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TAYLOR, JANE
LINNET'S ...
1822

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Christina Duff Stewart

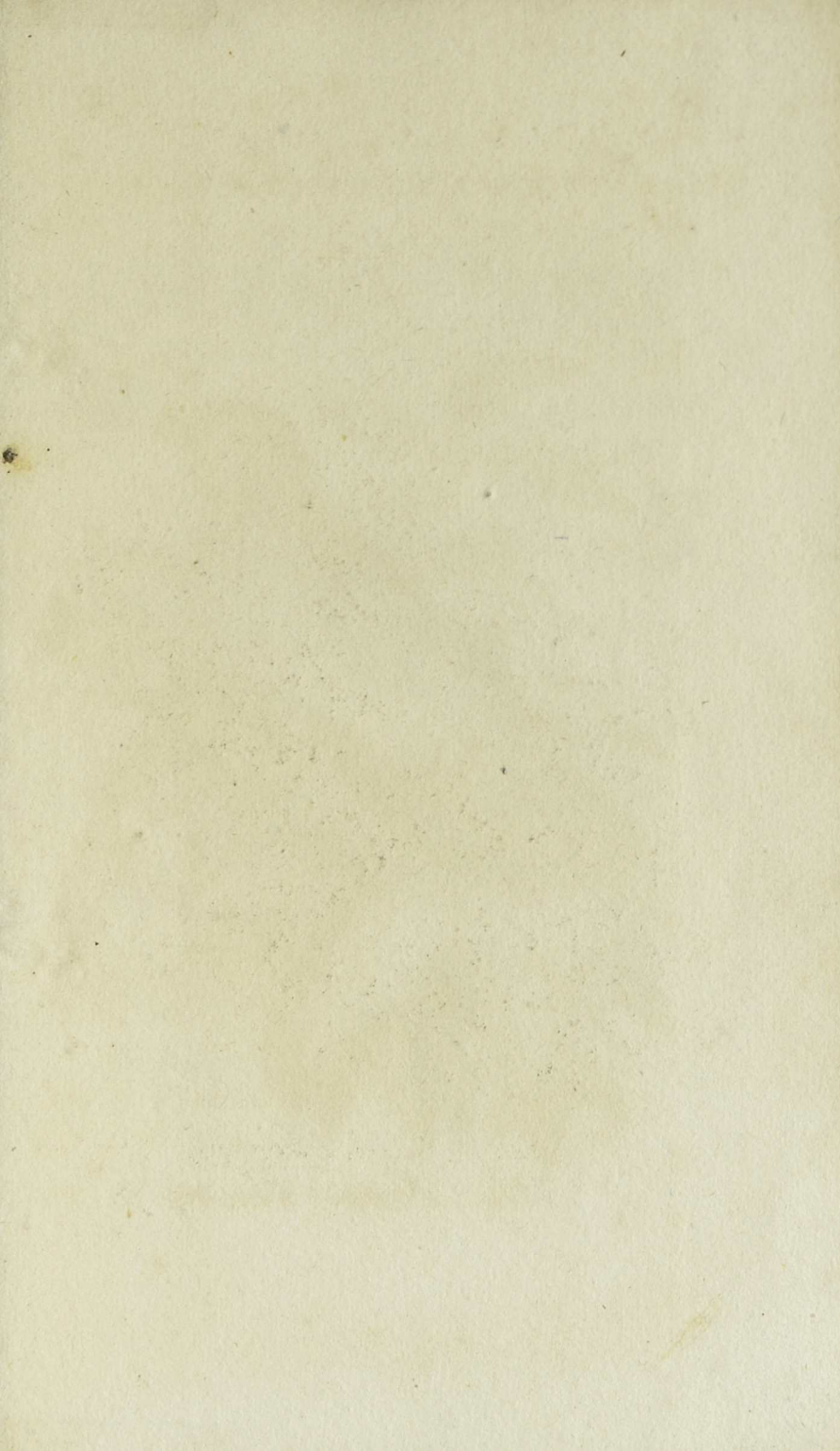
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FRONTISPIECE.



The Linnet himself.

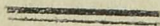
THE
LINNET'S LIFE.



TWELVE POEMS

WITH

A COPPER PLATE ENGRAVING TO EACH.



