of shade, and the sunshine free,
In thy gorgeous beauty are meet for thee !





THE DOR-HAWK.

In the dark brown wood beyond us,
Where the night lies dusk and deep;
Where the fox his burrow maketh,
Where the tawny owl awaketh
Nightly from his day-long sleep;
There, Dor-hawk, is thy abiding,
Meadow green is not for thee;
While the aspen branches shiver,
'Mid the roaring of the river,
Comes thy chirring voice to me.

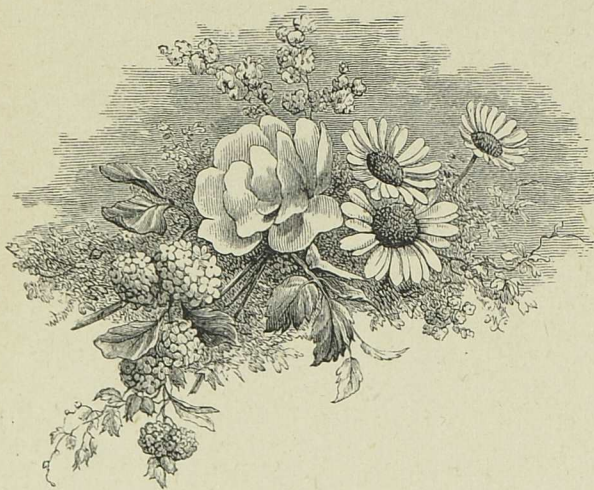
Bird, thy form I never looked on,
And to see it do not care ;
Thou hast been and thou art only
As a voice of forests lonely,
Heard and dwelling only there.

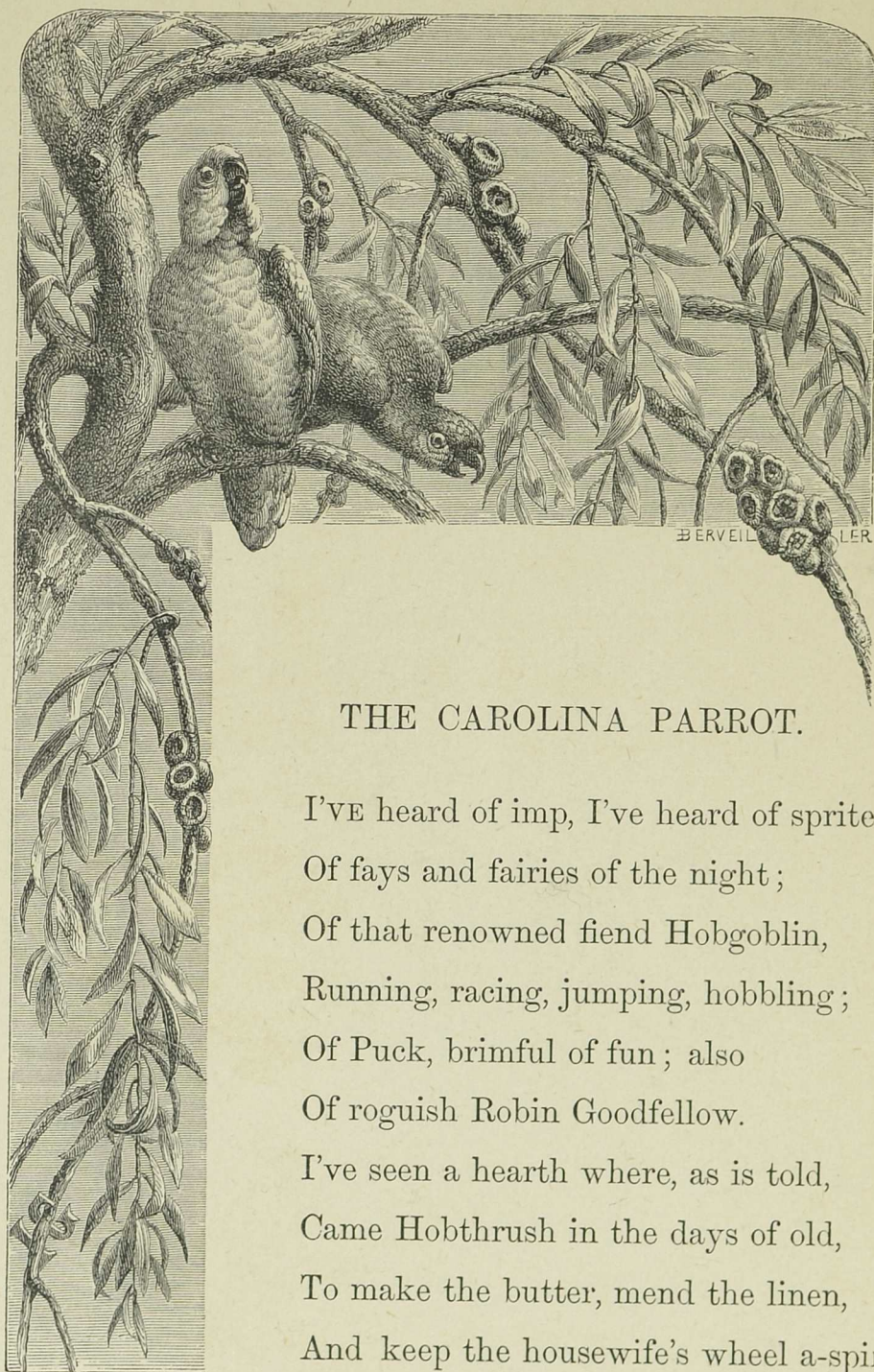
Bringing thoughts of dusk and shadow ;
Trees huge-branched in ceaseless change ;
Pallid night-moths, spectre-seeming ;—
All a silent land of dreaming,
Indistinct and large and strange.

Be thou thus, and thus I prize thee
More than knowing thee face to face,
Head and beak and leg and feather,
Kept from harm of touch and weather,
Underneath a fine glass-case.

I can read of thee, and find out
Of thy flight, if fast or slow ;
Of thee in the north and south too,
Of thy great moustachioed mouth too,
And thy Latin name also.

But, Dor-hawk, I love thee better
While thy voice unto me seems
Coming o'er the evening meadows,
From a dark brown land of shadows,
Like a pleasant voice of dreams !





THE CAROLINA PARROT.

I've heard of imp, I've heard of sprite ;
Of fays and fairies of the night ;
Of that renowned fiend Hobgoblin,
Running, racing, jumping, hobbling ;
Of Puck, brimful of fun ; also
Of roguish Robin Goodfellow.
I've seen a hearth where, as is told,
Came Hobthrush in the days of old,
To make the butter, mend the linen,
And keep the housewife's wheel a-spin-
ning.

I've heard of pigmies, pixies, lares,
Shoirim, gemedim, and fairies :—
And, Parrot, on my honest word,
I hardly think thou art a bird ;
Thou art some pixy, quaint and queer ;
Thou art not canny, Poll, I fear !
Look at that impish leer of thine ;
List to thy scream, thy shout, thy whine,
And none will doubt but thou must be
A creature of the faëry.
Answer me, was it 'mongst the fairies
Thou learnt thy many strange vagaries ?
Speak, pretty Poll !

And Poll replies,
With merry mischief in her eyes,—
“ I'm not an imp, I'm not a sprite ;
I'm not a goblin of the night ;
Nor did I learn my queer vagaries
Amongst the pixies nor the fairies.
I am a bird,—in feathers dressed,—
From Carolina in the west ;
But I've a lot of near relations
Who live amongst the foreign nations :
For all who climb with beak and claw,

The little Love-bird or Macaw,
The Cockatoo or Popinjay,
Or be the name whate'er it may,
And whatsoe'er the clime or nation,
You may be sure 'tis my relation.
But, ladies, as you just have heard,
I am a Carolina bird.

“ But, bless me, there's Mr. Wilson !—
Mr. Wilson, I say,
Do you remember crossing
The Cedar Swamp one day ?

“ You put me in your pocket,
As you thought, safe and tight ;
You called me your Kelinky,
And watched me day and night.

“ That was amongst the Choctaws ;—
I watched you night and day,
And at last, when you were sleeping,
I up, and flew away !

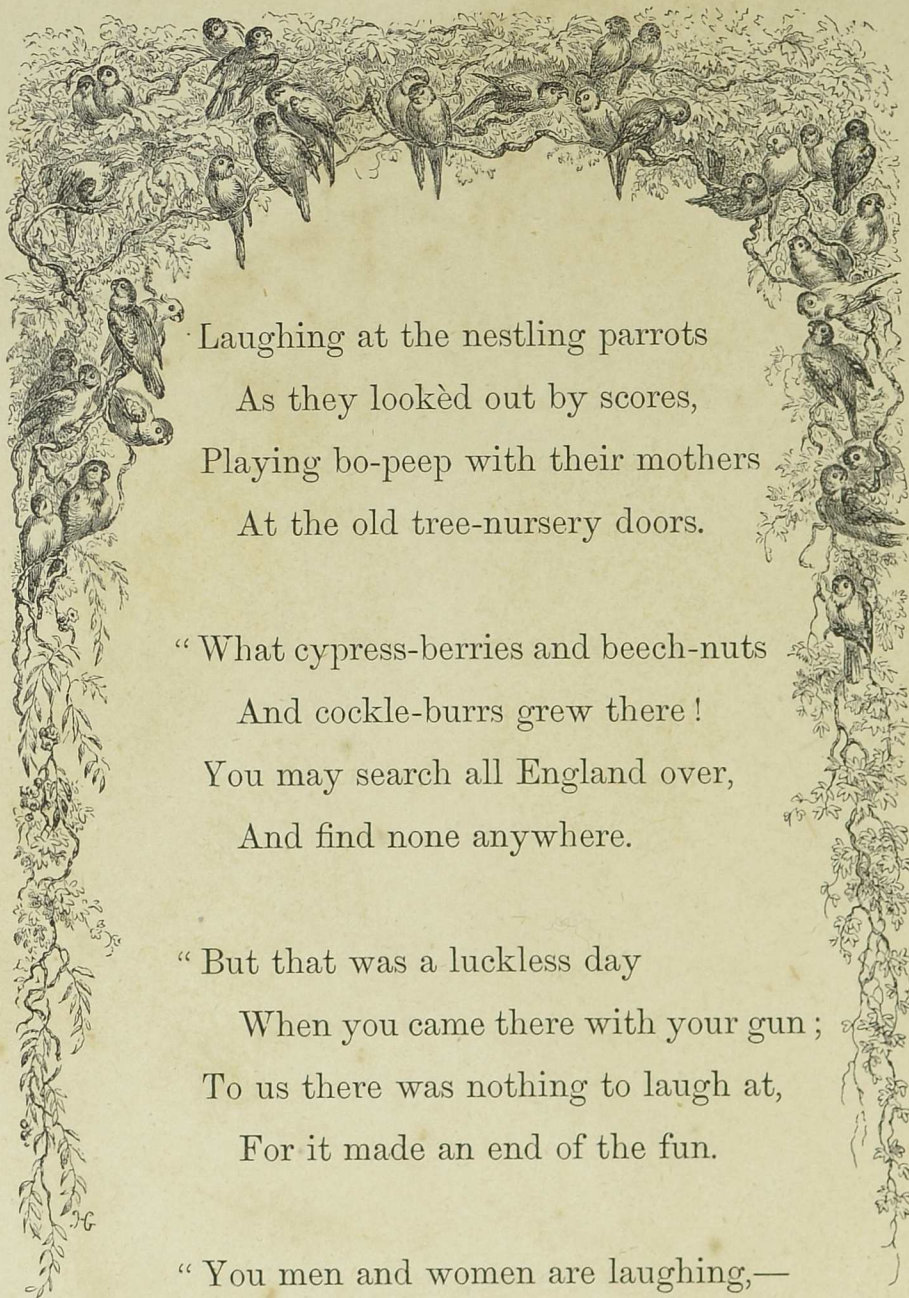
“ Ha! ha! ha! it sets me a-laughing,
For it was a nimble chase,
And I sat in the hiccory boughs
A-laughing in your face!

