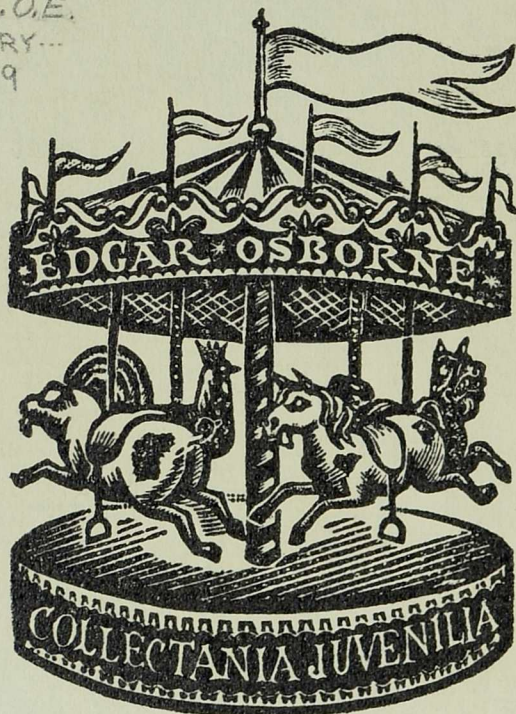


FAIRY FRISKET

OR, PEEPS AT INSECT LIFE



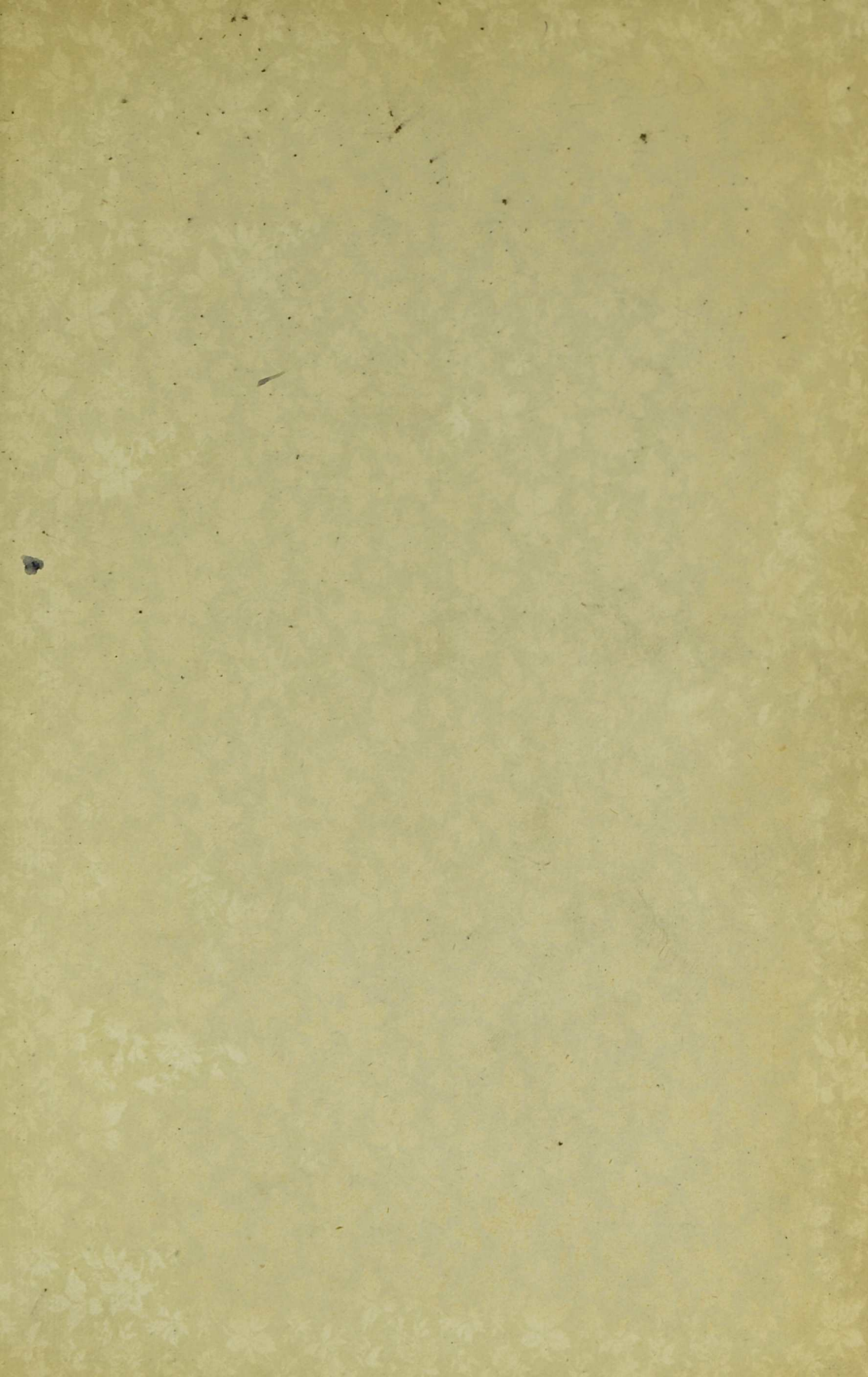
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AN ANT ARMY SURVEYED.

FAIRY FRISKET;

OR,

PEEPS AT INSECT LIFE.

BY

A. L. O. E.,

AUTHOR OF "FAIRY KNOW-A-BIT," "THE GOLDEN FLEECE," "THE GIANT-KILLER,"
"THE ROBY FAMILY," ETC., ETC.




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Preface.

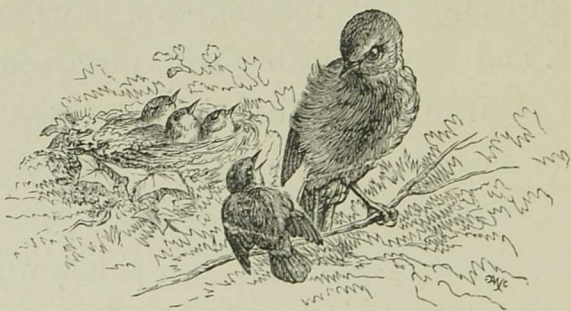


F my young reader have already visited Fairy dell Hall, and passed a few merry hours with Know-a-bit, the learned fay, it is quite a natural thing that an introduction to Fairy Frisket should follow. I need explain to no one where these fairies have come from,—whether they lurk in flower or book, or only in some quiet little nook in the brain of A. L. O. E. My reader will scarcely expect in his walks to see either Know-a-bit or Frisket spring from under a fern-leaf, or sit rocking on a hawthorn spray; but he may, and very probably will, meet some other of the curious creatures described in my little book. It is as well to mention that my own knowledge of the manners and customs of the insects—both winged and wingless—herein described has been chiefly drawn from Knight's "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," and Wood's delightful "Homes without Hands."

As for the two human specimens in the story,—the selfish and the unselfish, the boy who cared for his own

pleasure only, the other who cared for the comfort of others,—they may be found in thousands of homes in our land, they—especially the first—are common enough in Britain, however rare fairies may be. If some spoilt little master have received this small volume amongst other Christmas or New Year presents, I hope that he may have patience to read it to the end; and before he closes the book consider whether he would wish to pass all his days on a nettle-leaf of selfishness, or whether he would not rather—by his deeds, his words, and his example—show that he has undergone a nobler change than that which transforms the creeping caterpillar into a creature of light and beauty.

A. L. O. E.



Contents.

I. THE FAIRY'S VISIT,	...	...	...	...	...	9
II. FAIRY CONVERSE, ...	...	...	...	...	...	17
III. INTO THE WOODS, ...	...	...	...	...	...	30
IV. THE ANT-HILL, ...	...	...	...	...	...	38
V. AMAZONS, ...	...	...	...	...	...	49
VI. THE FAIRY'S OFFER,	...	...	...	...	...	58
VII. FORAGING-ANTS, ...	...	...	...	...	...	65
VIII. FRISKET EXPLORING,	...	...	...	...	...	77
IX. THE BRUSH AND THE WAND,	...	...	...	...	...	85
X. INSIDE THE CITY, ...	...	...	...	...	...	94
XI. THE ANT-LION, ...	...	...	...	...	...	102
XII. BLACK SPOTS, ...	...	...	...	...	...	107
XIII. THE DOCTOR'S VISIT,	...	...	...	...	...	119
XIV. I'D BE A BUTTERFLY,	...	...	...	...	...	126
XV. BUTTERFLIES' MEETING, ...	...	...	...	...	...	139
XVI. ADVENTURES OF A CATERPILLAR, ...	...	...	...	...	...	153
XVII. BORERS, WEAVERS, AND LEAF-ROLLERS,	...	...	...	...	...	160
XVIII. THE LIFE OF A BUTTERFLY,	...	...	...	...	...	166
XIX. A FRIEND IN NEED, ...	...	...	...	...	...	176
XX. THE FAIRY'S MISTAKE,	...	...	...	...	...	188

FAIRY FRISKET.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAIRY'S VISIT.



ARAH—careless Sarah, there's not a doubt of the fact—you quite forgot to shut the window of Squire Philimore's study last evening, and to close the shutters and put up the bar; and anybody that might take a fancy to get into the house could do so with ease. The squire is fast asleep in his big bed, dreaming of hounds and hunting; and Master Philibert fast asleep in his little bed; and all the servants in their different rooms: and so sound is their slumber that they would not awake if any one were to rattle a drum in the study.