LONDON:

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1822.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE LINNET.

THE Linnet is a neat elegant bird, about the size of a Sparrow, but much more slender and handsome in its shape. Its upper parts are brown; its under parts of a reddish white; but none of its colours are splendid. Its want of gaudiness is well made up by the sweetness of his song, and its rich variety. Its manners are gentle and docile.

Seeds are its food: linseed, from which it has its name, is its favourite.

THE LINNET HIMSELF.

COME, sweet warbler, cheer the grove
With thy soft mellifluous singing ;
Much to listen there I love,
Much thy dulcet tones approve,
Thoughts of peace and quiet bringing.

I have heard thee, prison'd fast,
Pour thy little soul in pleasure,
Quite forgetful of the past,
Making now one tone to last,
Thrilling then in quickest measure.

I have seen thee in thy cage,
Fluttering, threat'ning, feebly swelling,
Peck that hand, with panting rage,
Which with fondness does engage
To supply thy prison dwelling.

See, she brings thy favourite seed,
 Constant as the mornings follow ;
 Cock thy little eye and feed,
 Crack the shell, adroitly freed,
 Then the luscious kernel swallow.

There are gayer birds, 'tis true,
 On the mossy branches glittering
 Gold or scarlet, green or blue,
 Let them flit the woodlands through,
 But their song to thine is twittering.

Gay attire may catch the eye,
 Vanity and pride inspiring,
 But no dress of costly dye
 Draws out love and sympathy ;
 Only transient cold admiring.

How, then, let me well inquire,
 Can I gain affection truly ?
 Useful virtues I'll acquire,
 To the highest point aspire,
 Then esteem will follow duly.

BROODING.

QUIET on thy lonely seat,
 Spreading wide thy pinions gay ;
 What confines thy nimble feet,
 Linnet, why not flit away ?

Hush ! no noise, but gently steal
 One short peep, nor broadly stare :
 For her embrio offspring's weal,
 Anxious she, with mother's care.

Half this noise at other time
 Would affright the little fool ;
 Now how near she lets you climb,
 Loath to leave her eggs to cool.

View that curious frame, her nest ;
 Roots, and velvet moss, and hay ;
 Hair and downy feathers prest,
 Fastened on the forked spray.

II.



Brooding.

Would you view her tiny eggs ?

Do not scare her from her toil ;
She will stretch her cramped legs,
Seeking food a little while.

There, five whitish, bluish things,

Spotted brown the bigger end ;

Soft the lining, and her wings

Safe from every blast defend.

Ah ! my child, just so did I

Show my little babe such care—

Watching o'er your infancy,

Like the patient Linnet there.

FEEDING HER YOUNG.

How many plants, we call them weeds,
 Against our wishes grow ;
 And scatter wide their various seeds
 With all the winds that blow.

Man grumbles when he sees them rise
 To foul his husbandry ;
 Kind Providence this way supplies
 His lesser family.

Scattered and small, they 'scape our eye,
 But are not wasted there ;
 Safe they in clefts and furrows lie,
 The little birds find where.

Afar the mother bird has flown,
 O'er hill and dale, and field,
 To furrows new, and hedges known
 The favourite food to yield.



Feeding her Young.

Not her own hunger does she feed ;
 Safe in her slender bill
 She brings her prize, whate'er her need,
 Her callow young to fill.

Wide gaping every beak appears,
 All mouth, each chirping loud,
 The fluttering mother gladly hears,
 Of growing nestlings proud.

To each in turn, with equal care,
 The precious morsel's brought ;
 The gobbling throat the welcome share
 Engulphs as soon as caught.

Again the clamorous brood demand
 More, with impatient cry ;
 Again she seeks the distant land,
 Her catering skill to try.

Delighted they each meal devour,
 Delighted she bestows ;
 Who's happiest in that happy hour,——
 Mamma, who tries, best knows.

BIRD'S-NESTING BOYS.

CAN it then be, that such a face,
 Gleaming with health and mother's care,
 Should tear the bird's-nest from its place ;
 Destroy the tiny callow race,
 Or break the precious eggs, of beauty rare.