“ Did you speak of the Big-Bone-Lick?
That was our banquet store;
And there we came to pick up the salt
Which the Big-Bones licked up of yore.

“ By hundreds and by thousands
We came there altogether,
Just like a great camp-meeting
In the fine Carolina weather.

“ And moving over the Lick,
Picking up salt so mellow,
We looked like a carpet of feathers
All green and scarlet and yellow.

“ What merry times we had then,
I, and thousands more beside,
Flying round in merry sunshine
Through all the forest wide.



Laughing at the nestling parrots
As they lookèd out by scores,
Playing bo-peep with their mothers
At the old tree-nursery doors.

“What cypress-berries and beech-nuts
And cockle-burrs grew there !
You may search all England over,
And find none anywhere.

“But that was a luckless day
When you came there with your gun ;
To us there was nothing to laugh at,
For it made an end of the fun.

“You men and women are laughing,—
You say, ‘How the Parrot can chatter !’
But I can tell you, good people,
To us ’twas a serious matter.

“ Folks do not understand parrots,
Nor the love they have for each other ;
And there you shot us by dozens :
You shot my father and mother.

“ You shot us, brothers and sisters,
Uncles, and aunts, and cousins,
And loving and friendly neighbours,—
You shot them down by dozens.

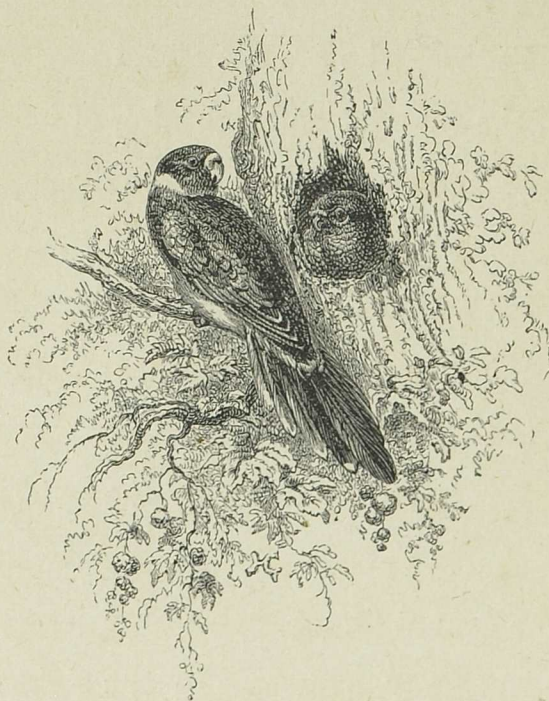
“ You set all hearts a-beating ;
For we, who are not afraid
Of the thunder and lightning of heaven,
By the sound of a gun are dismayed.

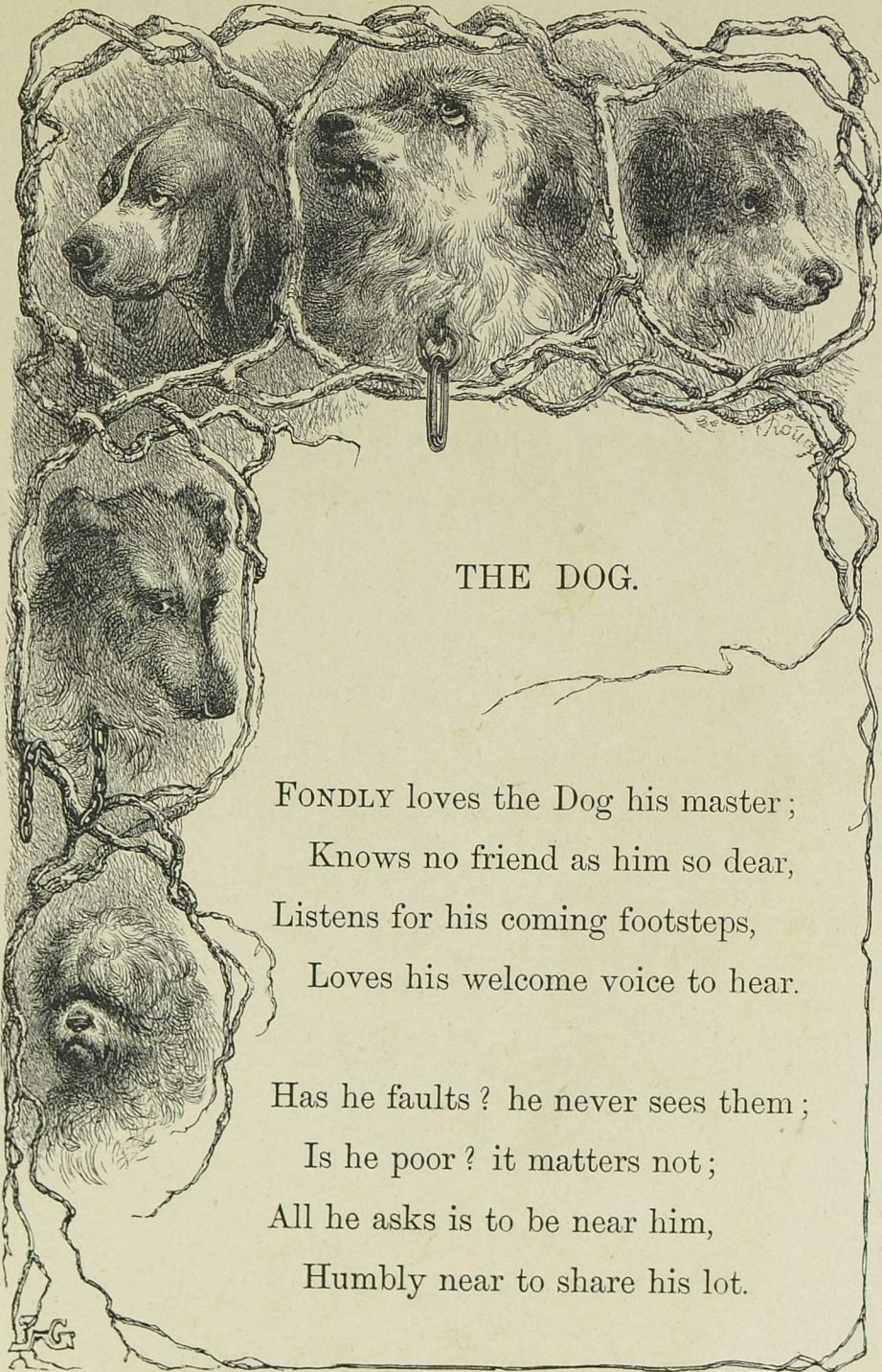
“ What a time of terror it was !
What wailing was heard, and what crying,
What circling round in distress,
What settling down by the dying !

“ One cannot forget such sorrow ;—
Even *you*, overcome by the sight,
Said you could not and would not shoot parrots :
And you kept your word for that night.

“ You tied me fast in your pocket,—
You thought so,—but I flew away,
And laughed in the boughs of the hiccory.
But you caught me again, did you say ?

“ I know it.—And now in Old England
I’m greatly admired and caressed ;
I’m happy enough in Old England,
But I love Carolina the best.”





THE DOG.

FONDLY loves the Dog his master ;
Knows no friend as him so dear,
Listens for his coming footsteps,
Loves his welcome voice to hear.

Has he faults ? he never sees them ;
Is he poor ? it matters not ;
All he asks is to be near him,
Humbly near to share his lot.

As a faithful friend to share it ;
To be with him night or day,
Ever ready when he calleth,
When he biddeth, to obey.

To obey with will instinctive,
Which can neither fail nor swerve ;
Asking for his faithful duty
Only love and leave to serve.

Only crumbs below his table ;
Little only from his much ;
Words or looks of kind approval,
Or the hand's electric touch.

Of the dog in ancient story
Many a pleasant tale is told ;—
As when young Tobias journeyed
To Ecbatane of old,

By the angel Raphael guided ;
Went the faithful dog and good,
Bounding through the Tigris meadows
Whilst they fished within the flood ;

Ate the crumbs which at the wedding
Fell upon Raguel's floor ;
Barked for joy to see the cattle
Gathered for the bridal store ;

Barked for joy when young Tobias,
With his bride and all her train,
And the money-bags from Media,
Left for Nineveh again.

And when Anna in the doorway
Stood to watch and wait for him,—
Anxious mother ! waiting, watching
Till her eyes with tears were dim,—

Saw she not the two men coming,
Young Tobias and his guide,
Hurrying on with their good tidings,
And the Dog was at their side !

They were coming dowered with blessings,
Like the Tigris' boundless flood,
And the Dog with joyous barking
Told the same as best he could.

And again in Homer's story,
When the waves Ulysses bore,
After Troy-town's siege and sorrow,
To green Ithaca once more.

Unto all he was a stranger,
None the king of old could know,
Worn with travel-toil and agèd,
By his twice ten years of woe.

In those twenty years of absence
He an alien had grown
Unto all who loved or served him,
Save to one poor heart alone.