But that which comes in through the open window into the study causes no noise—at least none that the

sharpest ear would hear. First there comes the soft night-breeze, stealing very gently ; so gently that it does not make even the papers on the table rustle, and scarcely swells the curtain at all. Then there comes the beautiful moonlight, laying along the floor what looks like a strip of silver carpet, with the shadow of the latticed window-bars forming the pattern upon it. And there is something besides this ; something softer than the breeze, and fairer even than the moonlight. A pretty little fairy is perched on the window-sill, looking into the room. She is scarcely more than five inches in height ; so small that she might lie at full length in a lady's silken slipper and find it a comfortable sofa, and a girl might wear as a ring the slender gold belt which girdles the waist of the fairy. A wreath of tiniest heather-bells encircles her hair ; if that can be called hair which is so fine that it hangs over the fairy's shoulders like a golden mist, which the puff of a child's breath could set floating upon the air. The little lady's dress is formed of petals of the blush-rose, fashioned by fairy fingers ; with a light robe of gossamer over it, such as lies on the grass on summer mornings, all fringed with diamond dew-drops. A violet would be large enough to cover the print of the fairy's footstep, if that tiny white foot ever left (which it does not) the lightest trace behind. The wings that spread at the fairy's back are such as the dragon-fly wears : they are transparent

as glass, and, as they quiver in the silvery rays, appear to be tinted with every hue in the rainbow. The light which comes streaming in behind the fairy throws no shadow of her figure upon the sill ; she seems herself as light as the moonbeams. The wand in her tiny hand—golden at one end, green at the other—is not much thicker than a horse-hair ; and the bag which hangs from the fairy's girdle looks exactly like one of the violet-velvet petals of a heart's-ease, sprinkled over with gold-dust. In short, Fairy Frisket, as she stands in the moonshine peering curiously into the half-dark study, is as lovely an object to look on as any mortal could wish to behold.

“This must be the place that I heard of ; but oh, what a den for a fairy to hide in !” cried Frisket, in a voice high and shrill as the chirp of a cricket, but sweet as the night-bird's song. “ Know-a-bit, Know-a-bit ! show a bit, show a bit ! After four hundred years spent apart, let brother and sister meet once again !”

And at the silvery call, up sprang, from a large red-edged volume which lay on the ledge of a bookcase, a tiny form, being that of a bearded fairy, dressed in cap and gown as a student, and with a minute pair of gold spectacles resting upon his small nose. Some of my readers may already have been introduced to the learned fay Know-a-bit, and have heard of his doings at Fairy-dell Hall, where he had lived amongst books and papers ever since the invention of printing.

No sooner did Know-a-bit catch sight of Frisket than, with an exclamation of pleasure, he made a bound like a cricket towards her, while she flew like a butterfly towards him; and the brother and sister embraced in the air as fondly as brother and sister should do, whirling round and round in their joy at meeting, as two feathers might whirl round in a gale. Then they alighted on the squire's silver inkstand, which stood in the middle of his table, and gazed upon one another to see if ages had wrought any change upon either.

Four or five hundred years is, of course, no great length of time to a fairy; and yet it was clear from Frisket's face that she did see a change in her brother, and a change that did not please her at all. With manner rather too brusque for a lady—to say nothing of a fairy—Frisket suddenly cried, “What's this?” darted at Know-a-bit's spectacles, and pulled them off from his nose. She then held them between her finger and thumb, and looked at them as you, dear reader, might look at a slug if found in your tea-cup.

“What's this?” repeated Frisket; “and what can possibly be its use?”

“These are my spectacles, sister; and I use them to read books with,” replied Know-a-bit with dignity, as he pointed towards the well-filled shelves of the squire's library.

“Books!” repeated Frisket scornfully. “Rusty,

fusty, musty, dusty! Better far that you should throw away these spectacles, as you call them—and that odd dress, with which I suppose you are mimicking man. Why, I do believe that you've crushed down your wings under that black gown! When was black ever worn before by a fairy?"

"I confess," replied Know-a-bit mildly, "that I have adopted some of the ways of mankind. I suppose, from living hundreds of years under a roof, I have had so little use for my wings that I have not spread them since the death of Queen Bess, and scarcely remember that I possess them. I can bound very well from place to place without them."

"Ay, in a *room*!" exclaimed Frisket with scorn. "You choose spectacles instead of free wings; books instead of leaves and mosses and ferns and flowers! You like to hear the mouse squeaking behind the old wainscot, instead of the lark singing in the air!"

"You would rather have me sing," said Know-a-bit, breaking out into song:—

"Where the bee sucks, there lurk I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry:
On a bat's back do I fly
After sunset merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

"Yes," said Frisket, more quietly, "that is a true fairy song."

"Yet it was written by a man," observed Know-a-bit. "Ay, look as much surprised as you please; but it was certainly written by old Will Shakespeare, whose bust you see there at the top of the bookcase."

"How could a man—a son of earth, a beef-eating creature—know anything about fairies?" cried Frisket.

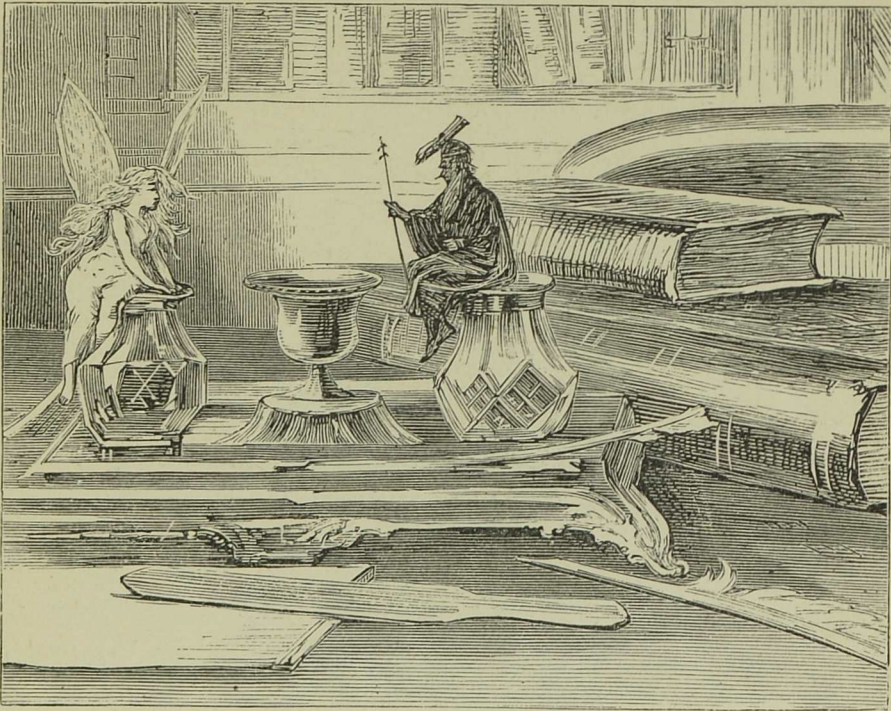
"And what does a fairy—a child of air, a dew-sipping creature—know about men?" asked Know-a-bit, smiling. "Has my fair sister ever so much as heard the voice of one of the race?"

"I know enough of them to dislike them," cried Frisket; "and I don't care to know anything more."

"Sister, sister! is not that prejudice? Is not that judging without knowledge? Suppose that, instead of quivering your wings so scornfully, and looking as if you thought the squire's mahogany table scarcely fit to set your little foot upon, you were to give back to me my glasses, and we two were to take our seats on this silver inkstand, and talk over the matter quietly together. Would not that be better than disputing on the first night of our meeting? Perhaps you may find that the human race, with all its faults, is not to be despised even by a fairy."

Frisket could not help looking up to her brother. I do not mean because he was much taller than herself—by at least the breadth of a man's thumb—but because he had a calmer judgment, a more thoughtful mind.

Know-a-bit had learned a good deal from his favourite books, and had perhaps made as good use of his spectacles as Frisket had of her wings. The lady-fairy closed those glassy wings—which folded neatly behind her back—restored the tiny spectacles to their owner, and sat down.



THE FAIRIES.


as her brother had proposed, upon the silver top of one of Squire Philimore's ink-bottles, while Know-a-bit rested on the other, the box to hold stamps being between them. The two fairies looked like ornamental figures of Wisdom and Mirth adorning the inkstand; but Wisdom was smiling, and Mirth had something of thought on her

bright little face. The squire's comfortable study seemed like a prison to Fairy Frisket; and it is scarcely to be wondered at that she felt the top of the ink-bottle a far less agreeable seat than a clump of green moss, or a down-lined nest, or the petals of a fragrant moss-rose.



CHAPTER II.

FAIRY CONVERSE.



FIRISKET. And now tell me, Brother Fay, what you can find in men or their works so charming as to make you desert the green woods? What joy can there be in this dull den, with its dusty piles of books, to compare with that of tripping it over the grass, rocking in the breeze on a trembling aspen, or watching the bees plundering the flowers of golden pollen, the spider spinning her silver thread, or the butterfly basking her wings in the sunshine?

Know-a-bit. I might say that I learn much from these books of the wonders of Nature in other lands, where the butterflies' wings are brighter and the flowers fairer than here in Old England. But I will own to you, Sister Fay, that I take pleasure in learning something of the ways and doings, and in studying the characters, of human beings—men and boys.

Frisket. Huge, heavy, gluttonous creatures, that actually prey upon sheep and oxen, and kill them for food. How horrid!

Know-a-bit. Do not look so much shocked at the idea. I do not see that it is worse in men to kill sheep and oxen for food, than it is for your friends the spiders to kill flies. The bigger creature needs the bigger prey, and feeds according to its nature. Philibert Philimore, the squire's fat boy, cannot dine, as you might, on a drop of sweet juice. The scent of the sweetest violets will not supply him with flesh, blood, and bones. He would starve upon dew; and as for making a breakfast upon pollen, I should like to see his face if such a thing were proposed.

Frisket. Yes. From what I hear, these wretched human beings are full of all kinds of wants. A leafy bough is a home for me. I can feast on the honey in a flower, and then make me a robe of its petals. If I choose to fly higher than my wings will bear me, I perch on the back of a lark, and enjoy its music as well as my ride as I mount up into the sky. If it rain, I can shelter me under a mushroom; and if I require a light on a starless night, every glowworm is pleased to lend me his pretty green lamp. But mortals cannot be contented with pleasures so simple as these. They cannot sleep without a huge house above them; nor dress, nor eat, nor move from one place to another, without such

worry and scurry, such scanning and planning, such moiling and toiling, as seems terrible to a fairy.

Know-a-bit. Man is indeed a frail creature, full, as you say, of all kinds of wants. But there is to me something grand in that wonderful gift of reason which enables him to supply every one of these wants.