Would you, my boy, such ruin bring
 Upon the fondling fluttering bird ?
 Sweep home and offspring from their wing ;
 Why surely 'tis a cruel thing—
 To call it fun or pastime is absurd.

Think you the birds no feelings know ?
 Nay, watch their anxious constant care ;
 Laborious when to build they go,
 Both day and night close sitting so ;
 Admire th' affection of the little pair.



Boys after the Nest.

And when their eggs to burst begin,
 And little beaks to chirp aspire,
 They help the struggling lump within
 Its new-born liberty to win,
 And shake the prisoning shell away entire.

How pleased they seem, of nestlings proud,
 The brood all hatched, completely free ;
 Twittering, they tell their joys aloud,
 A thousand feelings on them crowd,
 As round they skim, and round, all full of glee.

And would you come, as giant thief,
 And needlessly deep ruin bring ?
 Their happy bosoms pierce with grief,
 Parents and young, beyond relief ?
 Nay, think, it surely is a cruel thing.

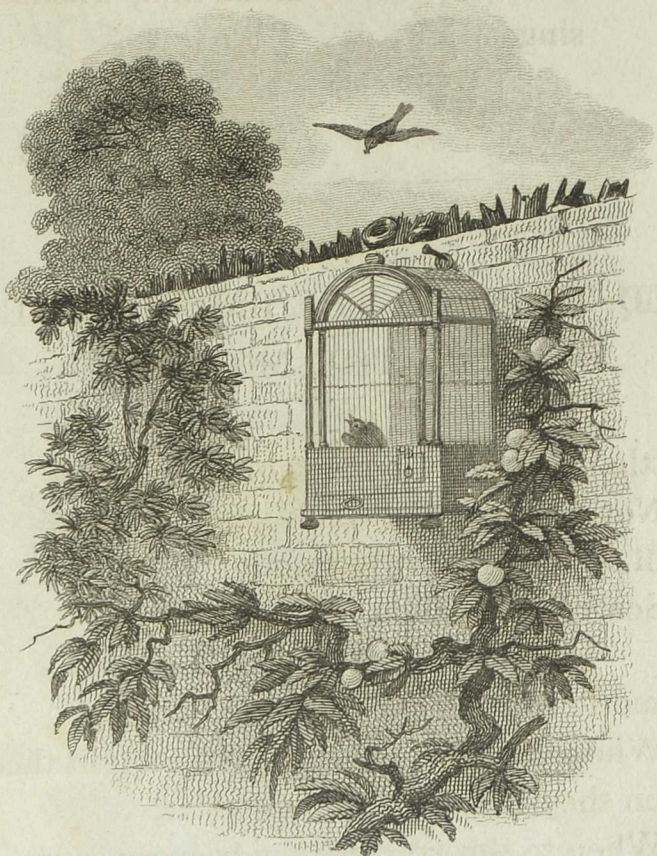
When once a fever laid you low,
 Threatening your life from day to day,
 I felt, like them, heart-rending woe ;
 Yet this was only one, you know,
 But you would tear the whole of them away.

Ah, spare them, let them life enjoy,
Grow, learn to spread their fluttering wing.
It can't be pleasure to destroy,
But will be, when next spring, my boy
Shall hear them sweetly thank him, when they
sing.

FED THROUGH THE BARS OF THE
CAGE BY THE MOTHER.

Little prisoner, thou art young,
Not aware of thy condition ;
Still the mossy sprays among,
Scarcely dost thou feel submission.

Some few flutterings rose from fear,
When the grasping hand had caught thee ;
Soon they vanished, all was clear,
When to this retreat they brought thee.



Fed in its Cage.

When thy mother's well-known cry
 Came within thy distant hearing,
 Cowering for her known supply,
 Thou didst welcome her appearing.

See, she comes thy food to bring,
 Her own life or freedom venturing ;
 See her to thy lattice cling,
 Seeking for some way of entering.

Strong affection guides her way,
 All her labours well repaying ;
 Feeding thee the live-long day,
 Care and tenderness displaying.

Thou hast store of dainty seed,
 Nibble, thou wilt easy shell it :
 Well supplied thy every need,
 Let a chirping quaver tell it.

Since, though now she's sure to come,
 Soon, her fond affection ceasing,
 She will o'er the fallows roam,
 All her own caprices pleasing.