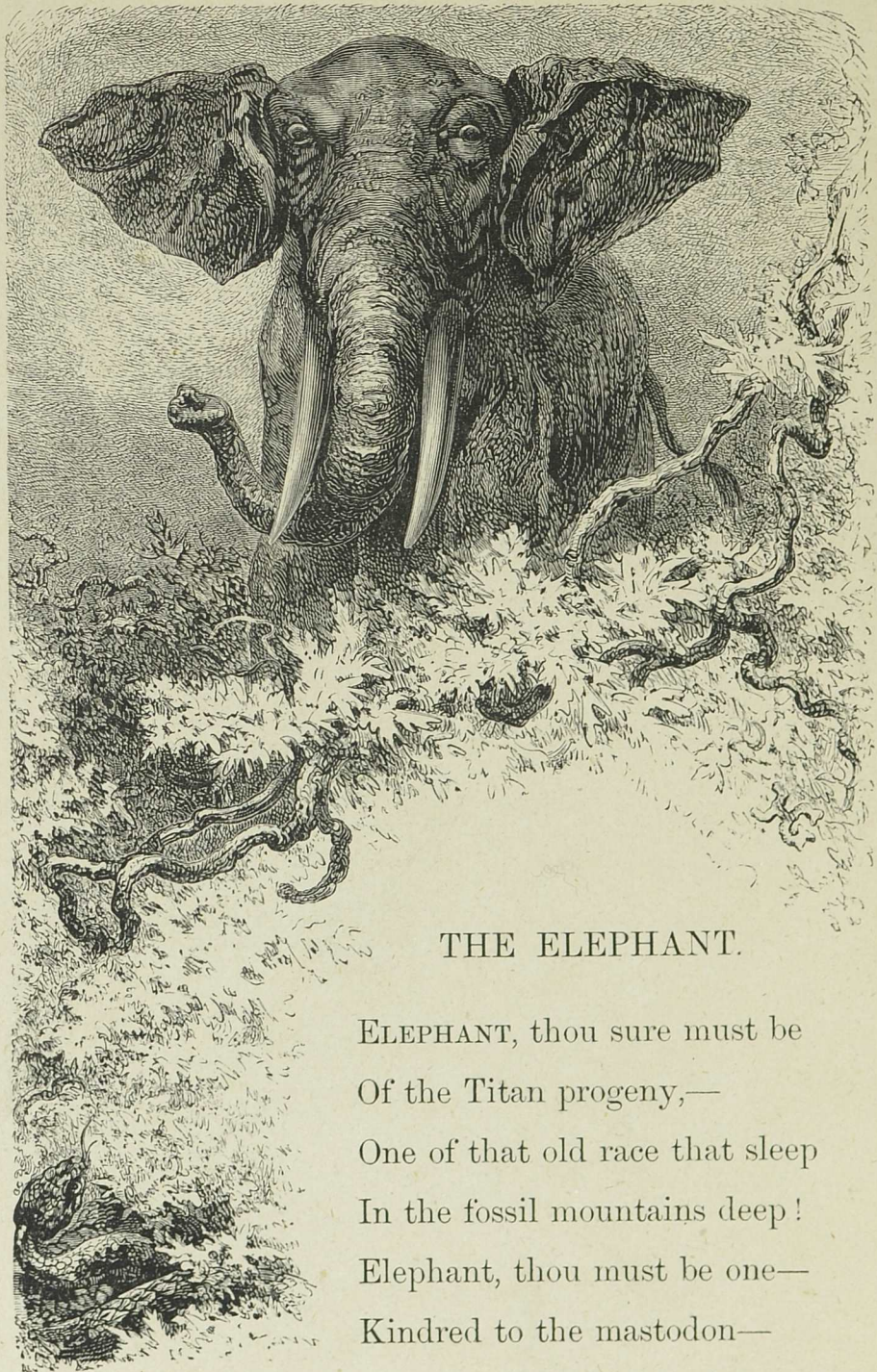
To his Dog, who, having lost him,
Never owned his loss supplied,
And who now, o'erjoyed to find him,
Lay down at his feet and died.

And the Dog is still the faithful,
Still the loving friend of man,
Ever ready at his bidding,
Doing for him all he can.

Let us take from him a lesson,
As the wisest of us may—
Learn a willingness in duty,
And be ready to obey.

Let us to *our* loving Master,
Give our will, our hearts, our all;
And be ever, ever watchful
To attend His slightest call!





THE ELEPHANT.

ELEPHANT, thou sure must be
Of the Titan progeny,—
One of that old race that sleep
In the fossil mountains deep!
Elephant, thou must be one—
Kindred to the mastodon—
One that didst in friendship mix

With the huge megalonyx;
With the mammoth hadst command
O'er the old-world forest-land.
Thou those giant ferns didst see,
Taller than the tallest tree;
And with upturned trunk didst browse
On the reed-palm's lowest boughs;
And didst see, upcurled from light,
The ever-sleeping ammonite;
And those dragon-worms at play
In the waters old and gray!

Tell me, creature! in what place
Thou, the Noah of thy race,
Wast preserved when Death was sent
Like a raging element,
Like a whirlwind passing by,
In the twinkling of an eye,
Leaving mother Earth forlorn
Of her mighty eldest-born;
Turning all her life to stone
With one universal groan!
In what cavern drear and dark,
Elephant, hadst thou thine ark?

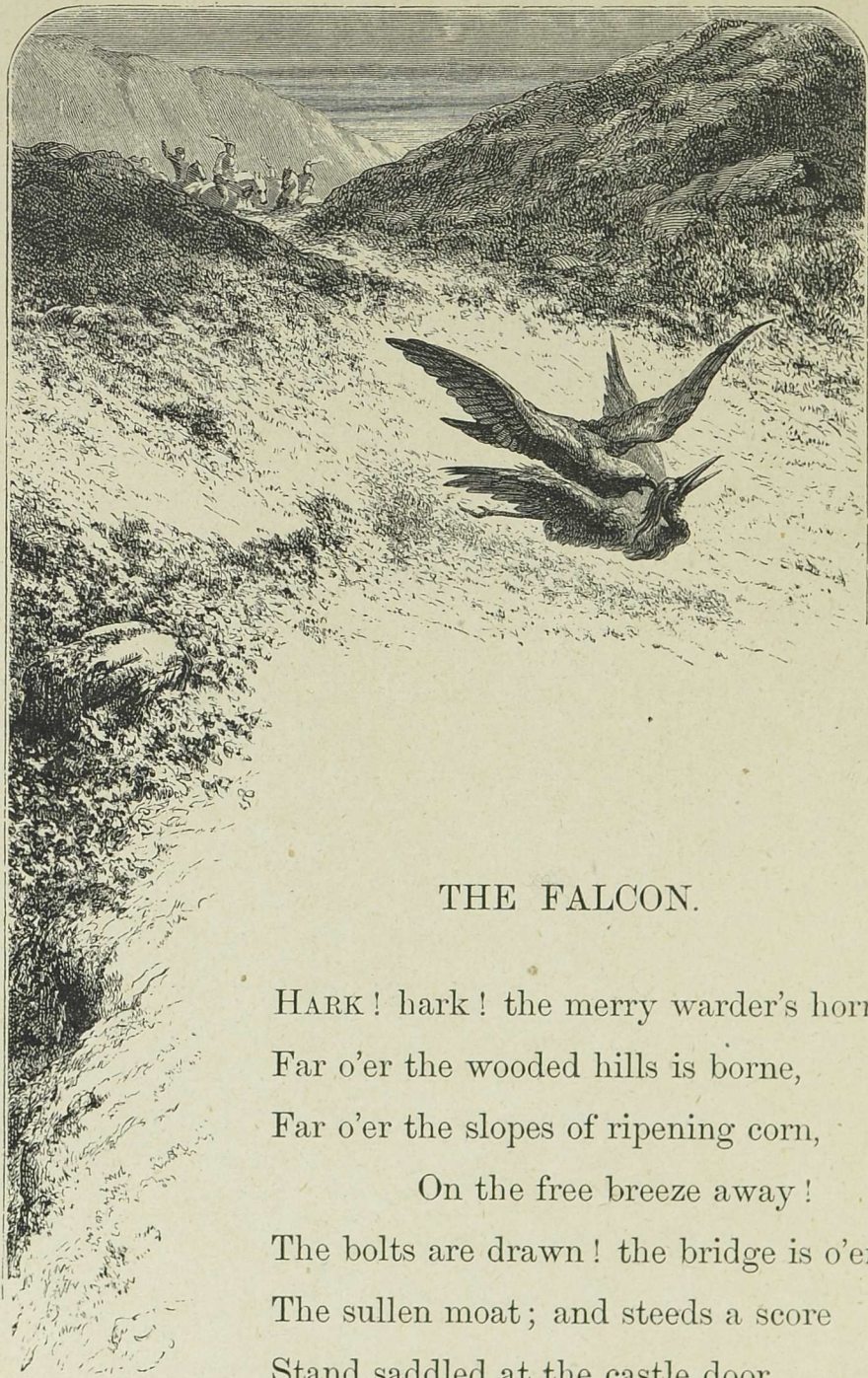
Dost thou in thy memory hold
Record of that tale untold ?
If thou dost, I pray thee tell,—
It were worth the knowing well.

Elephant, so old and vast,
Thou a kindly nature hast ;
Grave thou art, and strangely wise,
With observant, serious eyes ;
Somewhat in thy brain must be
Of an old sagacity.
Thou art solemn, wise, and good ;
Livest not on streaming blood.
Thou, and all thine ancient clan,
Walked the world ere grief began,
Preying not on one another,
Nourished by the general mother,
Who gave forests thick and tall,
Food and shelter for you all.

Elephant, if thou hadst been
Like the tiger fierce and keen,
Like the lion of the brake,
Or the deadly rattlesnake,

Ravenous as thou art strong,
Terror would to thee belong;
And before thy mates and thee,
All the earth would desert be.
But, instead, thou yield'st thy will,
Tractable, and peaceful still;
Full of good intent, and mild
As a humble little child;
Serving with obedience true,
Aiding, loving, mourning too;
For each noble sentiment
In thy good, great heart is blent!





THE FALCON.

HARK ! hark ! the merry warder's horn
Far o'er the wooded hills is borne,
Far o'er the slopes of ripening corn,
On the free breeze away !
The bolts are drawn ! the bridge is o'er
The sullen moat ; and steeds a score
Stand saddled at the castle door,
For 'tis a merry day !

With braided hair, of gold or jet,
Is many a May and Margaret
Before her stately mirror set,
 With waiting-woman by;
There's scarlet cloak, and hat and hood;
And riding-dress of camlet good,
Green as the leaf within the wood,
 To shroud those ladies high.

And presently they are arrayed,
And plaits are smoothed and folds are laid,
And all the merry gabble stayed
 That showered down like rain;
And down the stately stairs they go,
Where dainty pages stand a-row,
To greet them with obeisance low,
 And follow in the train.

And then into the castle-hall
Come crowding gallant knights and tall,
Equipped as for a festival;
 For they will hawk to-day.

And then outbreaks a general din
From those without, as those within
Upon the terrace-steps are seen,
In such a bright array.

The kennelled hounds' long bark is heard;
The falconer talking to his bird;
The neighing steeds; the angry word
Of grooms impatient there.
But soon the bustle is dismissed;—
The falconer sets on every wrist
A hooded Hawk, that's stroked and kissed
By knight and lady fair.

And sitting in their saddles free,
The brave, the fair, of high degree,
Forth rides that gallant company,
Each with a bird on hand;
And falconers with their hawking-gear,
And other birds, bring up the rear;
And country-folk from far and near
Fall in and join the band.

And merrily thus in shine and shade,
Gay glancing through the forest glade,
On rides the noble cavalcade,

 To moorlands wild and gray ;
And then the noble sport is high !
The jess is loosed, the hood thrown by ;
And *Leurre!* the jolly falconers cry ;
And wheeling round the Falcons fly,
 Impatient of their prey.

A moment, and the quarry's ta'en ;
The falconers' cry sounds forth amain ;
The true Hawk soars and soars again,
 Nor once the game is missed !
And thus the jocund day is spent,
In jolly sport and merriment :
And baron bold were well content
To fell his wood and pawn his rent
 For the Hawk upon his wrist !

O gay Goshawk and Tercel bold !
Then might ye rule it as ye "wold ;"
Then sat ye on a perch of gold,
 And kings were your compeers ;

But that was in the days gone by,
The days of Norman chivalry,
When crouched the low unto the high ;—
The times of other years.