Frisket. Man cannot fly like a bird nor run like a hare; and if he dare venture into the water at all, the tiniest fish in the brook can excel him in diving and swimming.

Know-a-bit. And yet observe how man makes up by the powers of his mind for all his imperfections of body. He cannot fly, indeed, for Nature has not supplied him with wings; but if he choose to mount above the clouds, he forms a huge ball which he calls a balloon, and darts up higher than eagle can fly. He has no fins like a fish to swim with; but man gets wood to float and iron to swim, and fire and water to work his will, and his ships in a long race round the globe would beat any fish in the ocean. If man takes a fancy to dive, he dives in a bell: as he cannot live without air, he cleverly carries down air to the very bottom of the sea. Man needs food of all sorts, and he gets all sorts. The leaf from this land and the berry from that, the birds and the beasts, the insects and fish,—he makes all supply his table. Man requires clothing, and finds it on all sides: he takes the wool of the sheep, the hair of the goat, the

fur of the rabbit, the skin of the mole, the feather of the ostrich, the silk of the worm,—all he prepares with wonderful skill to make his curious garments. Nor is this sufficient for man. England is not warm enough for the growth of cotton—a white down held in the



LEAVES, FLOWER, AND FRUIT OF THE COTTON PLANT.

seed-vessel of a yellow flower. Hills of this down are brought in ship-loads from far-distant lands in the East and the West; and in a single year enough of it is woven in England to cover, if needed, half the county of York-

shire, with its towns and churches, its fields and farms, and much more than half a million of people. Truly man is a wondrous creature, and reason is a marvellous gift.

Frisket. But man is full of faults, as well as of wants. Sad stories of his wicked doings have reached even the fairies. Though the least scratch upon his skin gives him pain, it seems to be his delight to give pain. Man flogs his horses, he beats his dogs, he hunts the hare, he shoots the bird; and even boys—horrible to tell!—will rob the poor linnet's nest, and torment the beautiful winged insects that fall into their merciless hands.

Know-a-bit. I fear that this, alas! is too true. I often wonder how those who so easily suffer themselves can bear to make innocent creatures suffer. But, if I remember rightly, fair sister, even you yourself carry in your bag a little brush fashioned of wasp-stings, a touch from which would make any boy in England start and wince.

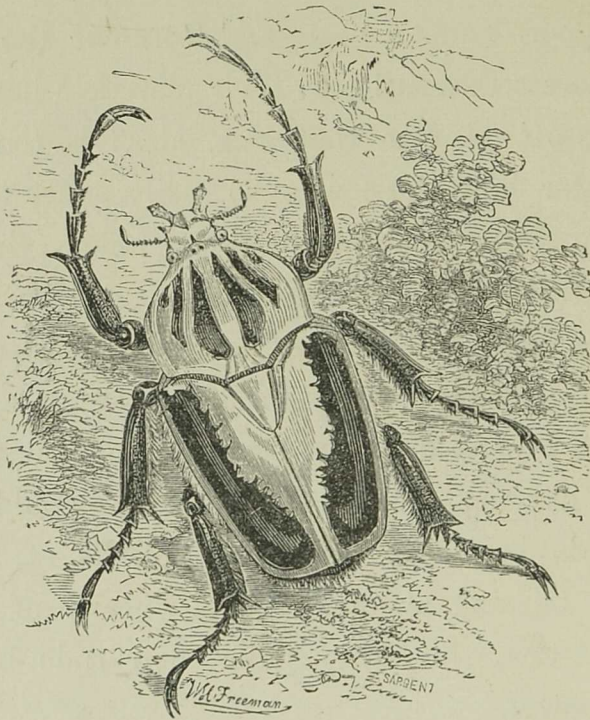
Frisket. I certainly own such a brush, but I never wantonly use my weapon. No fairy would ever be cruel. I do but keep the saucy hornets at bay when they come buzzing about me; and I warn off the great elephant-beetles when they poke their rude horns into my leafy bower.

Know-a-bit. You remind me of the song:—

“ You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blindworms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy-queen.

Philomel, with melody
 Singing her sweet lullaby ;
 Never harm, nor spell, nor charm
 Come our lovely lady nigh.
 So good-night, with lullaby !
 Weaving spiders, come not near—
 Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence !
 Beetles black, approach not near ;
 Worm nor snail, do no offence.
 Philomel, with melody," &c.

There's Will Shakespeare's poetry for you again !



ELEPHANT-BEETLE.

Frisket. Were it not for that bust up yonder, I should say that Will Shakespeare, as you call him, must have been a fairy himself.

Know-a-bit (*laughing*). You would not have thought so had you seen him, as I did, more than two hundred and seventy years ago, in the days of Queen Bess, when he came to this very house on a visit. Shakespeare was a man with a large forehead and a bright keen eye, and a mind brimming over with wit. Nothing of a fairy was he. Will Shakespeare was a mutton-eating, and a beef-eating, and a beer-drinking creature: there could be no mistake about that. He used to write in this very room some of the works which fill half the large books on yon shelf, while I sat on his shoulder watching his pen—for *his* fairy-wand was a goose-quill.

Frisket. He must have been one whom even fairies would have liked to see. I suspect, brother Know-a-bit, that you whispered those fairy songs into his ear.

Know-a-bit. No; they were all Shakespeare's own—every word. I had not then found out the spell, which has cost me hundreds of years of study, by which I can make myself visible, and my voice audible at pleasure, to any of the race of mankind.

Frisket. Is that a secret which I may know?

Know-a-bit. The secret lies in this little tassel, which hangs, as you see, from my cap. When I pull it thus, I can be seen and heard by whomsoever I will. I believe that I am the first fairy who ever possessed such a charm.

Frisket. Had I such a charm, I never would use it.

I might, indeed, like to examine man's curious works, and peep into his amusing books—that is, if I could take the trouble of learning the art of reading; but with man himself I should not care to have anything to do.

Know-a-bit. Now it seems to me that man is a more curious and interesting study than any of his works, or any of his writings. There is such wonderful difference between human beings, such strange variety in their characters and their conduct. For instance, there are two boys now asleep under this roof—Philibert Philimore, the son of the squire; and Sydney Pierce, his young guest. Never were two beings less alike, though both feed upon mutton and beef. The first is always thinking of self, the second always thinking of others. The one is discontented in the midst of luxury, the other pleased with whatever he gets. Philibert is ill-tempered and peevish, while I never yet have heard Sydney utter so much as a hasty word.

Frisket. You surprise me, brother Know-a-bit. I thought that all human beings were inclined to do and to speak what is wrong; that their very nature is to fall into folly and error, just as it is the nature of their poor weak bodies to fall down if not supported; as it is their nature to need food, and sleep, and after a little while to die.

Know-a-bit. But just as man seems born to struggle

against the bodily weakness of his nature, to make up by his wondrous inventions for the want of wings and fins and claws, the lion's strength and the deer's swiftness, so in some of the race there seems to be a constant struggle and victory over self. There is to me something very grand and very glorious about such a struggle.

Frisket. I do not understand what you mean ; I suppose because I am a fairy, and have never any trouble at all.

Know-a-bit. I will explain by means of examples. A poor man, named Garland, who lives at no great distance from Fairy dell Hall, saw some months since an idiot boy drowning in a stream. Garland plunged in at once to rescue the child : he risked shortening his own little term of life, in order to save one who had not even the power to thank him. Here was a struggle and a victory over cowardly self. Garland caught then a terrible cold on his chest, and suffered as mortals only can suffer. He lost his strength for work by day, he lost his rest by night, he lost the power to gain bread for his wife and six children ; and yet this poor sufferer never lost his temper—never, as I have heard, uttered one word of complaint. Here was a struggle and a victory over impatient self. Man is a grand being when he forces earth, air, water, and fire to obey his will and do his bidding ; but he is a nobler creature by far when mastering fear, and temper, and pain, conquering self,

rising above his own weakness, bearing what nature will not willingly bear, doing what nature will not willingly do.

Frisket. Did not his fellow-mortals help Garland, as he had helped the drowning child?

Know-a-bit. Hear the end of my story, Frisket. The two boys Philibert and Sydney had each one piece of yellow gold. Now the human race have a curious power of turning silver and gold into all kinds of things which they fancy—even huge things like cows, or even houses.

Frisket. What's that? what's that? you amaze me! Men must have very wonderful wands!

Know-a-bit (smiling). Men do not make these changes by the touch of a wand, like fairies, but by a very common-place arrangement, which they call buying—a thing never known in fairy-land, nor amongst any creatures except those that are human. But to return to my story. Philibert Philimore turned his bit of gold into toys and sweets for himself; Sydney Pierce turned his bit of gold into comforts for poor Will Garland. Sweets and toys would have been as pleasant to Sydney as they were to his young companion; but the boy, like the man whom he helped, had a struggle and victory over self. When I see self-denial like this—self-denial which we children of air never can practise—mortals, short-lived, weak, subject to pain, and ready to fall as they are, seem to me to be grander, nobler, happier beings than fairies.

Frisket. I should like to reward that Sydney. I should like to stir his cup, and touch his eyelids, with the end of my wand ; for—

The gilded rod of fairy-wood
Gives sweetest taste to common food,
Makes everything look fair and good.

Know-a-bit. You would need to be careful which end of your wand you used ; for, if I remember rightly, fair sister, the green end has a very different effect.

Frisket.

It gives to food a bitter taste,
Makes things look crookèd and misplaced,
And where it touches, spots are traced.

(*Laughing*). Perhaps Master Philibert Philimore may one day have a little rap from that end of my wand, or a touch from my tiny sting-brush, to improve his manners.

Know-a-bit. What ! does Frisket then think of leaving her darling green woods, to give, as I do, lessons to mortals in a dwelling ?

Frisket. Lessons ! you never told me that these two boys had you for their fairy-teacher !

Know-a-bit. Philibert and Sydney come each morn into this study, and through the power of my wand I show them many a wondrous sight in a fairy-mirror.

Frisket. Why in this dull, close study ? Why not in the free green woods ? Why not take them into the nest of the bird on the bough, the cave of the mole under

ground? Why not show them the wonders of Nature in Nature's own quiet retreats?