True, their love and care are strong,
 While their love and care are needed ;
 But they do not last them long,
 Grown—they are no longer heeded.

Now should master Linnet strive,
 At their former kindness aiming,
 Pecked and beat, away they'd drive,
 Nor regard his hungry claiming.

Ah, my children ! when shall I
 Cease my love and anxious caring ?
 Each new stage of life you try,
 Sets me watching, doing, bearing.

Ne'er shall our connexion cease,
 Though in life you may form other ;
 Rather will it thus increase ;
 Still shall I be found your mother.

GIVEN TO A LITTLE GIRL.

Miss Lucy at home, Ma'am? I hear she is good,
 Obedient and docile, and learns very well;
 I see she is never obtrusive or rude,
 But modest and careful, and strives to excel.

I've got a small present, I hope it will please,
 A nice little Linnet, a bird of this spring.
 She'll keep it, and carefully nurse it with ease;
 Next year, if not sooner, 'twill whistle and sing.

I thank you, kind Sir, I my daughter will call,
 I am sure you're too good to consider her so;
 The bird's a sweet fellow, and birdcage and all,
 She'll think it a wonderful treasure, I know.

Here, Lucy, see this, dear!—I think I have heard
 A wish oft expressed, when your wishes ran wild,
 To have in your keeping a sweet little bird:
 Your kind friend has brought one, a nice one,
 my child.

Tis not a bold Sparrow, or Tomtit, as you
 Have coveted often, when flitting along :
 Tis a Linnet, an elegant bird, it is true,
 But better, 'tis one of our sweetest for song.

O, Sir, how I thank you ! this pleases indeed ;
 I'll keep it, and feed it, and never forget ;
 O how I shall like it, to see it but feed,
 And hear its sweet singing, but that won't be
 yet.

Mamma ! and I'll give it some milk and some
 bread,
 Each morn from my bason, with pleasure I'll
 spare.—

No, Lucy, your kindness would kill it quite dead ;
 That can't live as you, but with suitable fare.

Then what must I give it ; what only this seed ?
 Dear me, I should hate it, so brown and so
 hard.—

But you are no Linnet, else you'd think, indeed,
 No nicety like it so worthy regard.



Given to Lucy.

But now, my dear Lucy, you take a great charge,
 It is not a mere plaything, now had, now
 laid by ;

Its life's in your keeping, no longer at large,
 If you should neglect it, it quickly would die.

And this is the reason ; with gladness sincere,
 I joy such a present as this has been made :
 I hope it will train you to carefulness, dear ;
 Bring thinking, remembering, to your little
 head.

The volatile, thoughtless, may be very kind,
 Benevolence rule them in all they intend,
 But one sad forget may leave sorrows behind,
 Which deepest repentance can never amend.

Then stop, and consider each morn when you rise,
 What have I to do, what depends upon me :
 Did Mamma give commission, that first I will
 prize ;
 Then rabbits, and Linnet, my care shall all see.

PERCHED ON THE FINGER.

Saucy fellow, on thy perch,
Perking round thy lively eye ;
What's the object of thy search ?
Is't the wonted nicety ?

Come, thy piece of sugar see,
Take it from these lips of mine ;
Thou art not afraid of me ;
Take it, wanton, it is thine.

Now a thankful little song,
'Tis thy mistress waits to hear ;
Roll thy warbling notes along,
Quick, and soft, and loud, and clear.

Thou art happy, so am I ;
Quite delighted thus to find,
By familiarity
Thou art conscious I am kind.



Perched on the finger.

There's no pussy in the room,
 I have searched th' apartments through,
 Every hole whence she could come :
 Soon she'd make an end of you.

Pussy cares not for thy song,
 Be it e'er so soft and sweet :
 She would drag thy limbs along,
 Thinking, birds are nice to eat.

Come, for fear of accident,
 Enter to thy safety cage ;
 Though in prison thou art pent,
 Thou art kept from pussy's rage.

Come, Sir ! what, you will not go ;
 You had rather fly at large ?
 So you should, did I not know
 That were faithless to my charge.

My Mamma will often say,
 I know better child than you,
 When I want to break away,
 That's not proper, dear, to do.