O gay Goshawk ! your days were when
Came down at night the ruffian men,
To slay the sleeping children then
Lying in London Tower ;
Yours were the days of civil feud ;
Of Rufus slain within the wood ;
Of servile John ; of Robin Hood ;
Of Woodstock's bloody bower.

O gay Goshawk ! you but belong
To troubadour and minstrel song ;
To shirt of mail and hauberk strong ;
To moat and castle-wall ;
To serf and baron, page and dame ;
To abbot sleek, as spaniel tame ;
To kings who could not sign their name ;
To times of wrong and thrall.

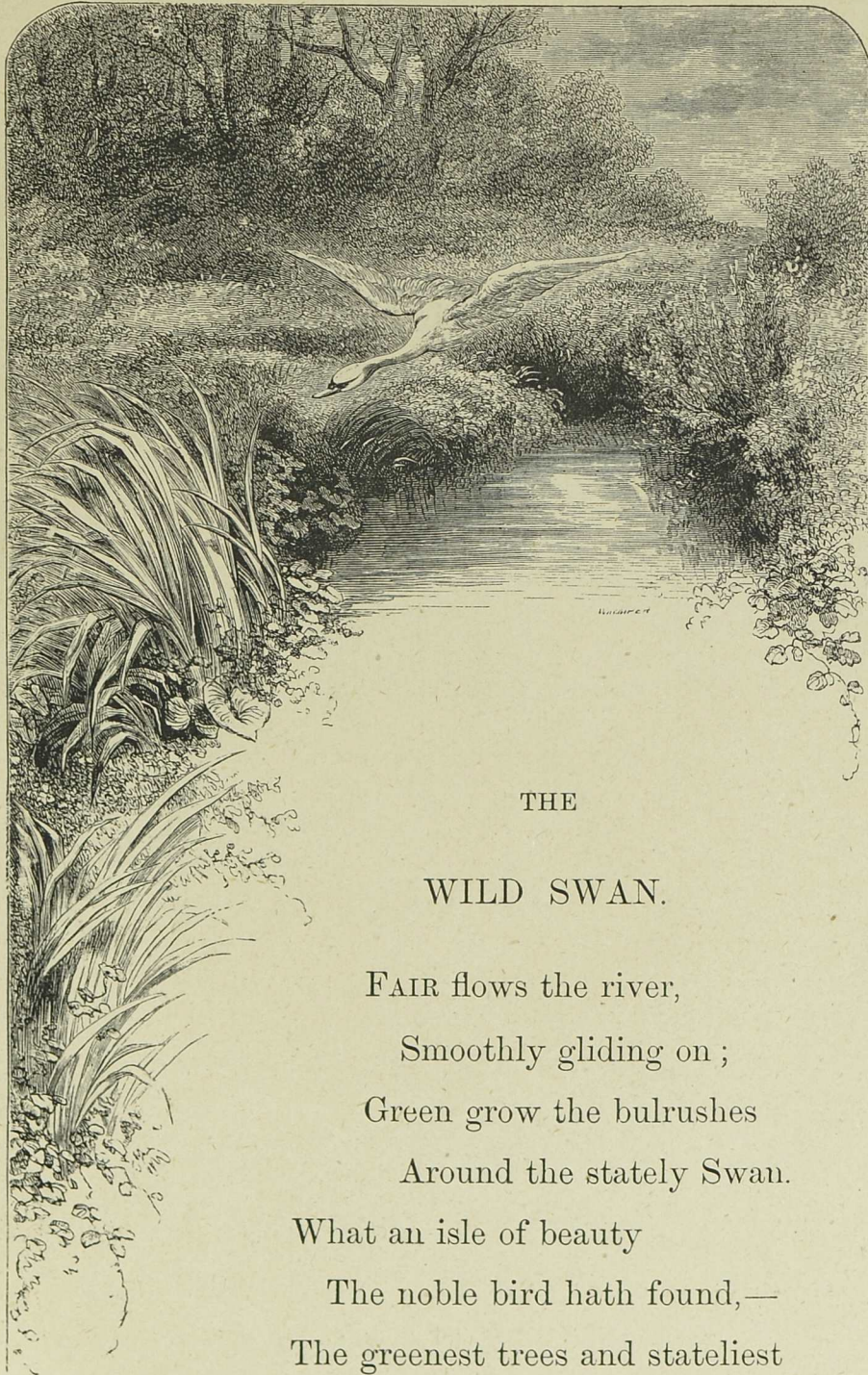
Times are not now as they were then ;
Ours is a race of different men,
Who loathe the sword and love the pen—
 For right, not rapine, bold.
No more, as then, the ladies bright
Work tapestry-work from morn till night ;
The very children read and write,
 Like learned clerks of old.

O Falcon proud and Goshawk gay !
Your pride of place has passed away ;
The lone wood is your home by day,
 Your resting perch by night ;
The craggy rock your castle-tower ;
The gay greenwood your ladies' bower ;
Your own wild will the master power
 That can control your flight.

Yet, noble bird, old fame is thine ;
Still livest thou in the minstrel's line ;
Still in old pictures art the sign
 Of high and pure degree ;

And still, with kindling hearts we read
How barons came to Runnymede,
Falcon on wrist, to do the deed
That made all England free !

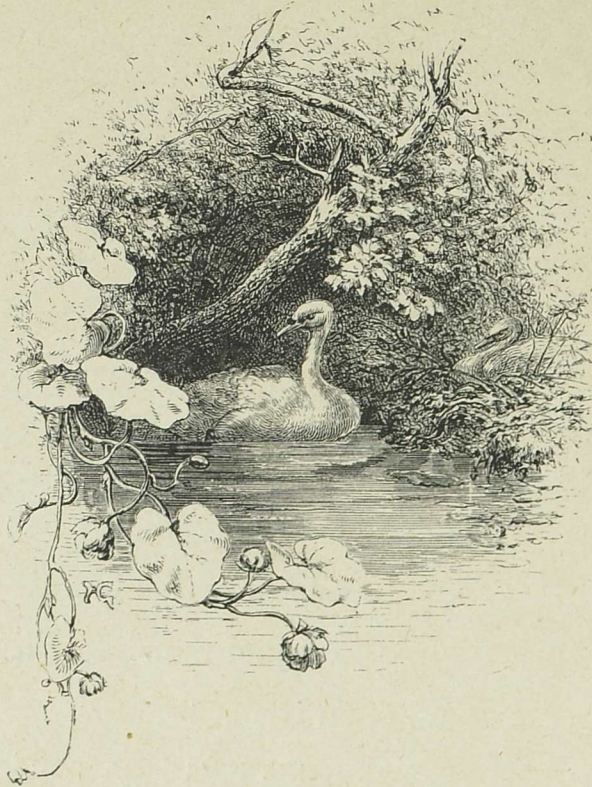




THE
WILD SWAN.

FAIR flows the river,
Smoothly gliding on ;
Green grow the bulrushes
Around the stately Swan.
What an isle of beauty
The noble bird hath found,—
The greenest trees and stateliest
Grow all the isle around.

Low bend the branches
In the water bright ;
Up the Swan comes sailing,
Plumy all and white.
Like a ship at anchor,
Now he lies at rest,
And little waves seem daintily
To play about his breast.



Wild bird of beauty,
Strong, and glad, and free !

Dwelling on these waters—
How pleasant it must be !
Like a gleam of sunshine
In shadow passing on—
Like a wreath of snow thou art,
Wild and graceful Swan !

Thick grow the flowers
'Neath the chestnut shade ;
Green grow the bulrushes
Where thy nest is made :
Lovely ye, and loving, too,
The mother-bird and thee,
Watching o'er your cygnet brood,
Beneath the river-tree.

Kings made laws a-many,
Laws both stern and strong,
In the days of olden time,
You to keep from wrong ;
And o'er their palace-waters
Ye went, a gallant pair ;
And Surrey and his Geraldine
Beheld ye sailing there.

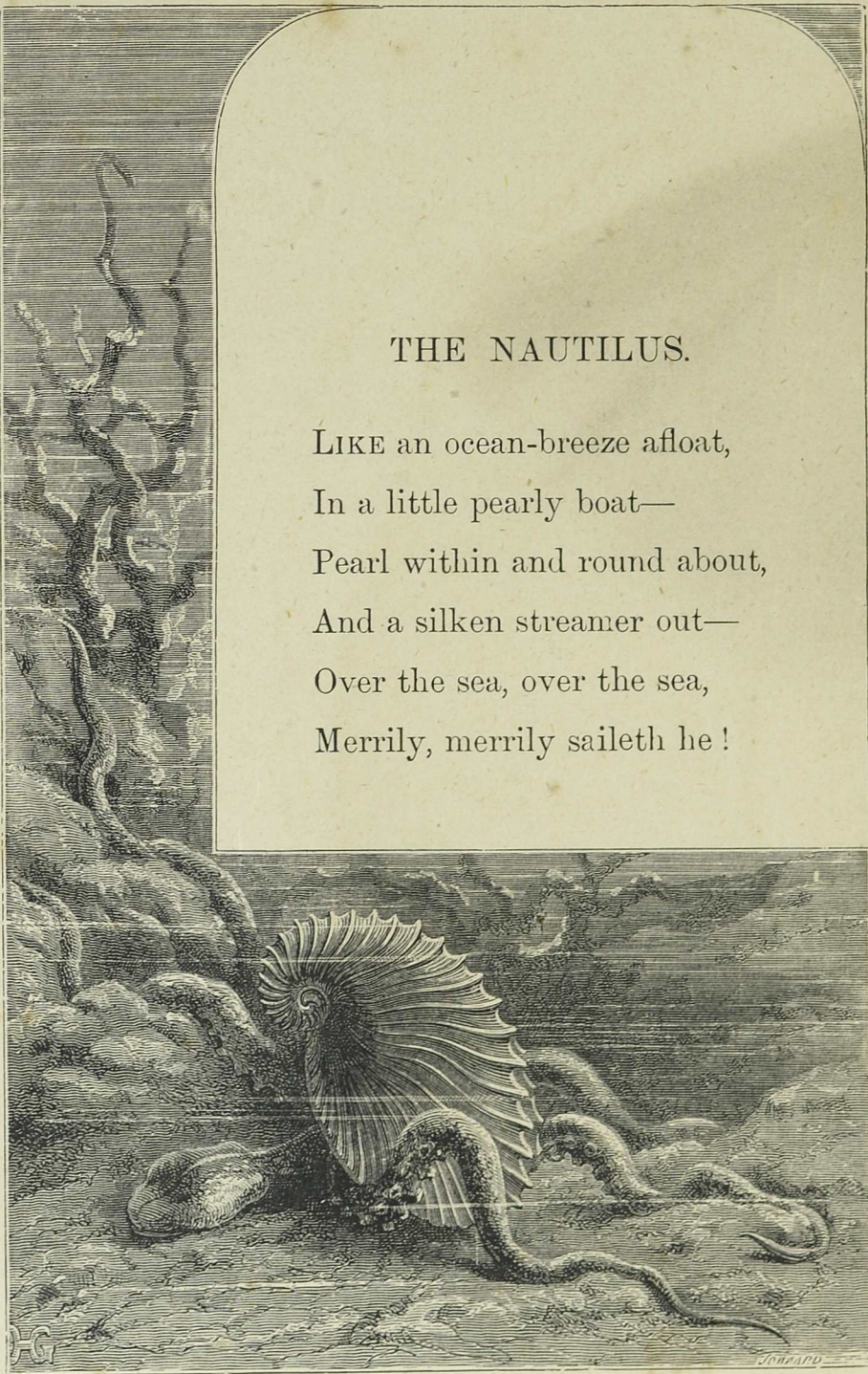
Tell me, Swan, I pray thee,
Art of that high race ;
Or a sylvan creature
From some far, lone place ?
Saw ye in woody Athelney
True Alfred's care and pain ;
Or, riding out among his men,
Good King Canute the Dane ?