Know-a-bit. That is to me quite a new idea; but I see a little difficulty in carrying it out. These boys are hampered with bodies, a great deal too heavy and a great deal too large to mount into nests and to dive into holes, to creep where a caterpillar creeps, or to soar where a butterfly soars.

Frisket. Oh, those huge heavy meat-fed bodies would be much in the way, I own, but I know a remedy for the difficulty. (*Pulls out of her bag a little box about the size of a mustard seed.*) This is a box of fancy pomatum—the newest invention in fairy-land. The tiniest particle, rubbed on the temples, gives the mind power for one single hour to inhabit the body of any creature recently killed, to understand its language, and to enter its home. Through the charm of that fancy pomatum, the boys whom you love to teach may buzz through a hive as bees, or roam through underground passages as ants, or bury themselves like beetles, or fly through the air as gnats. This is a gift—and a choice gift it is—from fairy sister to fairy brother, on their first meeting after a separation of four hundred years.

Know-a-bit. I am surprised and delighted with your curious gift; but what can I offer in return? Accept the tassel from my cap, which will give you the power to appear and to speak when you will to mortals.

Frisket. Nay, I cannot rob you of that which has cost you ages of study to form.

Know-a-bit. All the difficulty was to discover how to form the charm. I can multiply the tassels at my pleasure, and have another at the top of yon bookcase, hidden in the ear of Shakespeare's bust.

Frisket. Such being the case, I gladly accept your gift, dear brother, though little likely ever to use it. I intend to see these two boys, Philibert and Sydney, but never to let them see me. I intend to listen to their words, but never to let them listen to mine. If I stir their cups, they shall never know what makes the contents seem bitter or sweet. If I touch their eyelids, they never shall guess what makes all things bright with fairy beauty, or ugly, crooked, and dark. I will acquaint myself with mortals; but mortals shall not make acquaintance with me. I want to know more of these strange beings, so strong in their weakness, in their power of self-conquering so great,—whose little life seems to be a struggle against want, pain, sorrow, and evil; but who, when they rise triumphant above all, are greater and nobler than creatures like us, who have nothing but ease and enjoyment.

CHAPTER III.

INTO THE WOODS.



It was, of course, a great pleasure to Know-a-bit to meet again with his fairy sister; and seeing Frisket revived his love for the greenwood, in which he had sported in olden times, dancing under the beech-trees by moonlight. It was not difficult, therefore, for Frisket to persuade her brother to leave for awhile his study and his books, and to wander with her in the free air, with nothing between them and the glorious stars.

“But really, brother, before we start we must look after your wings,” cried Frisket. “How funny you appear in that black robe of yours, which I am sure that you must have dyed in the squire’s ink-bottle! You are hardly fit to be seen amongst fairies. Allow me to examine your shoulders; perhaps a little slit in your dress would let out your wings. Ah, here they are, sure enough. I’ve in my bag the jaw of a rose-cutter

bee, which I use for slitting and shaping the petals, which I sew up again with silk from the web of the spider." Almost before Know-a-bit was aware of what his sister was about, she had cut two long holes in the back of his dress.

"Ah, that looks a little more fairy-like!" exclaimed Frisket, when, with tiny fingers which could hardly have spanned a filbert, she had pulled out, one after the other, two wings, glossy like her own, but not nearly so bright, nor so ready to quiver and glance. Indeed—if I may venture to say it—they looked crumpled, like a lady's dress that has been untidily folded, and then left in a drawer for years. "Give them a shake—a good hearty shake!" exclaimed Frisket; "they are none the brighter or the better for not having been used since the days of Queen Bess."

"Yes; it is a curious fact," observed the philosopher Know-a-bit, "that all creatures are apt to lose any faculty which they suffer for long to lie idle. Now that I am going abroad, I must rub up the art of flying, or," he added, laughing, "I may have to take, like mortals, to a coach or a railway-carriage at last."

Know-a-bit had not yet lost the use of his wings, though they felt at first wonderfully stiff. He had to fly two or three times round the study, to get them into good play, before attempting a longer excursion. In the meantime, Frisket replaced in her violet bag the sharp

jaw of the rose-cutter bee, which was to the fairy what a pair of scissors is to a lady, and then fastened to her girdle the curious tassel, which had been the gift of her brother.

“Now I am all ready for a start!” cried Know-a-bit, flying down from Shakespeare’s bust, where he had rested for a second or two upon the broad, bald forehead of the poet, after pulling the second tassel out of its hiding-place in his ear.

“Just pull off your spectacles, then!” cried Frisket; “spectacles look as odd on the nose of a fairy as they would on the beak of a sparrow.”

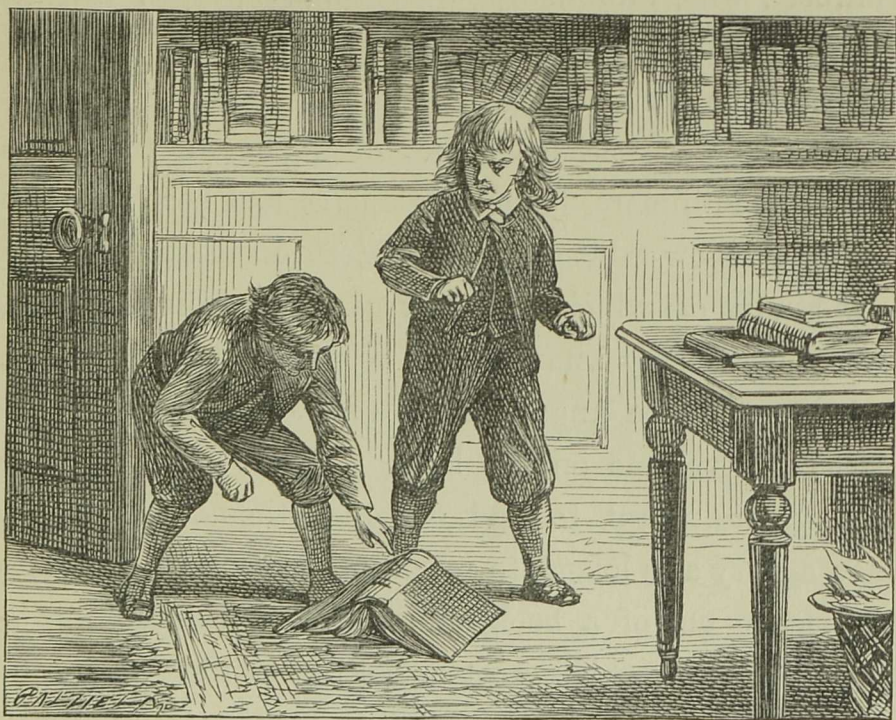
So Know-a-bit popped his tiny gold spectacles into a little pocket which he had in his dress, and merrily enough the two fairies flew away through the open window towards the leafy woods which surrounded the Hall.

A great disappointment was in store for Philibert and his young guest, when they came as usual into the study on the following morning, to meet their fairy friend, and see the wonders worked by his wand. Philibert, in his blue velvet dress, strutted in first, followed by Sydney, in his plain brown stuff one; the squire’s son impatient for amusement, the widow’s son eager for knowledge.

Philibert went up straight to the large red-edged volume, in which Know-a-bit for many years had dwelt, and gave three taps upon it with his fat knuckles, as we

rap with the knocker upon a door to ask, Is any one at home? Philibert expected the learned fairy to answer his knock, but never a fairy saw he.

"Why, Sydney, what ever has become of Know-a-bit?" exclaimed the boy in vexation. "Try if you can manage to make the lazy little fellow come out."



PHILIBERT AND THE BOOK.

Sydney thrice gently tapped the big book, but Know-a-bit was not to be seen.

"I'll make him attend!" cried Philibert, ready to stamp with impatience. He slapped the book, he banged the book, he snatched it up and shook it, and then, with

a burst of ill-temper, threw it down on the floor. Sydney quietly picked it up, and smoothed the leaves doubled up by the fall.

"I am afraid that our kind fairy is tired of us," observed Sydney.

"Then I'm sure that I'm tired of the fairy!" cried Philibert, who, like many other selfish people, let the first pause in the kindness of a friend take away all gratitude for past favours.

Sydney was perhaps more disappointed than was Philibert Philimore, for young Pierce had been eager to question Know-a-bit on some subjects in natural history—a study of which the boy was exceedingly fond. However, Sydney knew that it would be foolish to fret, and wrong to be angry; so he only observed, as he replaced the volume on the ledge of the bookcase, "Perhaps we are meant to find out that though we cannot have a fairy any longer to teach us, we may get a fairy's knowledge out of a book, and we may prize the knowledge all the more if it cost us a little trouble."

"I hate trouble, and I can't bear reading!" cried lazy Philibert. "If this tiresome fairy has taken himself off (he might have been civil enough to have given us notice yesterday), we'd better go into the wood and amuse ourselves there till Mary has got breakfast ready. Let's see how the workmen are getting on with papa's fine new summer-house under the oak."

“What a delightful old house this is!” exclaimed Sydney, as the two boys sauntered out together. “Your father was telling me yesterday that part of it—the part where the study is—was built before the Wars of the Roses; only think what a long time ago! The squire said that Fairydell Hall has stood so long, because in troublous times walls were made so thick and strong in case of attack. In these days, he told me, the moat round the house was full of water—not of grass and shrubs, as it is now—and there was a bridge over it that could be drawn up by pulleys, so that no one could pass over the moat without the leave of the master of Fairydell Hall. How strange it must have been to have lived in those rough old days!”

“They wouldn’t have done for you,” said Philibert Philimore; “you are such a weak little chap, you’d have been no use in defending a castle. Strong jolly fellows were wanted then; not those that needed coddling and stuffing with cod-liver oil.”