So I tell you, flutterer, go,
 I must shut your little door :
 Now you're safe, 'tis fast, I know,
 There regale with luscious store.

Seed and water given thee soon,
 All without thy thought or care ;
 Chickweed, groundsel, in festoon,
 These to thee are dainties rare.

RESCUED FROM PUSS.

Ah! see that tiger of a cat
 Upon his cage has sprung ;
 Whoever would have thought of that,
 So high as it was hung.

Oh! beat her, kill her, wicked puss,
 Before her talons strike,
 How close she clings in spite of us,
 I never saw the like.



Rescued from Puffs.

See what a scratch she's given me
 Because I went to pull ;
 It bleeds from end to end you see ;
 I'll come and crack her scull.

She is so fierce, I never thought,
 When she so fondly purs,
 That she would scratch me so, for nought ;
 What wicked tricks of hers !

Ah ! now she's off, how glad am I,
 Drive, drive her out of doors :—
 Now I'm afraid my Dick will die ;
 See how he pants, and cowers.

My pretty linnet I would stroke,
 My bosom should caress ;
 But fear my kindness would provoke,
 Not make thy panting less.

Oh ! how I wish the race of cats
 Were murdered every one !—
 Then who would catch our mice and rats ?
 That must not sure be done !

No, Lucy, she has acted but
 As natural to do :
 So watch, and keep the doors all shut,
 With double care from you.

The Sparrows oft you see her catch ;
 You pity them, tis true ;
 But do not blame her, as a wretch
 To whom all rage is due.

That this was yours how could she tell,
 She did not see you near ;
 And as to all its singing well,
 She's ignorant, my dear.

I'm glad your pretty linnet's safe,
 For your sake, and for his ;
 But don't in needless anger chafe,
 That very sinful is.

GETTING AWAY.

Mamma ! mamma ! my bird is flown,
Alas ! what shall I do ?
It slipped out while its seed was blown,
And then away it flew.

It never served me so before,
And when upon my hand,
Though it would flutter towards the door,
It came at my command.

But when you took it on your hand,
You closed the window first ;
You then was not afraid to stand
All free, for come he must.

Yet, you have seen him strive to fly,
And gain the garden groves ;
'Twas natural he should ever try
To wander where he loves.

A silly bird, encaged as he
 Has been his whole life thro',
 He knows not where his food should be ;
 He soon will long for you.

The other birds will peck and tear,
 A stranger bird they hate ;
 Of feathers they will pluck him bare,
 And wound his little pate.

Hark ! what a quarrel : they have found
 The interloper out ;
 See how they gather clustering round,
 All hunting him about.

Had he grown up among them, there,
 With nestlings of his age,
 His presence had been nothing rare,
 To rouse their selfish rage.

Nor is his strength like theirs to fight,
 Not practised he in wars :
 Sometimes your finger he would bite,
 Between the wiry bars.



Getting away.

Ah, Lucy! should you lose your bird,
 You'll gain a lesson good;
 More lasting than a mother's word,
 And better understood.

This cage was his paternal home,
 You was his mother kind;
 'Mong all he meets where he may roam,
 None other will he find.

Ah! had I seen my Lucy so,
 And thought those screams were thine:—
 What your own sufferings you might know,
 But could not guess at mine.

CAUGHT AGAIN.

Mamma, I have caught him, and got him safe
 quite,

O how at his linseed he flew :