No—from 'mid the icebergs,
Through long ages piled,
Sometime ye were driven
By the winter wild ;
From where the ermine hunters
On their far journeys go ;
From where the reindeer sledges
speed
Over the wastes of snow :

From northern wildernesses,
Wild, and lone, and drear,
Ice-lakes cold and gleaming,
Ye have hastened here.

The pleasant streams of England
Your homeward flight have stayed ;
And here, among the bulrushes,
Your English nest is made.





THE NAUTILUS.

LIKE an ocean-breeze afloat,
In a little pearly boat—
Pearl within and round about,
And a silken streamer out—
Over the sea, over the sea,
Merrily, merrily saileth he !

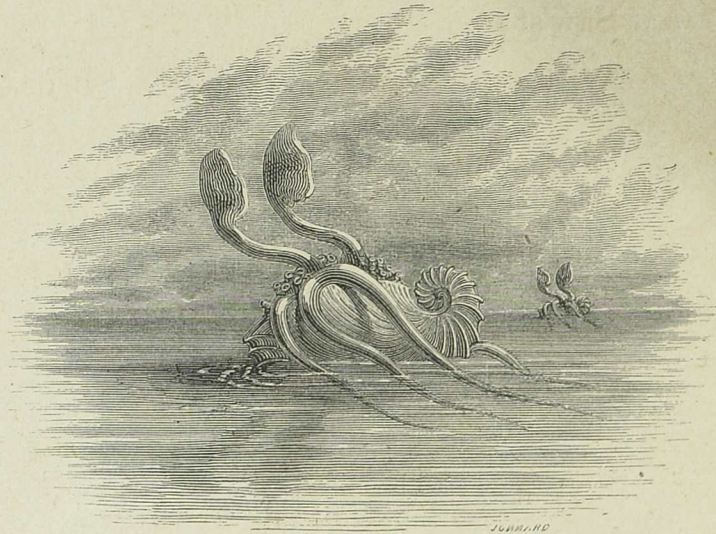
Not for battle, not for pelf,
But to pleasure his own self,
Sails he on for many a league,
Nor knoweth hunger nor fatigue;
Past many a rock, past many a shore,
Nor shifts a sail, nor lifts an oar:
Oh! the joy of sailing thus,
Like a brave old Nautilus!

Much doth know the Northern whaler;
More the great Pacific sailor;
And Phœnicians, old and gray,
In old times knew more than they;
But, O daring voyager small,
More thou knowest than they all!

Thou didst laugh at sun and breeze,
On the new-created seas:
Thou wast with the dragon broods
In the old sea-solitudes,
Sailing in the new-made light
With the stony ammonite!
Didst survive the awful shock
That turned the ocean-bed to rock;

And changed its myriad living swarms
To the marble's veinèd forms—
Fossil-scrolls that tell of change
Sudden, terrible, and strange !

Thou wast there !—thy little boat,
Airy voyager, kept afloat



O'er the waters wild and dismal,
O'er the yawning gulfs abysmal ;
Amid wreck and overturning,
Rock-imbedding, heaving, burning—
'Mid the tumult and the stir,
Thou, most ancient mariner !

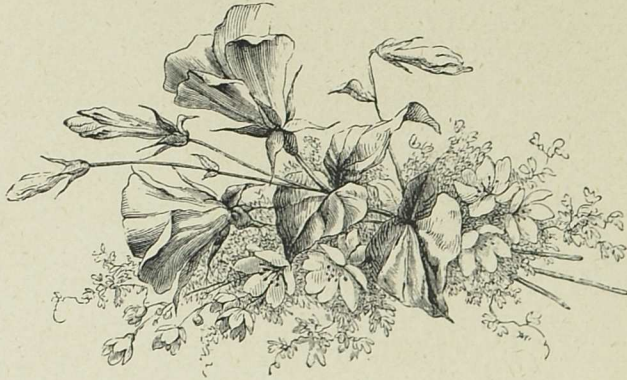
In that pearly boat of thine,
Sat'st upon the troubled brine !

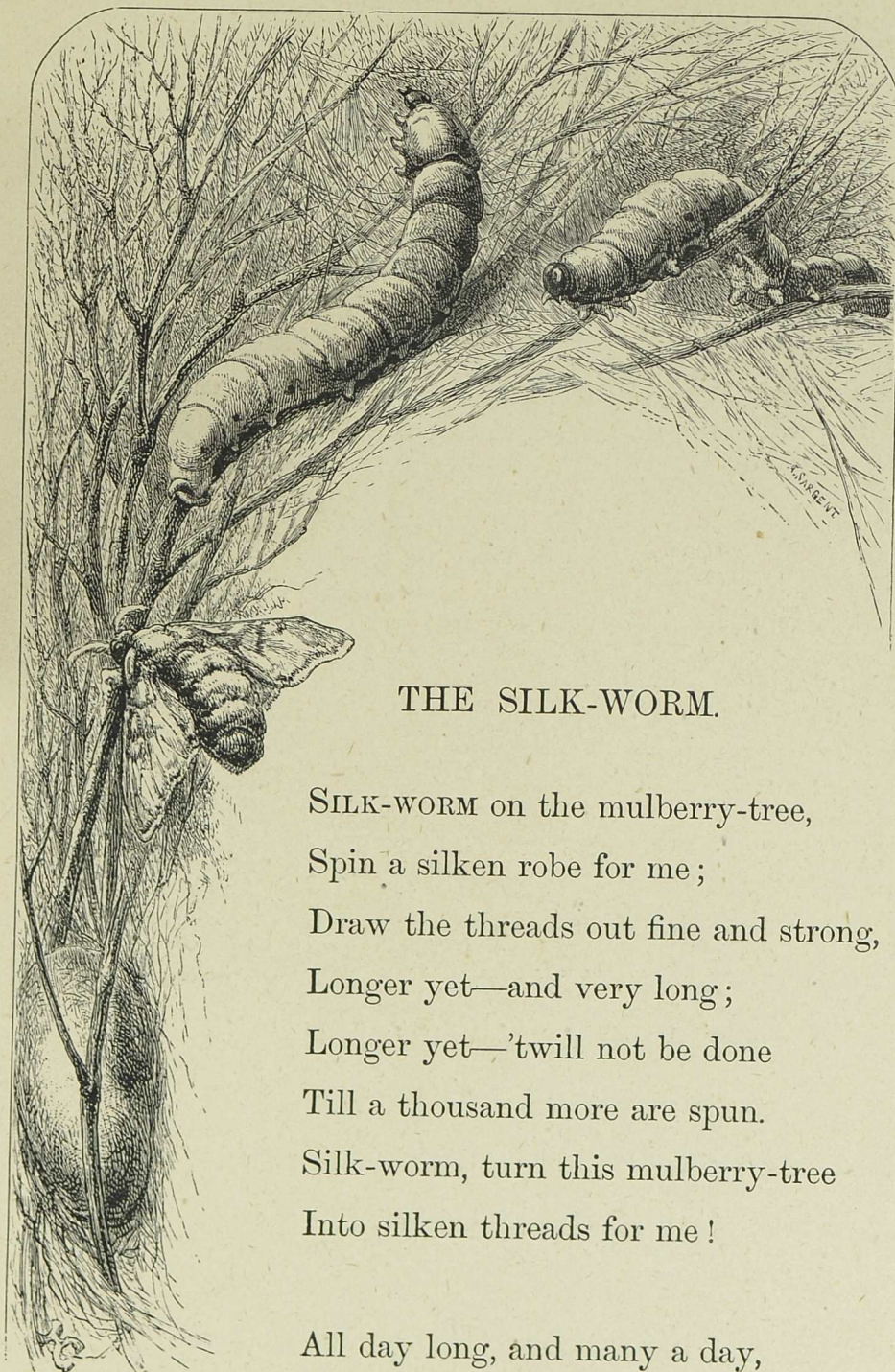
Then thou saw'st the settling ocean,
Calming from its wild commotion,
And, less mighty than the first,
Forth a new creation burst !
Saw'st each crested billow rife
With ten thousand forms of life ;
Saw'st the budding sea-weed grow
In the tranquil depths below,
And within the ocean-mines
Hourly branching corallines.

Thou didst know the sea, ere man
His first timid voyage began—
All the world hadst sailed about
Ere he America found out ;
Ere Ulysses and his men
Sailed for Ithaca again ;
Ere among the isles of Greece
Went Jason for the Golden Fleece.

Thou wast sailing o'er the sea,
Brave old voyager, merrily,
Whilst within the forest grew
The tree which made the first canoe.

Daring circumnavigator,
Would thou wert thine own narrator !



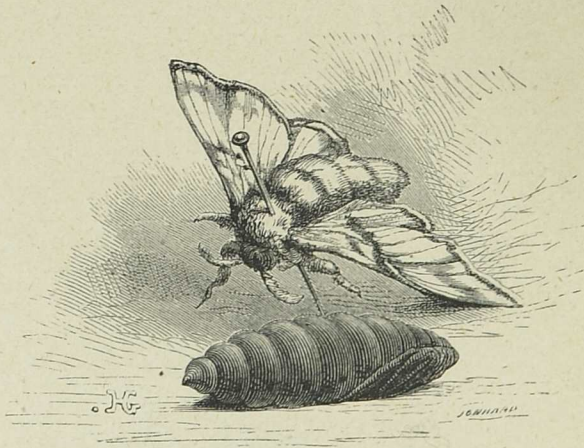


THE SILK-WORM.

SILK-WORM on the mulberry-tree,
Spin a silken robe for me ;
Draw the threads out fine and strong,
Longer yet—and very long ;
Longer yet—'twill not be done
Till a thousand more are spun.
Silk-worm, turn this mulberry-tree
Into silken threads for me !