Sydney felt the words of his companion to be inconsiderate, if not unkind. It was no fault of young Pierce’s that his health was delicate and his strength small. He had seen enough of the squire’s fat little son to know that, though Philibert might be far the stronger of the two, if it came to a question of courage, the weaker frame might hold the firmer spirit. Sydney, however, said nothing in reply, but amused himself

with looking up at the strong gateway with the red rust-stain on the stone, marking where the portcullis had hung. The portcullis was an iron grating which could be let down suddenly to stop the entrance of a foe. The portcullis itself, like the movable bridge over the moat, was gone, now that there was no longer fear of danger: a firm broad bridge had replaced the one; and all that remained to tell of the other was the rust-mark, and the holes in the stone where the iron supports had been fixed. It amused Sydney, however, in fancy to recall the past, as he glanced up at the massive gateway, and the slits in the wall through which archers sent forth their arrows against unwelcome intruders, long before guns had been invented.

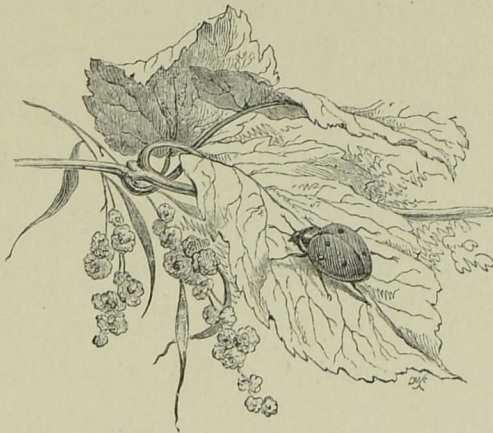
“And then to think of Shakespeare himself having passed under this very arch!” exclaimed Sydney. “I’ve thought this noble old place twice as interesting since hearing of his having paid it a visit.”

“I daresay that you’ve never read a line out of those big books with his name on the back of them,” observed Philibert, as the two boys went on their way down the green velvety slope which led into the wood.

“My mother has read to me bits out of Shakespeare,—beautiful bits about Mercy being ‘twice blessed,’ and about ‘vaulting Ambition that o’erleaps himself, and falls on t’other side.’ And oh! now that we’re amongst these splendid old trees, with their trunks all knotted

and gnarled, and the green moss over their great straggling roots, it seems just the place to sing Shakespeare's song—perhaps he made it just here." And the joyousness of Sydney's heart broke out into music.

"Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry throat
Unto the sweet bird's note,
Come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather."



CHAPTER IV.

THE ANT-HILL.



“COME on, Sydney, will you ; what are you stopping to stare at ?” cried Philibert Philimore.

“An ant-hill. Oh! how curious it is to look at the little hillock, all alive with busy creatures ! How they swarm, and how active and lively they are ! There’s one ant dragging a great bit of twig—I mean great for so tiny a creature to manage—and he can’t manage it, poor little fellow ! He’ll leave it—he’ll give up the task. No, no ; just see : he has gone up to another ant ; he’s tapping him with his feelers—I daresay that’s his way of saying, ‘ Please, old boy, come and help me ! ’ Oh what fun !—there they both are at the twig ; a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together ! Well done, little ants, well done ! I am sure you work with a will.”

“Horrid, ugly little brutes ! I can’t think how you are so stupid as to care to watch them !” cried Phili-

bert. "I'm sure there's nothing worth seeing in an ant-hill."

"That is the conclusion of ignorance," said a bird-like voice from the branch of an old oak which spread over the green woodland path. Philibert and Sydney both started and looked upwards; and whom should



THE ANT-HILL.

they see, seated upon a twig, but their learned friend Know-a-bit the fairy. He looked much as he had done when the boys had last met him in the study, except that his spectacles had disappeared, and that a pair of long dragon-fly wings were folded behind him. Sydney

was so glad to see his fairy again, that he uttered an exclamation of joy.

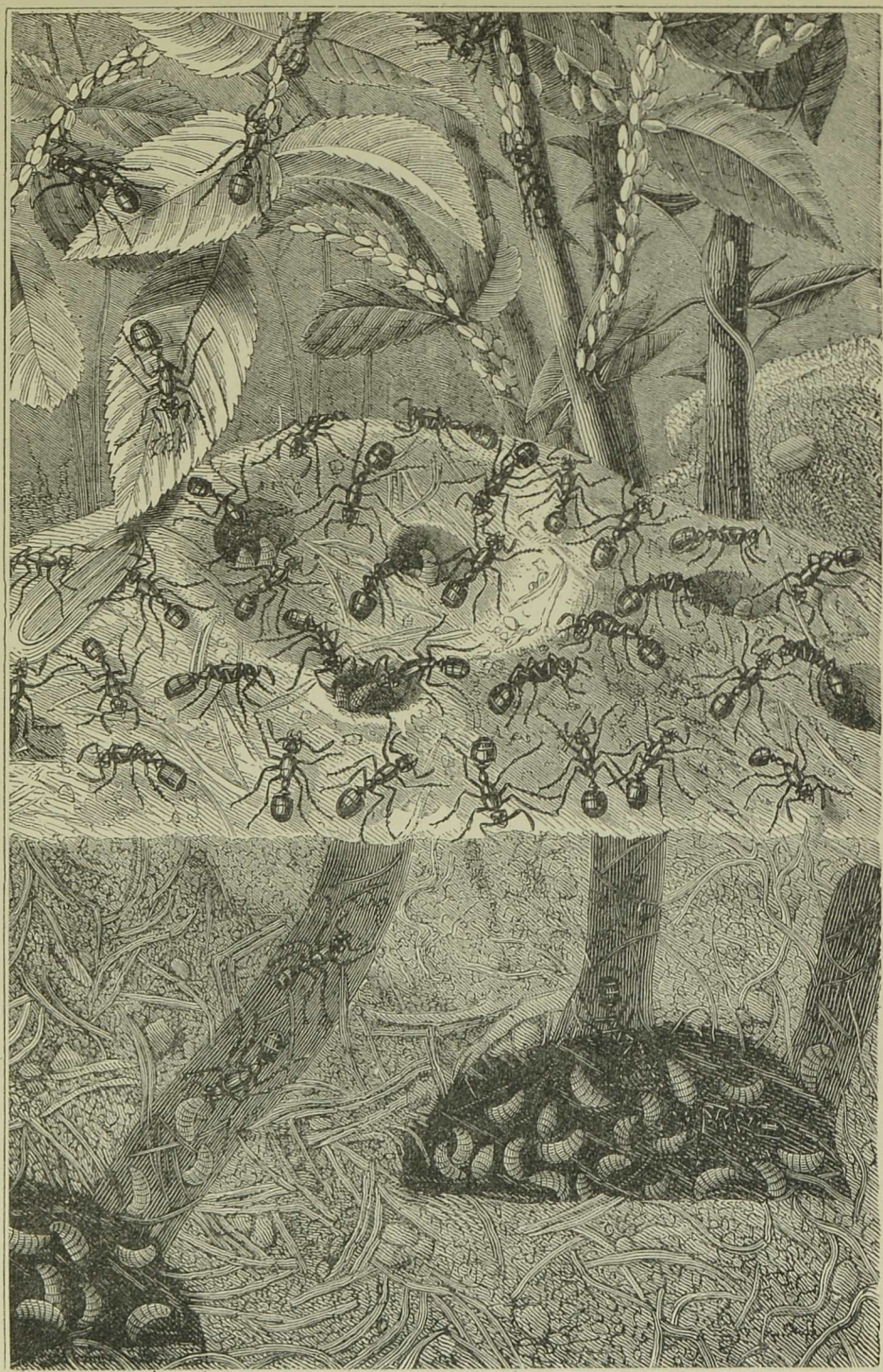
“Man,” continued the fairy, “is proud of his fine buildings, his grand works of art, the houses which he raises by the help of numberless tools—the hammer, saw, trowel, and axe, the crane and the pulley, the lever and the wheel. Those little insects which you have the folly to scorn, with no tools but those with which nature supplies them, scoop out long passages and deep tunnels, and raise buildings story upon story—buildings which are far more wonderful and grand, in proportion to the size of the little workers, than St. Paul’s or Westminster Abbey, or the great Egyptian Pyramid itself!”

“You don’t mean that wretched ant-hill!” cried Philibert.

“I more especially speak of the labours of the white-ant, or termite,—an insect related to the dragon-flies and may-flies, rather than to the rusty-brown little workers before you. In Africa these builders raise nests that are sometimes twenty feet in height, and so strong that the wild bull can stand on the top to look out if danger be near!”

“What a famous ant-hill that must be!” exclaimed Philibert; “why, this little heap of twigs and withered grass would not support a cat!”

“Pray, Mr. Fairy, tell us more of these curious white-ants and their habits,” said Sydney.



ANT NURSERIES.

“The gigantic nests of these termites,” observed Know-a-bit, “are each like a populous city, with its palace-cell for king and queen in the middle, and rooms round it for their guards and attendants, who are always in waiting. These rooms are joined to magazines formed to hold provisions, which look like raspings of wood and plants, but which principally consist of gums and sugar. Near these are the nurseries.”

“Nurseries!” interrupted Philibert; “what kind of creatures are baby-ants?—do they wear bibs or pinafores?”

“Not exactly,” replied the fairy. “Ants first appear in the shape of tiny eggs, of which there will sometimes be as many as eighty thousand in an ant-hill. From these eggs come little white pupæ, which are carefully tended, or educated, as we may call it, by nursing ants, until they are able to take care of themselves.”

“These are the boys and girls of the ant-city, I suppose,” said Sydney. “But what are the king and queen like? Do they wear splendid colours to show their rank?”

“They are rather distinguished by size than by colour,” answered the fairy. “The king of the termites is about twice as large as one of his soldiers, and ten times as large as a labouring ant.”

“How funny it would be if there were such differences between human beings!” cried Philibert; “if

King George had been twice as big as the Duke of Wellington, and ten times as big as his gardener."

"He would have been a *great* king indeed," observed Sydney; and both boys burst into a merry laugh.

"Size is not the king's only distinction," continued the fairy: "in his perfect state he has four large brownish transparent wings; but they adorn his majesty for but a few hours."