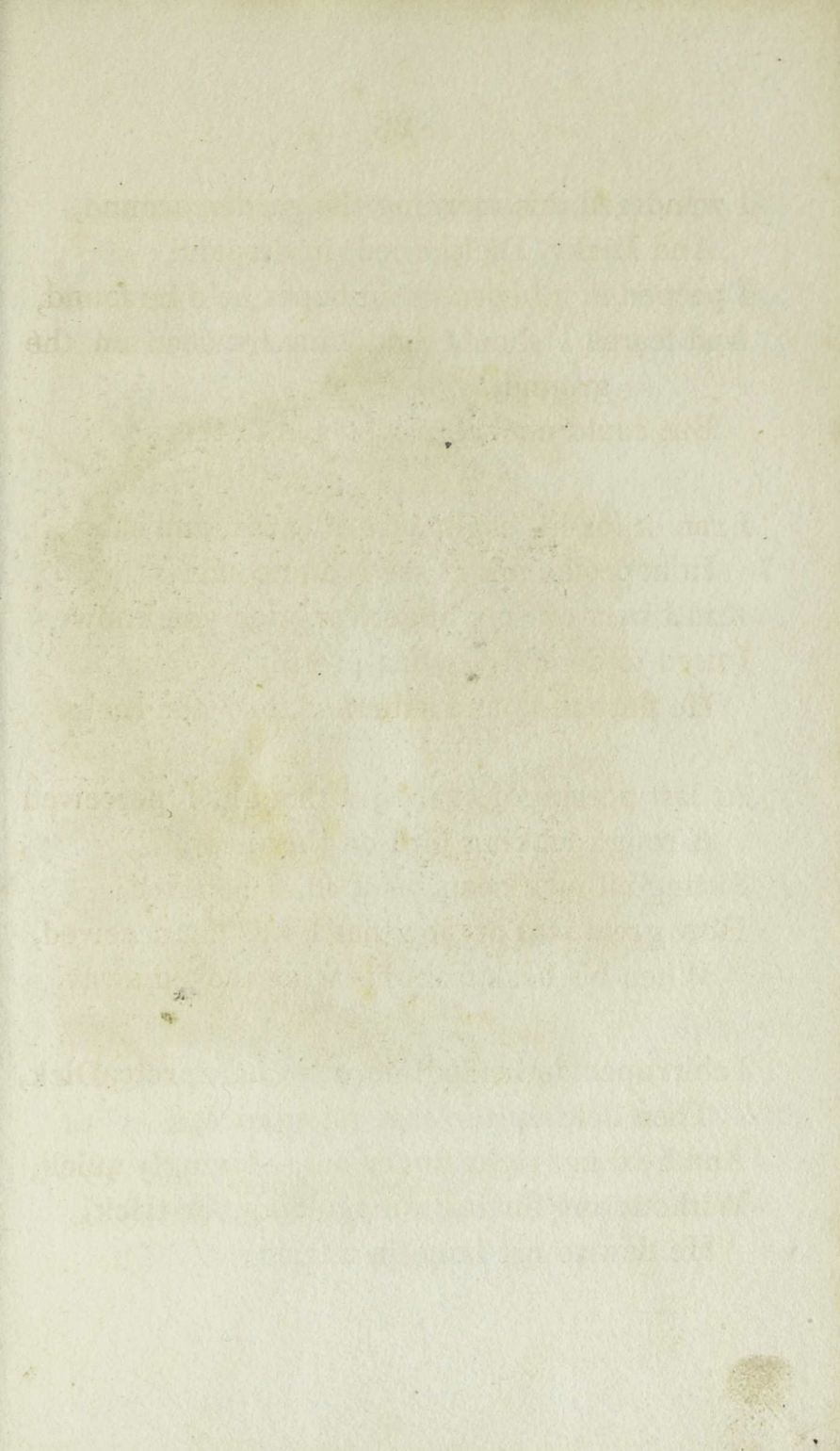
I don't think he got at a morsel all night,
 In all the long day he was too much in fright ;
 I think he's half starv'd, do not you?

I wandered this morning the garden around,
 And Dicky, Dick, cried, in despair ;
 I peeped in all corners, in hopes he'd be found,
 And feared I should find him lie dead on the
 ground,
 But could not see aught of him there.

I ran in for his cage, just to carry, and show,
 In hopes he might see it and come.
 And I held out my finger, as often you know
 I used to do daily, when prettily so
 He fluttered, and skimmed thro' the room.

At last peering upwards, I thought I perceived
 A rough looking bird on the spray,
 Sitting all in a heap, as if ill, I believed ;
 How great was my joy that I was not deceived,
 When his beak from his wing moved away.

I chirruped, and called him ; come here pretty Dick,
 Then held up the cage all so nice,
 And held my right finger out, — lovingly quick,
 Without any flirting, or scolding, or trick,
 He flew to my hand in a trice.