All day long, and many a day,
Busy silk-worms spin away ;

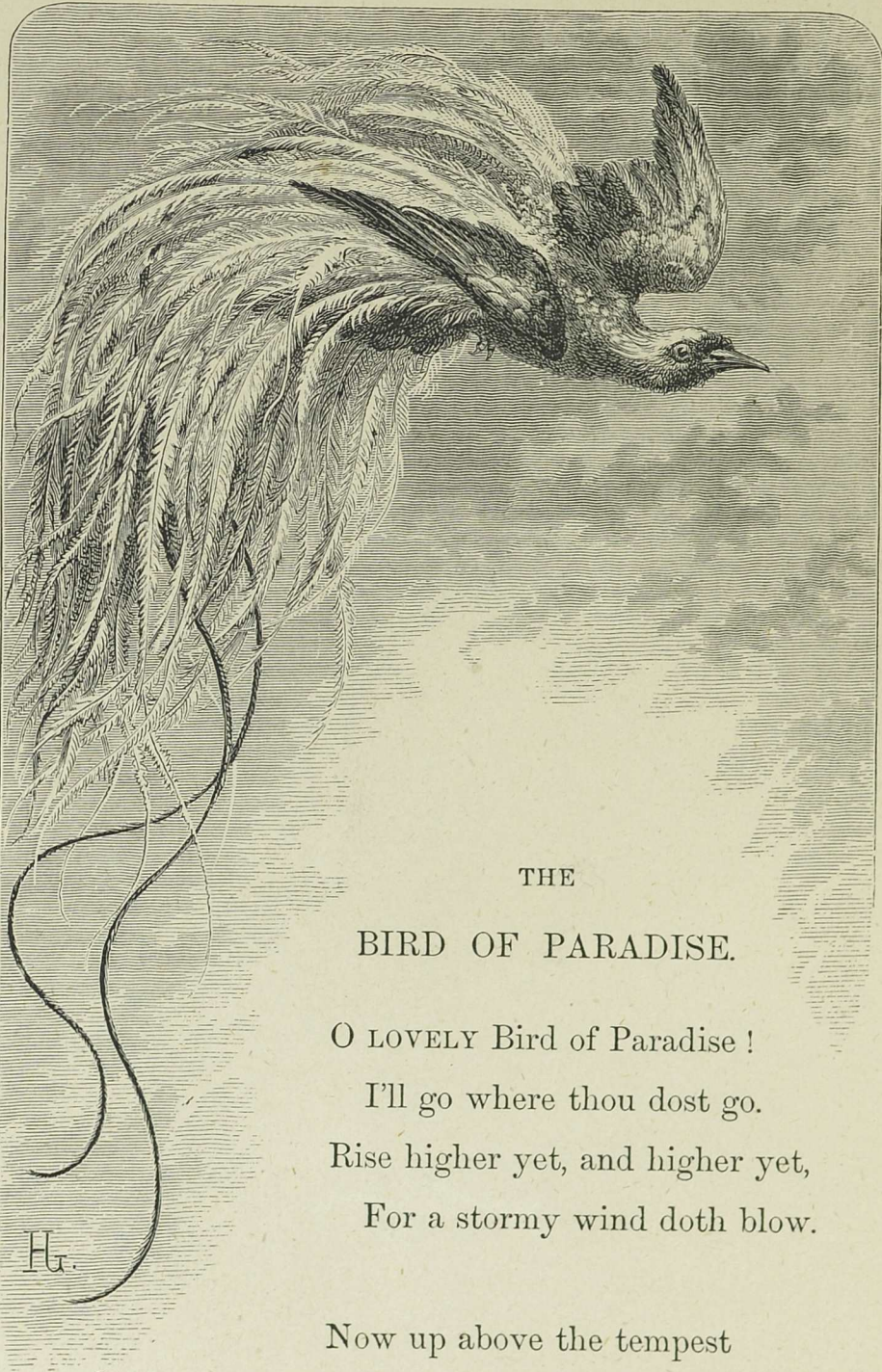
Some are ending, some beginning ;
Nothing thinking of, but spinning !
Well for them ! Like silver light,
All the threads are smooth and bright ;
Pure as day the silk must be,
Woven from the mulberry-tree !



Ye are spinning well and fast ;
'Twill be finished all at last.
Twenty thousand threads are drawn,
Finer than the finest lawn !
And as long, this silken twine,
As the equinoctial line !
What a change ! The mulberry-tree
Turneth into silk for me !

Spinning ever ! now 'tis done,
Silken threads enough are spun !
Spinning, they will spin no more—
All their little lives are o'er !
Pile them up—a costly heap !—
Each in his coffin gone to sleep !
Silk-worm on the mulberry-tree,
Thou hast spun and died for me !





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,

Amidst 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 !

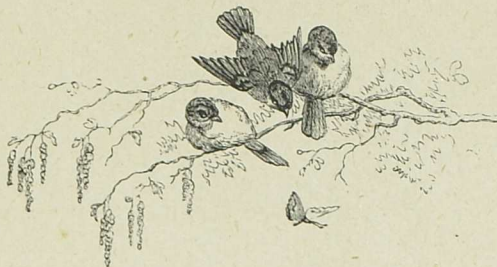


Oh ! take me, take me to it,
Wherever it may be,—
For far into the sunshine
I'll fly away with thee !

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 !





THE FOX.

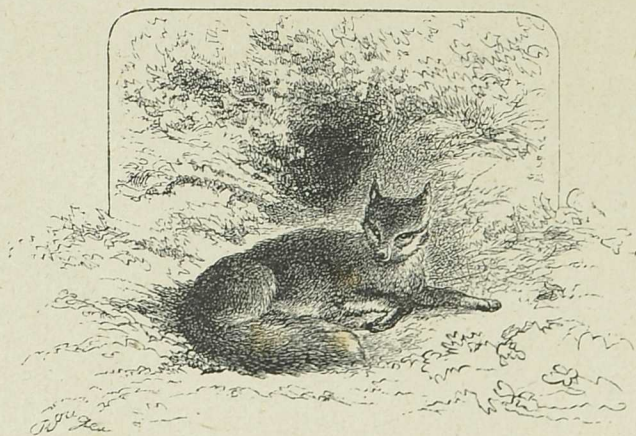
In the rugged copse, in the ferny brake,
The cunning red Fox his den doth make ;
In the ancient turf of the baron's land,
Where the gnarlèd oaks of the forest stand ;
In the widow's garden lone and bare ;
On the hills which the poor man tills with
care :

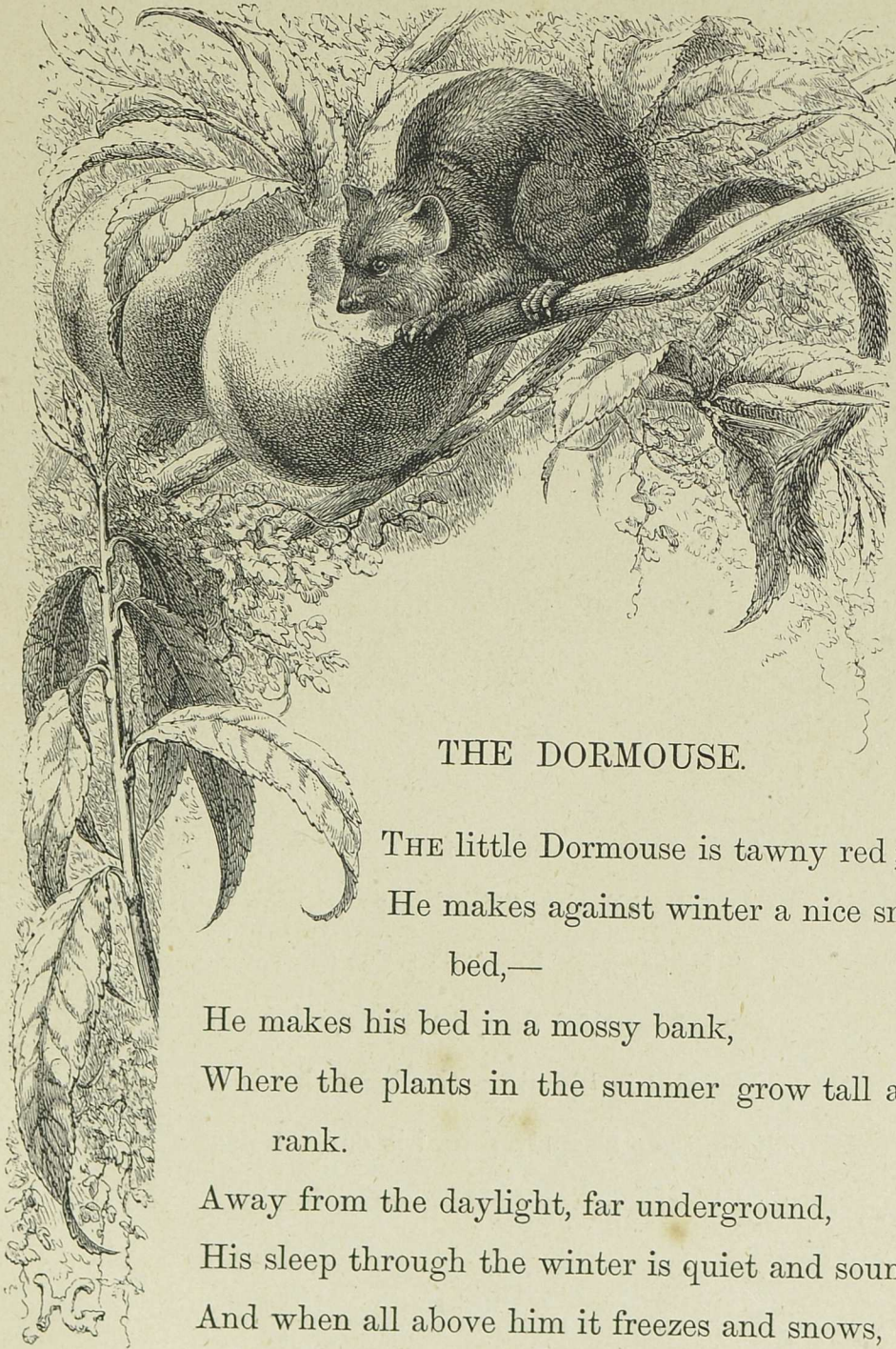
There ages ago he made his den,
And there he abideth in spite of men.

'Tis a dismal place, for all the floor
With the bones of his prey is covered o'er;
'Tis 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.

At times he steals down to the depth of the wood,
And seizes the partridge in midst of her brood;
And the little gray 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 discover 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 ;
Then they cut off his tail and wave it on high,
Saying, " Here fell the Fox so thievish and sly !
Thus may all the oppressors of poor men die ! "





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.

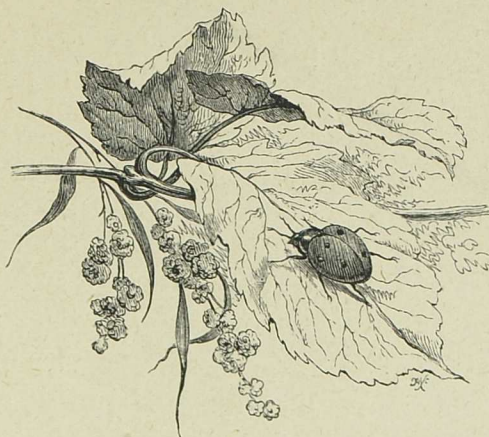
Away from the daylight, far underground,
His sleep through the winter is quiet and sound,
And when all above him it freezes and snows,
What is it to him, for he nought of it knows ?