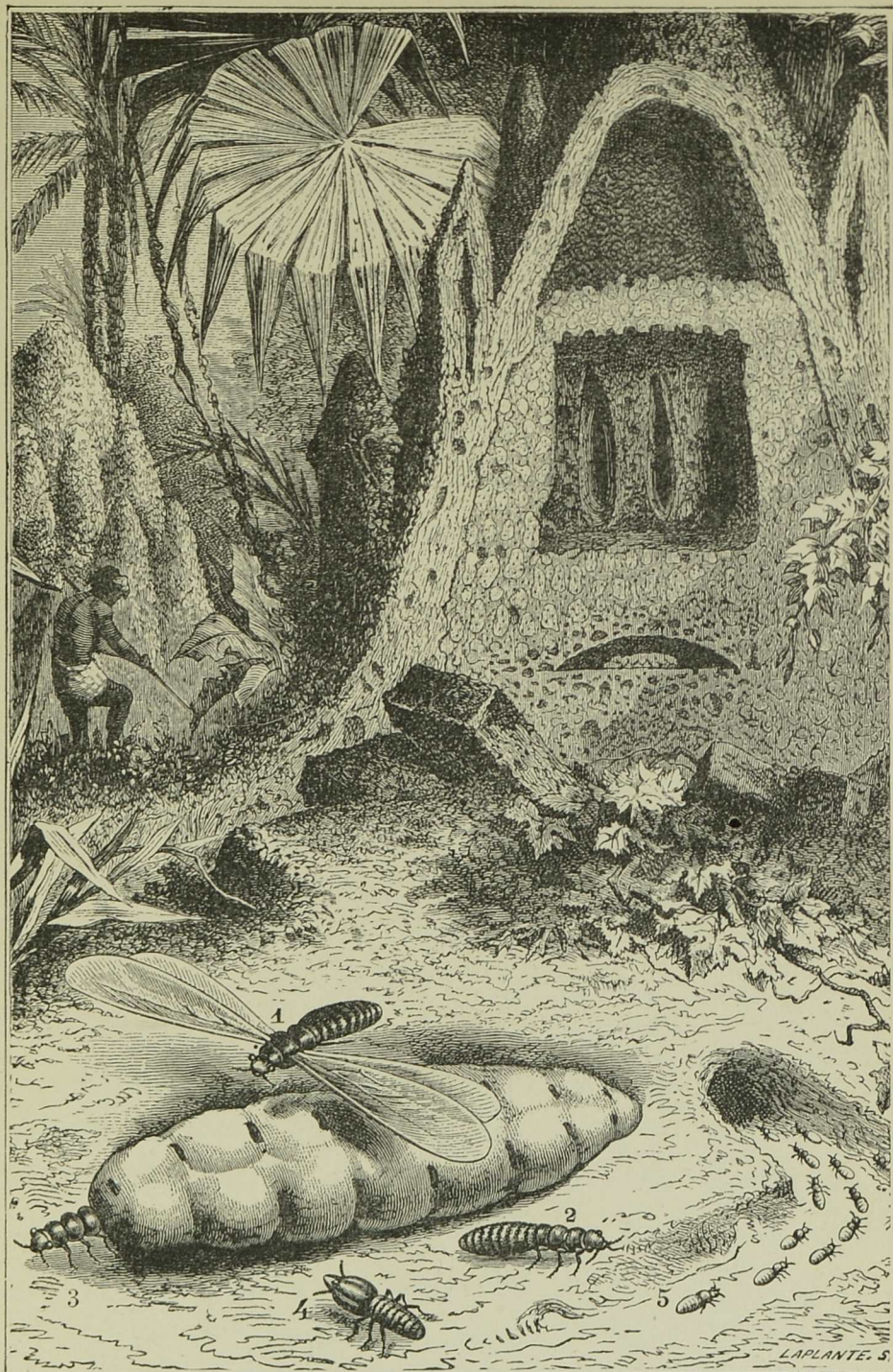
"We may call them his robes of state," observed Sydney, "which he has very soon to put off."

"To die," added the fairy.

"I suppose that the queen white-ant is not nearly so big as the king, as she is the lady," said Philibert.

"Nay, there you are greatly mistaken," said the fairy. "In the hill of the termites, as in the hive of the bee, the queen, the great mother, is by far the most important person in the state; and the white-ant queen, at one period of her life, is of size quite enormous compared to her subjects. She is thousands of times as big as one of the labouring ants, and so large that it is quite impossible for her to get through the doorway of the cell which she had entered when comparatively small, so that her palace is also her prison. The queen, like the king, has for a short period wings, or robes of state, as we call them; but this is before her great increase in size."

"You mentioned soldiers, Mr. Fairy," said Sydney;



NEST OF THE WHITE-ANT IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

1. King Ant; 2, 4, 5, Neuters; 3. Queen Ant.

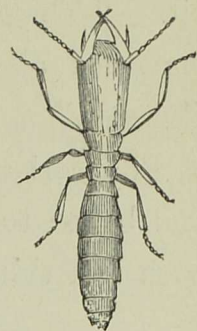
"pray, do the king and queen of these termites keep a standing army of ants?"

"A regular standing army of warriors, of about the size of earwigs, who have nothing to do but to fight. Their weapons are powerful jaws, protruding from very large heads; and with these they can inflict very severe bites. If part of the wall of their city be broken down, out rush the bold soldiers to defend the breach, ready to attack any invader; while the labourers, who have no fancy for fighting, take refuge within."

MILITARY
ANT.

"Like the women keeping safe in a castle, while the men are defending the walls," observed Sydney.

"So stanch is the courage of the soldiers," said Know-a-bit, "that sooner than quit their hold on an enemy, they will suffer themselves to be pulled limb from limb."



WORKING ANT.

"Well done, little heroes," cried Sydney.

"When the fight is over," continued the fairy, "the soldiers leave to the labourers all the trouble of repairing the walls, as they had done that of building them. No soldier termite will deign to lift a burden, nor so much as look after one of the baby-ants."

"Then I should say that, except in time of war, these big soldiers are useless fellows," observed Philibert.

“Therefore, in the beautiful arrangement of nature, an ant-hill contains but one soldier to about a hundred workers,” said Know-a-bit.

“I don’t think that we have so much as one soldier to a hundred other people,” remarked Sydney.

“These termites are very curious creatures, but I suppose that they are very useless ones,” said Philibert.

“They are of exactly the same kind of use to the Africans as your father’s pheasants and hares are to you.”

“You don’t mean to say that any one eats them,” cried the fat little boy, with a look of disgust. “I’d rather starve than dine upon ants!”

“White-ants are not only eaten, but they are considered by the Africans a delicate dainty,” said Know-a-bit. “They have been compared in taste to sugared marrow; also to sweetened cream, and paste made of almonds.”

Philibert opened his eyes very wide on hearing this, and began to think that a dish of termites might be no such bad thing after all.



CHAPTER V.

AMAZONS.



“ARE there many other kinds of curious ants?” inquired Sydney.

“There is a great variety of ants, both foreign and British,” answered the fairy.

“We have the dusky, the brown, the yellow, and the wood-ant, on which you are looking now, and which is commonly called the pismire. But in other parts of the world are found many other remarkable species; amongst them the amazon-ants, which have the curious distinction of being a kind that capture and keep black slaves.”

“Oh the naughty, cruel little creatures!” exclaimed Sydney, who had a vivid recollection of what he had heard from his mother of the horrors of the slave-trade as practised by men.

“Insects can scarcely be called naughty or cruel,” observed the fairy, “when acting according to the instinct which Nature has planted within them.”

"Pray, let us hear something about these amazons and their slave-catching," said Philibert Philimore. "Did you ever see them about it?"

"No, for I have never myself been out of England," Know-a-bit replied; "my wings—fairy wings though they be—will not carry me so far as railways and steamers will carry human beings."

"You might ask some traveller to pack you up in his hat-box," said Philibert.

Sydney observed that the little fairy looked rather angry at such an impertinent joke, and turned the conversation by saying: "I suppose that these amazon-ants live near the Amazon river, the biggest river in the world, which flows in South America."

"No," replied Fairy Know-a-bit. "The amazon-ants are nearer neighbours; they are found on the continent of Europe, though not, I believe, in this island. A great naturalist, called Huber, had the opportunity of watching an army of amazons, or, as he calls them, legionary ants, near the Lake of Geneva, in the country of Switzerland, on a slave-capturing expedition."

"And what did he see?" asked Philibert.

"Between the hours of four and five, on the afternoon of a summer's day, Huber saw a column of large iron-brown coloured ants going at a pretty rapid pace along a road. This column of ants covered a space about eight or ten inches in length, by three or four in breadth."

"Then there must have been more than a dozen ants abreast," observed Philibert; "but I suppose that they did not move all in order, like soldiers, right foot and left foot together."

"Pray go on, Mr. Know-a-bit," said Sydney.

"In a few minutes Huber saw the column leave the road, pass a thick hedge, and enter a meadow. Full of curiosity to know whither they were bound, the naturalist followed to watch them. There was the column of disciplined insects, making its way through the grass without straggling, going steadily on like an army of men under a human general, till it came near a nest of the negro-ant, which was at the distance of about twenty feet from the hedge."

"And how did the negro-ants receive the invaders?—did they show fight?" asked Philibert Philimore.

"Some of the negroes were guarding the entrance of their nest, and on discovering the advancing foe, dashed bravely forward to repel them. The alarm that an enemy was coming to attack them soon spread amongst the negroes; more and more of the gallant little ants rushed out to defend their home; then a fierce fight ensued."

"Oh, poor little negroes! I hope that they had the best of it," exclaimed Sydney.

"If I'd been there, I'd have stamped my foot on the amazon-ants, and killed the whole army at once," cried Philibert.

Know-a-bit smiled at the foolish boast. The squire's son would have been afraid of a single wasp, and was little likely to attack a whole column of fierce-biting amazon-ants.

"After a short conflict," continued the fairy, "the negroes fled to their underground galleries, leaving the amazons masters of the field. The invaders now began making openings for themselves into the ant-hill; and Huber soon saw the amazons swarming in where he had no power to follow them. In two or three minutes, however, they reappeared out of the nest, each amazon carrying a grub, or baby negro-ant; and having obtained what they wanted, they returned the same way that they had come, only not in the same regular marching order."

"And the poor negroes had been robbed of all their babies?" cried Sydney.