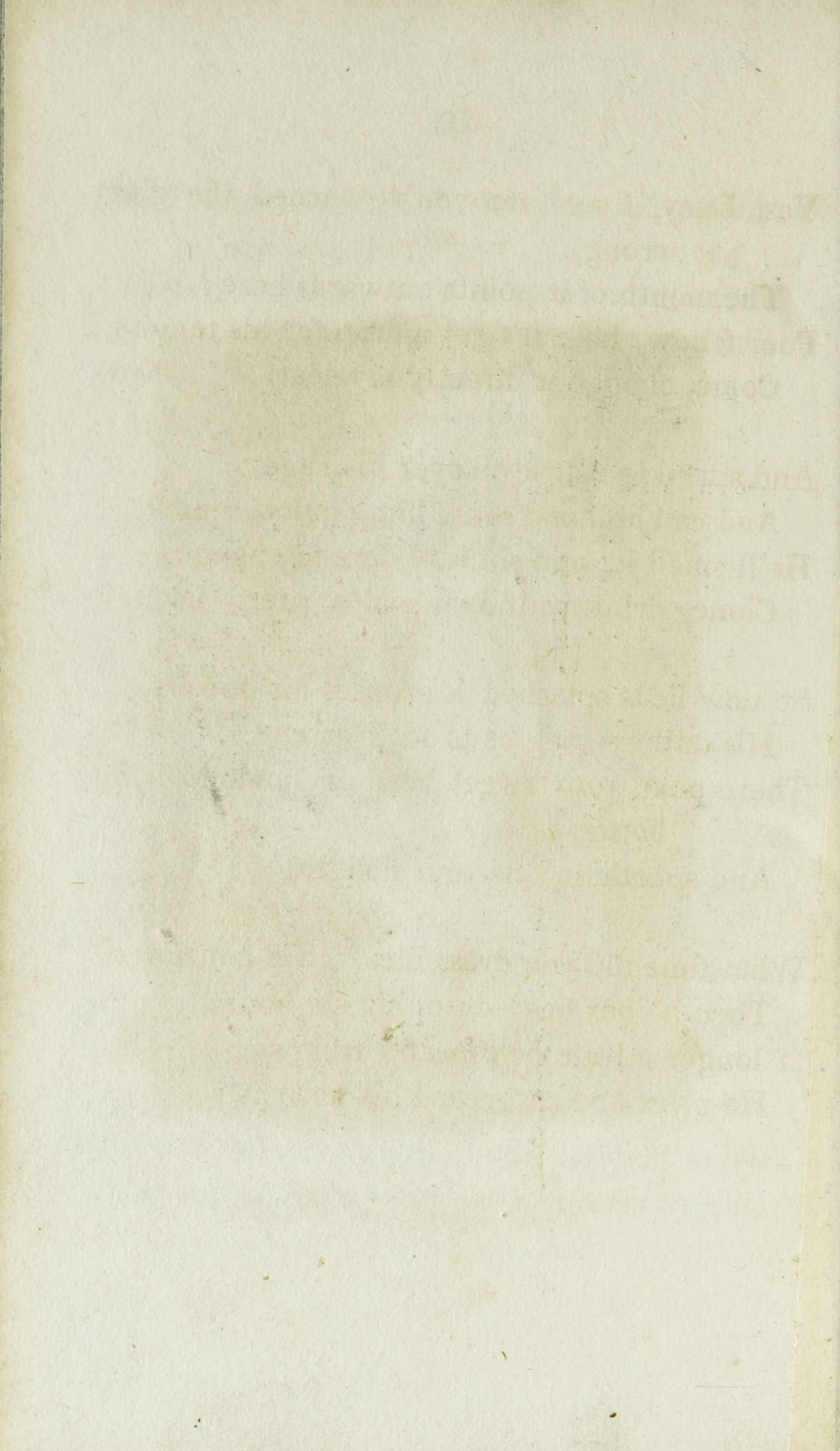
Caught again.

I had got the cage open, and popped him insure,
 Saw well that I fastened the door ;
 Quite glad that he yielded, and came to the lure,
 Then had a good cry, when I coaxed, and said poor,
 Poor Dickey, you sha'nt do so more.