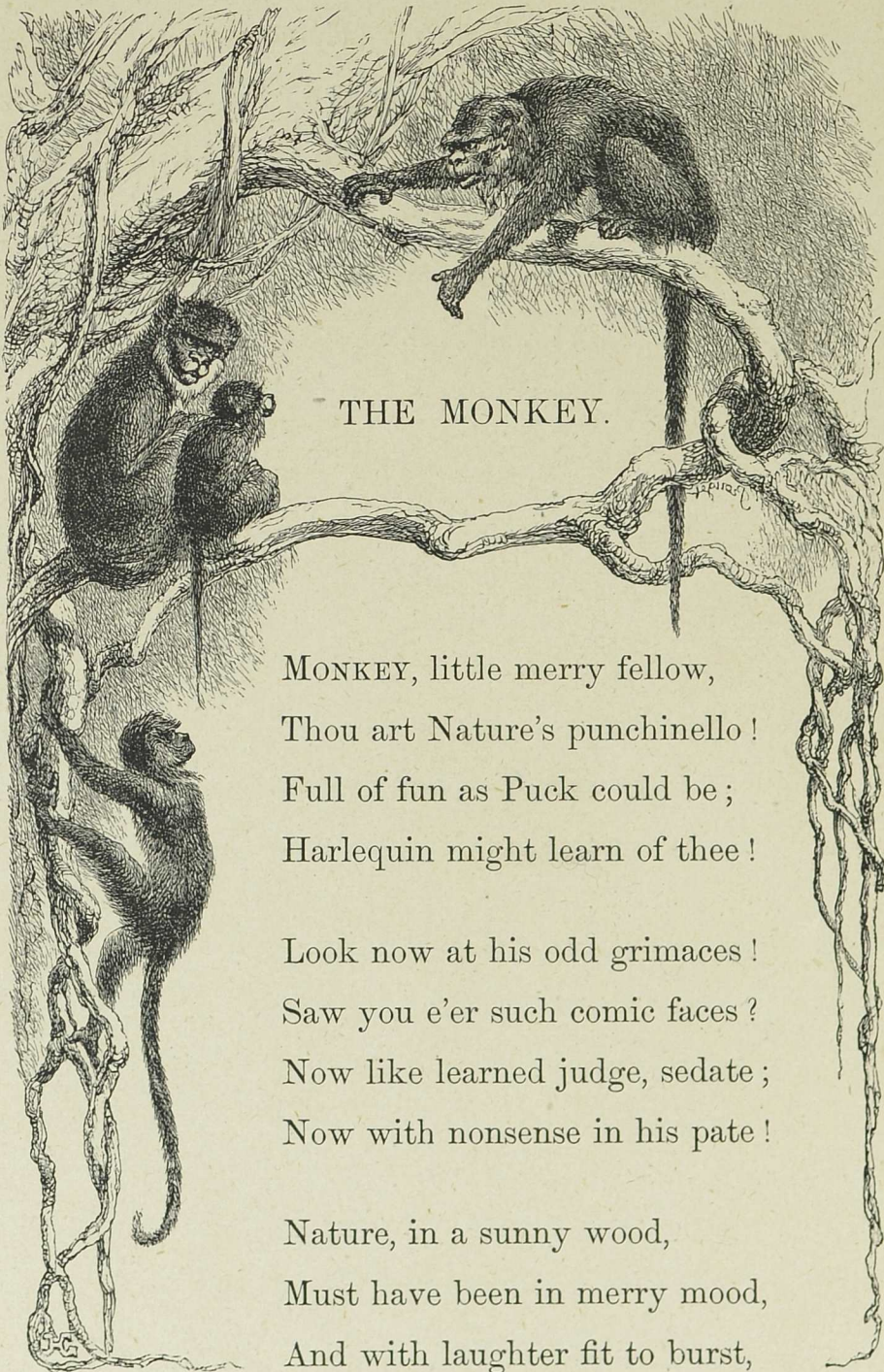
And till the cold time of the winter is gone,
The little Dormouse keeps sleeping on.
But at last, in the fresh breezy days of the spring,
When the green leaves bud, and the merry birds sing,
And the dread of the winter is over and past,
The little Dormouse peeps out at last.



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 his own delight,
Looking down to the earth and up to the sky,
Thinking, "Oh! what a happy Dormouse am I!"





THE MONKEY.

MONKEY, little merry fellow,
Thou art 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 you 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 sat and made a din
Louder than had ever been,



Till the parrots, all a-riot,
Chattered too to keep you quiet ;

THE MONKEY.

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 rollicking about ;
Never keeping in your mind
Drownèd 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 you no traditions,—none,
Of the court of Solomon ?
No memorial how he went
With Prince Hiram's armament ?

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

Look now at him ! Slyly peep :
He pretends to be asleep ;—
Fast asleep upon his bed,
With his arm beneath his head.

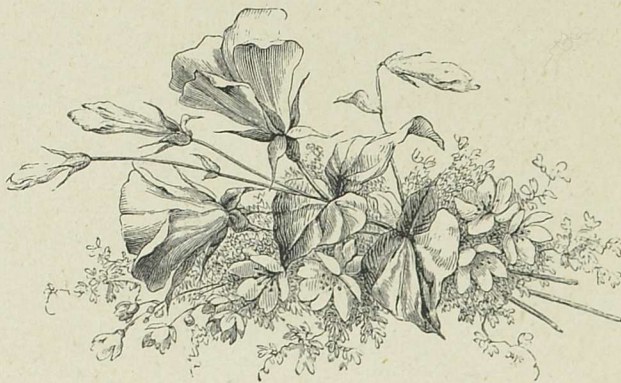
Now that posture is not right,
And he is not settled quite—
There ! that's better than before,
And the knave pretends to snore !

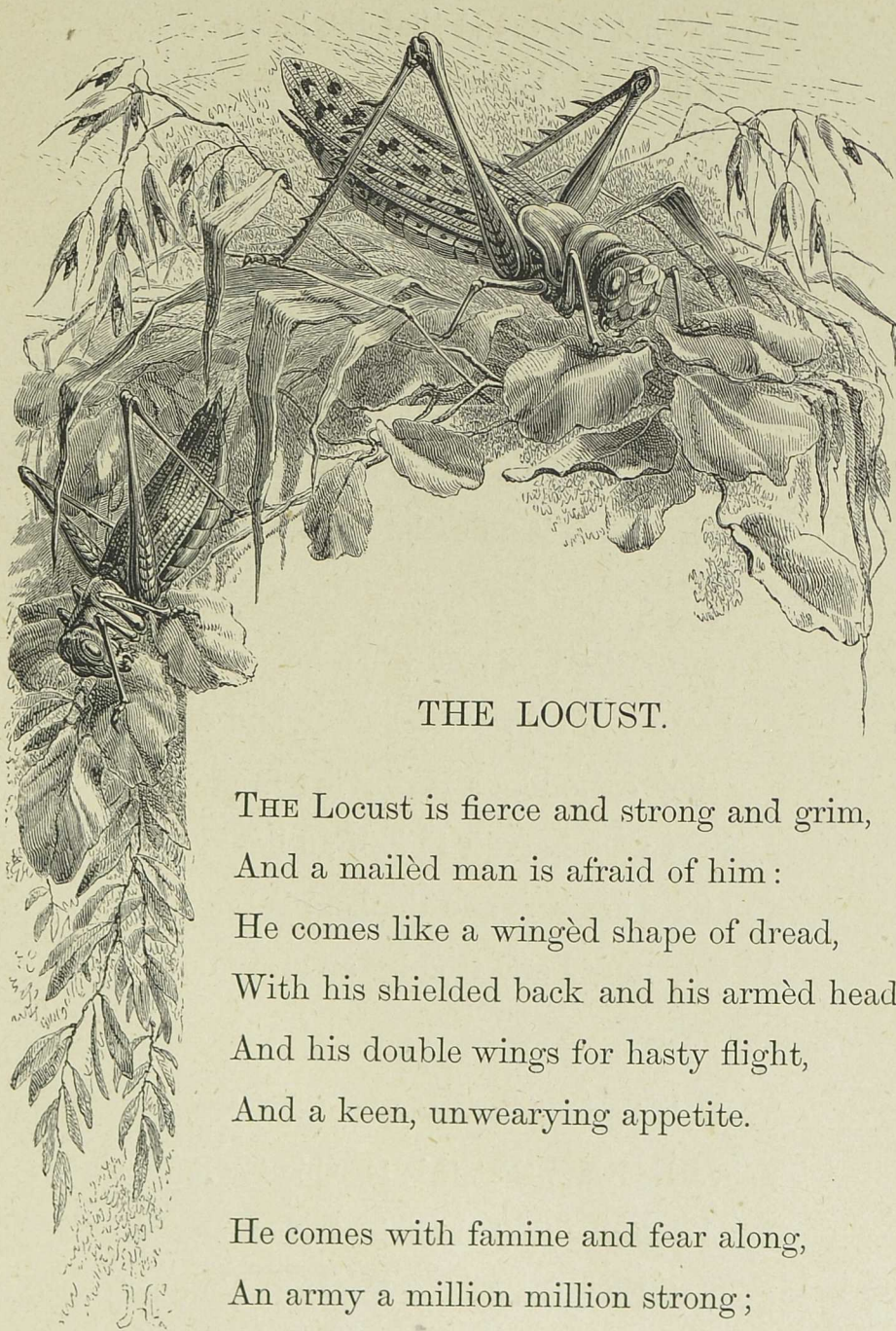
Ha ! he is not half asleep !
See, he slyly takes a peep !
Monkey, though your eyes were shut
You could see this little nut.

THE MONKEY:

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 LOCUST.

THE Locust is fierce and strong and grim,
And a mailèd man is afraid of him :
He comes like a wingèd shape of dread,
With his shielded back and his armèd 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,

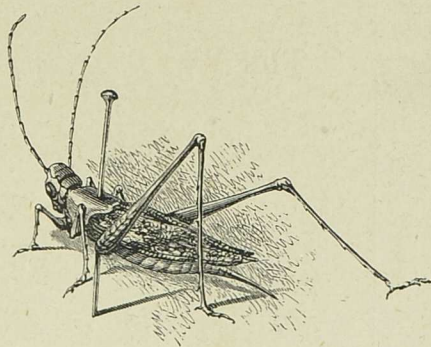
Brought not the dread that the locust brings,
When is heard the rush of their myriad wings.