"Not of all of them," said the fairy. "Huber, after watching for some time the homeward march of the amazons, returned to the ant-hill which they had plundered, and near it saw a few of the defeated negroes perched upon the stalks of plants, and holding in their mouths some grubs that had escaped the general pillage."

"I'm glad of that," said the kind-hearted Sydney. "But what did the amazons do with the baby-ants that they had carried off?" asked Philibert. "Did they make a grand feast, and gobble them up?"

"Oh no. You forget that the expedition was to capture slaves, not to procure food," answered the fairy. "Huber was curious, like yourself, to know the fate of the little prisoners. He found out the nest of the amazon-ants, and took his post near it to watch what would happen on the conquerors' return to their home. He was much surprised to see a number of negro-ants come out of the amazons' nest to meet the victors, not as enemies to fight them, but like affectionate servants or friends. These negroes caressed the amazons, offered them food, and then received from them the little pupæ, or grubs, of which they took charge, doubtless in order to bring them up as if they were their own offspring."

"How funny! how very funny!" cried Philibert. "Of course, these negro-ants must have been caught and carried off when they were babies themselves, but had quite forgotten or forgiven the attack upon their old home."

"I suppose that the amazons treat their slaves well," observed Sydney. "They've no flogging and over-working in an ant-hill."

"The amazons and the negro-ants live in perfect harmony together," said Know-a-bit. "Indeed, the amazons are quite dependent upon their servants, and would not know what to do without them; for the warriors appear to be no more fit to work for themselves than are the soldier-ants of the termites. Not only does all

the building work, and the nursing of the pupæ, fall to the share of the negro-ants, but they even take the trouble of feeding the amazons. The busy little labourers appear as much masters as servants in the nest, and, it has been remarked, will even refuse the amazons admission into their own home if they come back unsuccessful from one of their plundering excursions."

"Do these amazons ever carry off grown-up negro-ants?" inquired Sydney.

"Never are they seen to do so," answered the fairy. "The baby-ants only are taken; and it is no hardship whatever to them to be brought up in the amazons' nest."

"Oh, how I wish that we had some of these curious ants in England!" exclaimed Philibert; "it would be such rare fun to watch them."

"We have not the amazons here," observed Know-a-bit; "but these very wood-ants on the hillock at your feet have been seen to eagerly carry off the pupæ of other ants." *

"I should like to catch them at it," cried Sydney. "I never thought that common wood-ants were such curious creatures."

"What will you say when I tell you that some ants may almost be said to have their herds as well as their servants?" said the fairy. "It is well known that ants

* Gould: also White of Selborne.

press from the aphides—a kind of insect very common upon our apple and oak trees—a sweet juice which nourishes them, as human beings are nourished by the milk of their cows. The ants do not hurt the aphides: they gently stroke them with their feelers (which are called antennæ), and then drink the honey-dew with which those creatures are supplied.”

“Wonders upon wonders!” cried Sydney.

“Ants are very fond of liquids,” continued the fairy; “and are provided with little tongues, with which they are able to lap.”

“I suppose,” said Sydney, “that the ants do not *keep herds*; they only catch a—what do you call it?—when they can find one.”

“Nay,” replied Know-a-bit; “the clever Huber discovered that the common yellow-ant of our gardens keeps the eggs of the aphid,* and guards them as carefully as if they were her own.”

“Oh, doesn’t that look as if the ant knew that the aphid would one day supply it with honey-dew!” cried Sydney.

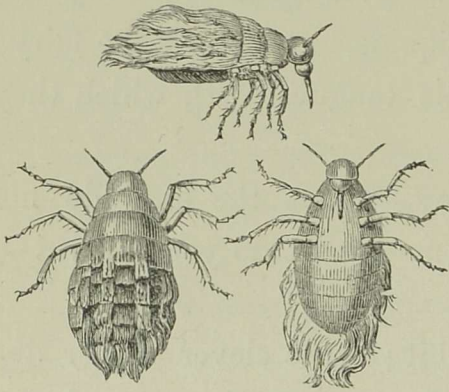
“Huber,” continued the fairy, “found in the nest of the yellow-ant a number of little eggs; most of them were black as ebony, but some were of a clouded yellow. In vain the ants that Huber had disturbed tried to carry

* *Aphis* in the singular, *aphides* in the plural. So *pupa* and *larva* are singular, describing one only; *pupæ* and *larvæ* are plural, describing more than one.

off these eggs : the human intruder seized upon both the ants and their treasure, and, in order to watch them more closely, put them all into a corner of a box faced with glass."

"And what did the yellow-ants do in their prison?" asked Philibert Philimore.

"They collected the eggs, and placed them in a heap, as if they valued them highly. Part of the number they put into some earth which was in the box ; others they stroked, seemed to lick, and frequently carried about in their mouths. The ants seemed to regard these eggs with great affection. They



APHIDES, OR PLANT-LICE.

were not ant-eggs, which are white, but the eggs of aphides."

"And what are the aphides like when these little cows of the ants are full grown?" inquired Sydney.

"There are various kinds of aphides, as there are various kinds of ants," said Know-a-bit. "The common oak aphis you may see on this very leaf on which I am resting my wand."

"What an ugly creature!" exclaimed Philibert, as the boys turned their eyes in the direction pointed out by

the fairy, and beheld a very repulsive-looking brown insect.

“If the ants were to hold a cattle-show,” observed Sydney gaily, “no one would think much of the beauty of their cows—unless they consider it a beauty to have such a long tail as this ugly aphis seems to have.”

“What you mistake for a tail is a sucker,” observed Know-a-bit, “which is bent under the body of the insect, and therefore appears behind it. That sucker is much the same to the aphis that the trunk is to the elephant. Through this long proboscis it drinks up the juices of the leaf upon which it is resting; which juices will undergo a wondrous change into the honey-dew with which it supplies the ants.”



CHAPTER VI.

THE FAIRY'S OFFER.



NOW all the time during which Know-a-bit was holding this long conversation with the boys, there was a listener whose presence Philibert and Sydney never suspected; though Fairy Frisket had chosen for her seat the shoulder of the squire's young son, covered as it was with thick blue velvet almost as soft as moss. Frisket was quite as much amused as any of the party; regarding, as she did, with great curiosity those remarkable creatures called boys, to whom this was her first introduction. Perhaps the fairy's feelings towards them were something like what their own might have been on their first sight of a huge elephant, which they had found more sagacious and good-tempered than they had expected such a monster to be. Frisket began to suspect that what her brother had said might be true—that she had indulged a foolish prejudice against human beings, and that her scorn of mankind had arisen

from her want of knowledge. Whenever we are inclined to despise any being, we should try to discover whether the feeling may not arise from mingled ignorance and pride.

Fairy Frisket was amused not only by watching the boys, but by hearing what her brother was relating. Of course, she who had lived for hundreds of years in the forest, knew all about wood-ants, and aphides, and every other creature, save man, that lived near her fairy haunts; but of foreign creatures Frisket really knew nothing. How was it to be expected that she should, seeing that she had never looked into a book? Of lions, tigers, and bears (except, of course, the insects—ant-lions, tiger-moths, and woolly-bears) she never had heard in her life. An elephant would have amazed her. The pretty little fairy, as she listened to her brother, began to imagine that pleasure might be found in learning, even by a fay, and that the hundreds of years spent amongst the books in the study by Know-a-bit might not have been lost time after all.

Only once had Frisket been displeased during the course of the conversation to which she had listened; and that was when saucy Philibert had joked about packing up her learned brother in a hat-box. The indignant little fairy had popped her sting-brush out of her bag, with the intention of giving the plump white ear, which lay so conveniently close to her hand, such a

tap with it as would have sent the saucy boy roaring with pain all the way back to the Hall. Sydney's question, by diverting Frisket's attention to amazon-ants, had saved his companion, for a time at least, from the danger of which he was so little aware; but the fairy resolved that the saucy boy should not always escape so easily, but that she would tickle his ear, or spot his cheek, or stir his tea with the green end of her wand, if ever she should catch him again speaking disrespectfully of one of her race.

"All the strange things which you have told us, Mr. Fairy," said Sydney, "make me want so much to learn more. How curious it would be to know what is passing in that little ant-hill at this moment!"

"Would you like to enter it and look about you?" asked Know-a-bit quickly, feeling in his pocket for his tiny pot of pomatum.

"That's quite impossible," answered the boy, smiling as he glanced down on the little brown hillock which it would not have been difficult to have jumped over; for English ants build very much more humble homes than the termites of Africa.

"It is not impossible for mind to go where body cannot enter, when fancy is powerful," said the learned fay. "If I but touch your temples with this curious pomatum, to-morrow morning, for an hour after sunrise, you and your companion there, if he wish it, shall inhabit the

tiny bodies of ants, and explore wherever ants can go. I am speaking, of course, of your *minds*, and not of your large, heavy bodies."

"And what is to become of our poor bodies while our minds are running about and amusing themselves thus?" exclaimed the astonished Sydney; while Philibert, who could scarcely yet even understand the strange offer of the fairy, stood staring at him with mouth and eyes wide open with amazement.

"Your bodies will remain fast asleep on your beds, while your minds roam free, as they so often do in your dreams."

"I won't be an ant," exclaimed Philibert suddenly. "If Mary the nurse should see me in such a shape running over my pillow, she'd squash me, as sure as a gun."

This exclamation, and the anxious, alarmed look on the face of the fat little boy, made Know-a-bit fall into such a violent fit of laughter that he shook the twig on which he was seated, and nearly knocked over the aphid. His laughter was echoed by Fairy Frisket; though, of course, the boys could not hear the tinkling sound of her mirth, as she had never yet pulled the tassel which had been given to her by her brother.

"Don't be frightened, my friend," said Know-a-bit, as soon as his laughter was over. "You shall find yourself an ant in these woods, and close to this ant-hill, where no

monster in the shape of a nurse will be near to 'squash' you."

"But suppose we should never turn back again into boys!" suggested Sydney, shaking his head very gravely, as he looked down on the little rusty-brown creatures that were running about at his feet.

"No fairy spell lasts beyond an hour," replied Know-a-bit. "At the end of sixty minutes you will find yourselves safe and sound in your beds. Shall I touch you with this?" continued the fairy, holding out towards Philibert the tiny pot of pomatum.