I don't think he minded my crying a bit,
 Tho' it was all for love, and for joy.
 It was rather ungrateful, mamma, was not it ?
 He might have said thank you, in some manner fit,
 But self was his only employ.

To eat and to drink was his only desire,
 So cracking and sipping he stood ;
 Nor minded my finger, when brushing the wire ;
 I thought his poor beak must with nibbling it tire,
 But all he regarded was food.

Aye, hunger will bring down the wantonest breast
 And even the fiercest will tame :
 It has made many wanderers come back to their
 nest,
 Their follies forsaken, their crimes all confess,
 With sorrow, compunction, and shame.



Yes, Lucy, I see! but you've turned the glass
wrong,

The mouth of it points outwards here ;
Poor fellow, he can't get a drop for his tongue,
Come, change it directly my dear.

And sprinkle a little all over his cage,
And call him and rouse him, quick, quick,
He'll smell it, and sip it, I dare to engage ;
Come, drink your own health, pretty Dick.

So now he is splashed it arouses his powers,
His dull eye begins to look bright ;
There poke your sweet head in, and sip it for
hours,
And spurtle it, 'tis your delight.

What time did you dress him ? Six hours ago.
Then he has been drooping six hours.
If longer a little he'd been sitting so,
He ne'er had recovered his powers.

How would you have felt, when to-morrow
you'd come,

The pitiful subject to view.

Dickey dead, and stretched out, and his sweet
piping dumb ;

And dead by your carelessness too.

My love, 'tis not merely the doing the thing,
Should satisfy sensible minds.

The miss of a pin, or a horse-nail, may bring
Sad mischief, as every day finds.

The careless may robbers and murderers be ;

'Tis shocking such terms to employ :

A door left unlocked, then the thief may make
free,

And loaded guns left, may destroy.

There are evils in life which we cannot avoid,

And sorrows no care can prevent :

We bear this with patience, tho' comfort's
destroyed

Are trials, from high heaven sent.

But when our own foolishness mingles regret,
 More pungent the sorrow must be ;
 If I'd been more careful, we'd had that joy yet,
 The loss of it's owing to me !

BURIED UNDER THE CHERRY TREE.

The linnet was one morning found,
 Stretched out upon his floor :
 They warmed him, turned him round and
 round
 But Dick could hop no more.

For two full years he had been blind,
 Yet groping well about,
 His seed and water he could find,
 Nay find his groundsel out.

This summer feeble was his strain ;
 He had no heart to sing ;
 He grumbled something, but in vain,
 No music could he bring.

Still was he tended with the care
 Which crowned his better days :
 Tho' useless now, with kindness rare,
 They still would coax and praise.

Lucy's kind heart, tho' woman grown,
 Would daily dress his cage :
 No want of comfort had he known ;
 He died of sheer old age.

Give it the cat, would some have said,
 When he began to fail :
 Hard are their hearts, and dull their head,
 Where self can so prevail.

Now woman grown,—yes, fifteen years,
 A double length of life
 Her care had given him ; changed her fears,
 As mother, and as wife.

Her little linnets, dearer still
 Than Dick had ever been ;
 Were by her trained for him to feel,
 And take an interest in.



Buried.

They begged that they might dig his grave,
 And make his coffin new ;
 A *wooden tombstone* he shall have,
 For well we loved him too.

Here we go in slow procession,
 Bearing Dickey to his grave :
 True he knows not this expression,
 Sight or sense no more he'll have.

But we yield to our own feelings,
 Love itself will gratify :
 It desires not dull concealings,
 Would not once repress a sigh.

Yes, we loved thee, pretty linnet,
 We've with pleasure heard thee sing ;
 Tho' mamma said little's in it,
 Years ago a sweeter thing.

Memory glows with strong affection,
 When she tries of thee, to speak ;
 Oft we've listened, claimed selection,
 Tell us now of little Dick.

Lay him in his chamber narrow ;
 Press the earth, the tile lay flat :
 Honoured more than any sparrow,
 Safe from claws of pussy cat.

Who at last ourselves will follow?
 We must in the grave be laid.
 Will affection, true or hollow,
 Move them all, when we are dead ?

While I live I'd make all cheerful,
 Of their love and smiles be proud ;
 But should like a funeral tearful,
 Fond affection bursting loud.