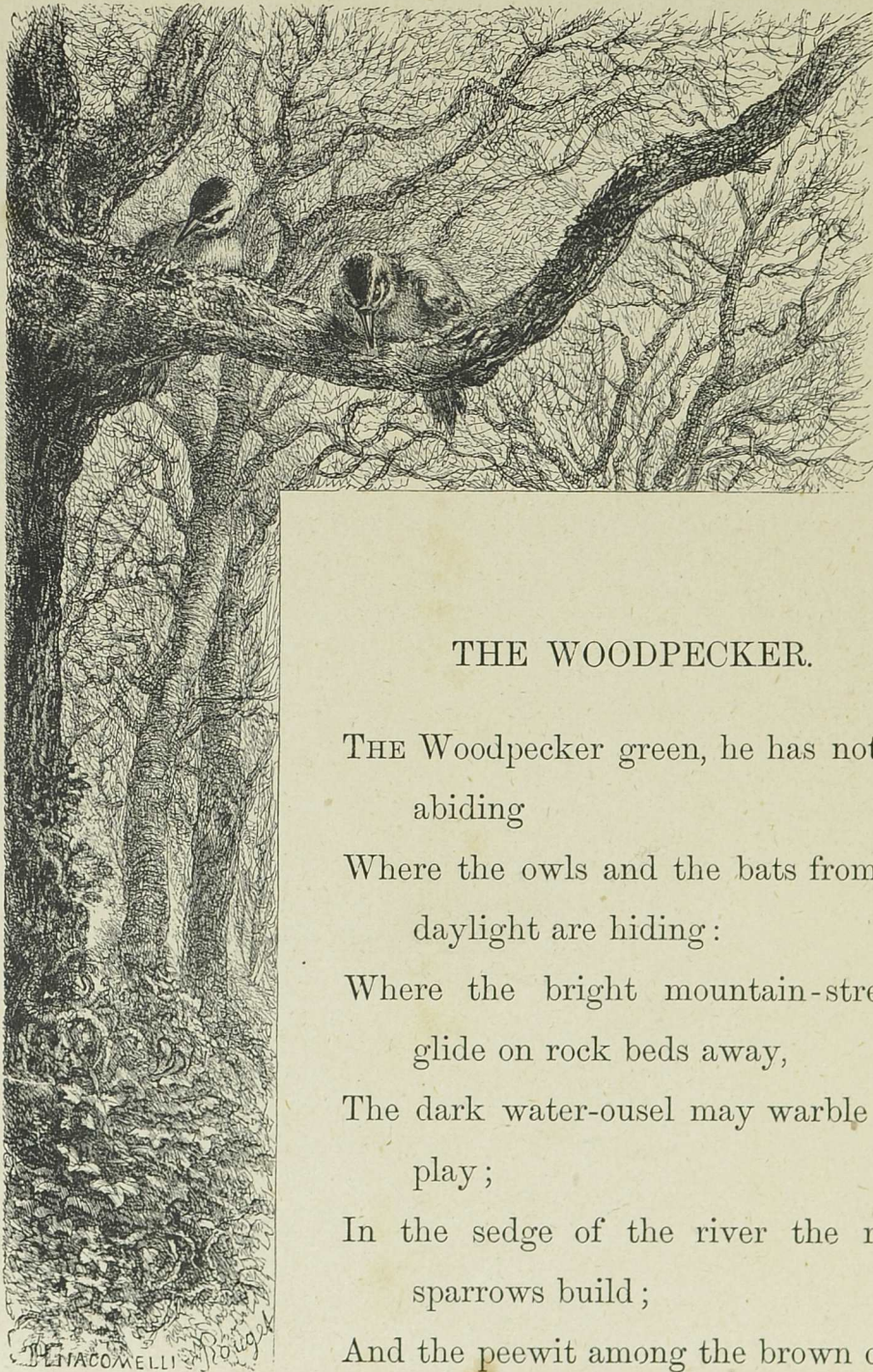
From the deserts of burning sand they speed,
Where the lions roam and the serpents breed,
Far over the sea away, away !
And they darken the sun at noon of day.
Like Eden the land before they find,
But they leave it a desolate waste behind.

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 ;
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 armèd host
Cannot drive the spoiler from out his coast,
And that terror and famine his land await,—
That from north to south 'twill be desolate.

Thus the ravening Locust is strong and grim ;
And what is the sword and the shield 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 WOODPECKER.

THE Woodpecker green, he has not his
abiding

Where the owls and the bats from the
daylight are hiding :

Where the bright mountain-streams
glide on rock beds away,

The dark water-ousel may warble and
play ;

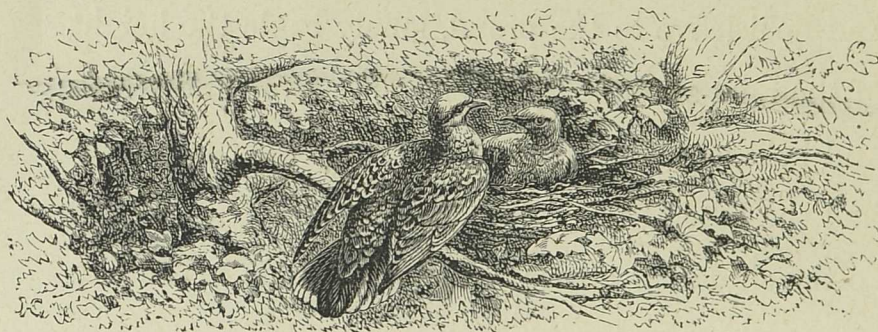
In the sedge of the river the reed-
sparrows build ;

And the peewit among the brown clods
of the field ;

The sea-gull may scream on the breast of the tide ;
On the foam-crested billows the petrel may ride ;
But the Woodpecker asketh nor river nor sea ;
Give him but the old forest, and old forest-tree,
And he'll leave to the proud, lonely eagle the height
Of the mist-shrouded precipice splintered and white ;
And he'll leave to the gorcock the heather and fern,
And the lake of the valley to woodcock and heron ;
To the skylark he'll leave the wide fields of the air,
The sunshine and rainbow ne'er tempted him there.
The greenwood for him is the place of his rest,
And the broad-branching tree is the home he loves best.
Let us go to the haunt of the Woodpecker green—
In those depths of the wood there is much to be seen.

There the wild rose and woodbine weave fairy-land
 bowers,
And the moth-mullein grows with its pale yellow flowers ;
There the hum of the bees through the noonday is heard,
And the chirp, and the cry, and the song of the bird ;
There up the tree-trunk, like a fly on the wall,
To pick the gray moss, runs the tree-creeper small ;
There the wren golden-crested, so lovely to see,
Hangs its delicate nest from the twigs of the tree ;

And there coos the ring-dove—oh, who would not go,
That voice of the wood to hear, dreamy and low!



Yes, come to the wood—to the Woodpecker's tree—
There is joy 'mong the green leaves for thee and for me!

Hark! heard you that laughter so loud and so long?—
Again now!—it drowneth the wood-linnet's song!
'Tis the Woodpecker laughing,—the comical elf!
His soul must be merry to laugh to himself.—
And now we are nearer—speak low—be not heard!
Though he's merry at heart he's a shy, timid bird.
Hark!—now he is tapping the old hollow tree:—
One step further on—now look upward—that's he!
What an exquisite bird!—with his downward-hung head.
With his richly-dyed greens—his pale yellow and red!

On the old gnarled tree-trunk, with its sober-toned gray,
What a beautiful mingling of colours are they !
Ah, the words you have spoken have frightened the
bird—

For by him the lowest of whispers are heard ;
Or a footfall as light as the breezes, that pass
Scarcely bending the flowers, he perceives on the grass.

The squirrel above him may chatter and chide ;
And the purple-winged jay scream on every side ;
The great winds may blow, and the thunder may roll,
Yet fearless the Woodpecker clings to the bole :
But soon as a footstep that's human is heard,
A quick terror springs to the heart of the bird !
For man, the oppressor and tyrant, has made
The free harmless dwellers of nature afraid.

'Neath the fork of the branch, in the tree's hollow
bole,
Creeps the shy, timid Woodpecker into his hole ;
For there is his home in deep privacy hid,
Like a chamber scooped into a far pyramid ;
And there is his mate, as secure as can be,
And his little young Woodpeckers, deep in the tree.

And not till he thinks there is no one about,
Will he come to his portal and slyly peep out ;
And then, when we're up at the end of the lane,
We shall hear the old Woodpecker laughing again.





LITTLE LAMB AND LITTLE CHILD.

TO L. E. S.

LITTLE Lamb and little Child !
Inexperienced and mild,
Full of gambols, gay and wild,
Innocent and undefiled :—
God, the Saviour, when on earth,
Lamb in nature, child by birth,
Gave to you immortal worth !

LITTLE LAMB AND LITTLE CHILD.

Little Lamb, without a stain,
Thou, the Pascal, suffered'st pain,
For the ancient Hebrew slain,
As a type of man's great gain—
When the Lamb, the Lamb of God,
Scourged and mocked at, and unshod,
To the height of Calvary trod.

Little Child, before whose sight
Sport the denizens of light,
And whose angel, clothed in white,
Sees the Father Infinite ;
Thou to us a type art given,
Of the spirit cleansed and shriven,
Love-indwelling, meet for heaven !



N O T E S.

PAGE 28.—*Ormuz*: a seaport in Persia, famous for its pearl-fishery. It is mentioned by Milton.—*Damascene ware*: Damascus, in Syria, has always been famous for its production of rare silks and other stuffs.—*Simoom*: a hot wind of fearful intensity, identical with the “Khamsin” of Egypt and the “Sirocco” of Southern Europe.

PAGE 50.—*Linn*: a Scotticism for a waterfall.

PAGE 52.—*Northern lights*—that is, the Aurora Borealis.

PAGE 69.—*Petits maîtres*—that is, fops.

PAGE 70.—*Paganini* was a violinist of great ability, who, some years ago, attained an extraordinary popularity.

PAGE 74.—*Jarvies*. The drivers of hackney-coaches were formerly so called.

PAGE 75.—*The merle, the mavis*—that is, the blackbird, and the thrush.

PAGE 80.—*Cayman, or caiman*: a species of alligator.

PAGE 81.—*Campanero*: the bell-bird, so named from the peculiar bell-like sound of his monotonous song.

PAGE 117.—*Brake, or bracken*: the common fern.

PAGE 144.—*Calamus beds*: beds of the marsh-growing reed, known as Sweet-flag.

PAGE 150.—*Puck* and *Robin Goodfellow* are really one and the same

individual,—a mischievous fairy, whose delight it was to tease the housewife and her household, before Fairyland was done away with.—See Shakspeare's "Midsummer-Night's Dream."

PAGE 151.—*Pixy*: a name given to the fairies of Devonshire.—*Lares*: the household gods of the ancient Romans.

PAGE 153.—*Lick*: an Americanism for a salt-marsh.

PAGE 158.—*Young Tobias*. The story of Tobit and his Dog forms one of the books of the Apocrypha.—*Ecbatane*, or *Ecbatana*, an ancient city in Persia.—*The Tigris*: a great river in South-western Asia.

PAGE 160.—*Homer's story*—that is, the Odyssey, which relates the adventures of Ulysses (or Odysseus) on his return to Ithaca, his kingdom, after the siege of Troy. When the king reached his palace-threshold, none recognized him but his faithful dog.

PAGES 162, 163.—*Mastodon*, *Megalonyx*, *Mammoth*: colossal animals of the order Mammalia, which are supposed to have lived upon Earth immediately prior to the creation of Man.

PAGE 172.—*Runnymede*: the meadow on the bank of the Thames, near Windsor, where the English barons assembled, and compelled King John to sign the Great Charter of the liberties of England.

PAGE 175.—*Surrey and his Geraldine*: the poet-Earl of Surrey, in love with the Lady Geraldine Fitzgerald. He was beheaded by order of Henry VIII.

PAGE 181.—*Jason for the Golden Fleece*. One of the old Greek stories represents Jason as the first voyager, and describes his expedition to Colchis in quest of the treasure of the Golden Fleece. The story forms the subject of a poem by a living poet, William Morris.

PAGE 189.—*Thus sung an Eastern poet*. It was supposed that Birds of Paradise never touched earth, but lived out their lives in the "translucent air."

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HOWITT, M.B.

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