"I don't believe that you can turn me into an ant, or into anything else, with that ridiculous little mustard-seed," exclaimed Philibert.

Out popped Fairy Frisket's sting-brush; but her brother, who saw the movement of her tiny hand, made a sign to her not to use it.

"I have given you already pretty convincing proofs of my fairy power," said Know-a-bit. "I make you the offer but once more. Shall I enable you, by fancy, to enter an ant-hill in the shape of an ant?"

"Do it if you can!" cried Philibert Philimore, with a little laugh of defiance.

Almost before the words had quitted his lips, Know-a-bit, with a few quivers of his wings, had reached the squire's son, and touched his temples with fancy-pomatum.

"O Philibert, you're in for the adventure!" cried Sydney.

"Then you shall be in for it too!" exclaimed Philibert, again looking frightened. "If I'm an ant, you shall be an ant. Oh, do! pray do let your forehead be touched!" The poor little boy was alarmed at the idea of undergoing such a change all by himself; he thought that no adventure would be so terrible if but his companion would share in it.

Sydney smiled, but hesitated. "I should like to consult my mother," he said; "but she would think me quite out of my wits if I asked her leave to turn into a wood-ant."

"And you can't ask her leave," cried Philibert; "you know that you heard yesterday that she has been suddenly called to Scotland to visit her sick brother. O Sydney, don't leave me in the lurch! it would be so cowardly, it would be so unkind!"

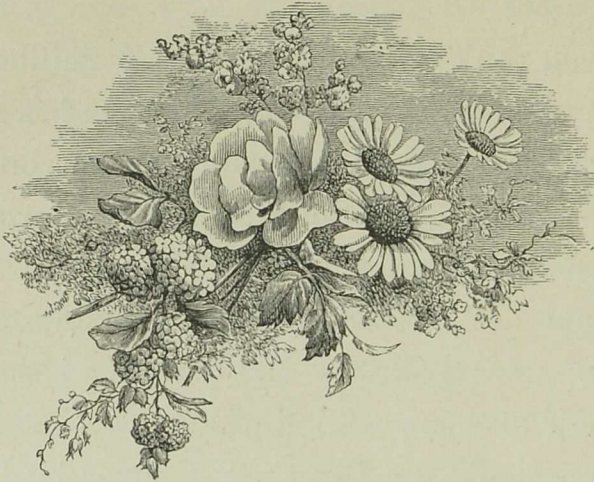
"I should not like to be unkind to any one, nor to desert you," said Sydney, "and yet this is such a very strange, very uncommon kind of affair."

"Do you doubt me?" asked Know-a-bit, who had again taken his perch on the twig; "have you, child of earth, ever found me, the child of air, lead you into danger or evil?"

"No, indeed!" replied Sydney frankly; "I have had nothing but good from what you have taught me. Touch

my forehead if you like, Mr. Fairy ; Philibert and I will visit the little ant-hillock together."

Lightly flew Know-a-bit towards the boy, lightly he touched his temples with the fancy-pomatum. At this moment the voice of Mary was heard calling aloud through the wood, " Master Philibert ! Master Philibert ! where are you ? will you never come in for your breakfast ? "



CHAPTER VII.

FORAGING-ANTS.



T was with mixed and very curious feelings that the two boys at Fairy dell Hall thought over the occurrences of the morning, and the very strange offer of Know-a-bit. The first thing which Philibert did on returning to the Hall was to wash his forehead well with soap and water, for he had sad misgivings as to the power of the fancy-pomatum, though he had so saucily defied Know-a-bit to turn him into an ant. Notwithstanding this washing, Philibert did not feel easy in his mind ; and when, after breakfast, he and Sydney were together alone in the play-room, with a look of trouble on his plump round face, thus Philibert addressed his companion :—

“I say, Sydney, do you really think that that horrid little conjuring fairy ” (it was well that Frisket was not present to hear) “will really turn us both into pismires?”

“I think that it will be as if we had a dream of being

ants, and that in this odd kind of dream we shall enter the ant-hill."



PHILIBERT'S UNEASINESS.

"But I don't care a straw for seeing the inside of that wretched little heap!" exclaimed Philibert; "and if I ever went in, who knows whether I ever should come out again! Think what fierce little things these ants are. Remember what the fairy told us of terrible soldiers, that would let themselves be pulled in pieces rather than let go an enemy whom they had caught hold of. Why, they might catch hold of me!"

"You forget that these soldiers were termites, or

white-ants," said Sydney, "and that we have none such in England."

"And those fighting amazons—"

"They too do not live in this country," observed young Pierce; "it was in Switzerland, if you remember, that Huber watched the column on its march."

"But I don't see why English ants should be better humoured than African, or Indian, or Swiss ants," said Philibert; "they may bite as fiercely as any. Know-a-bit told us that those very wood-ants have been seen to carry off pupils—or puppies—or what did he call them?"

"Pupæ," said Sydney, with a smile.

"I know what I'll do," observed Philibert. "Mr. Gray is coming to see papa this forenoon (he's the clever fellow with the bald head, who knows so much about all kinds of creatures); I'll question him about ants; I'll ask him whether English pismires are quiet, gentle, good-natured little beasts, that never think of fighting or biting."

There was no fear of Philibert Philimore's forgetting his intention, for the perils that might be encountered in an ant-hill weighed a good deal on his mind. When at noon the boys entered the dining-room, where the rosy-cheeked jovial squire and his grave intelligent-looking guest were seated at table, with wine and fruit before them, Philibert scarcely waited to shake hands with

Mr. Gray before blurting out, "I want you to tell me everything about ants."

"Thirst for knowledge, thirst for knowledge," said the squire, as he pushed the decanter of port towards his guest, as if he thought that Mr. Gray might be thirsting for something besides.

"The subject of ants is one on which we might talk all day long," observed the bald-headed gentleman; "there are so many species of the formica, or ant, and their manners and habits are so various. The termites—"

"Oh, I know all about them already!" interrupted Philibert; "they make houses twenty feet high, and have a big king, and an enormous queen, and soldiers that fight like furies. I want to know if other kinds of ants are as savage."

"A green kind in Australia," replied Mr. Gray, "is said to inflict a wound almost as painful as the sting of a bee. Another is called the fire-ant, from the burning sensation which it causes. Captain Stedman relates that a whole company of soldiers started and jumped about as if scalded with boiling water, from having got amongst ant-nests. A writer named Knox, in an account of Ceylon, mentions a black ant, which, he tells us, 'bites desperately—as bad as if a man were burned by a coal of fire;' but he adds the consoling assurance that 'they are of a noble nature, and will not begin unless you disturb them.'"

The countenance of poor Philibert fell; he felt more frightened than ever, and began to regard ants as creatures much of the nature of wolves, only, happily, not so large and so strong. Sydney, who had not lost his courage, quietly inquired: "But what we should like most to know, sir, is whether our own little English ants ever bite or sting?"

"Some small English ants," replied Mr. Gray, "such as the red and the turf ants, are undoubtedly possessed of a sting, but the genus in general is more given to biting."

Philibert uttered a little groan.

"The ant is decidedly a pugnacious creature," continued Mr. Gray. "I had in one corner of my garden three separate colonies of ants of different species: the yellow (*Formica flava*), the negro (*Formica fusca*), and the red (*Myrmica rubra*); and it was not safe for a member of one of these colonies to cross over into the territory of either of its neighbours. Very savage battles sometimes take place between armies of different ants."

Poor Philibert groaned again, which made his father glance up at him in surprise. "Why, what's the matter with the boy?" muttered he. Seeing, however, nothing to cause him any uneasiness in the fat face of his heir, the jovial squire observed aloud: "I've heard that if a kitchen be infested with beetles, a sure way to get rid of them is to introduce a colony of ants—only," he con-

tinued gaily, "the remedy might be worse than the disease."

"Do you mean," inquired Sydney, "that the ant is a match for the black beetle—a creature fifty times larger than itself?"

"We must allow for numbers," observed Mr. Gray. "Ants, small as they are, seem to understand the axiom, *Union is strength*. But a lady of my acquaintance actually saw a single ant kill a wasp,* that appeared to have been by some accident disabled, so as to be unable to fly."

"An ant kill a wasp!" exclaimed Philibert, darting an uneasy glance towards Sydney.

"Yes; even English ants are remarkable creatures," observed Mr. Gray; "but when we compare them to the termites—the white-ants of warmer latitudes—their feats appear as nothing.—When I was in India," he continued, addressing himself to the squire, "not liking the bare appearance which the walls of rooms there usually present, I hung up on mine half-a-dozen good engravings, in gilded frames, with glass to preserve the prints. One morning it seemed to me that the glass was uncommonly dull, and the frames seemed to be covered with dust. I walked up to them, intending to give a good dusting to them, and a good scolding to my careless native servants, when what was my surprise to find

* A fact.

each glass, not hanging in the frame as I had left it the night before, but actually *fixed to the wall by a cement put round it by the white-ants!* The insects had eaten up the wooden frames for their supper, had gobbled up the greater part of my beautiful pictures, (showing a *taste* for such works of art!) and as the glass was too hard for even their strong little jaws, they had left each upheld by the covered way of cement which they had formed after their usual fashion, in order to devour their meal in peace."

The boys looked astonished, and the squire observed, "Insects with such voracious appetites must be the plague of your lives in India."

"Nothing seems to come amiss to white-ants," said Mr. Gray, smiling; "they've no objection to boots, shoes, papers, clothing. We have sometimes to put the feet of our chests of drawers into saucers full of water, to prevent the white-ants from eating up their contents."

"I wonder what such mischievous insects were made for!" exclaimed Philibert Philimore.

"My young friend," observed Mr. Gray gravely, "everything has its own proper place in creation; and some of the insects which we most dislike are valuable workers for man. White-ants, like burying beetles, and other creatures that are no favourites of ours—such as jackals and vultures—perform very important services. They are the scavengers of nature; they clear away

refuse—dead animals and decaying matter—which, if left to corrupt on the ground, would taint the air and make it unwholesome.”

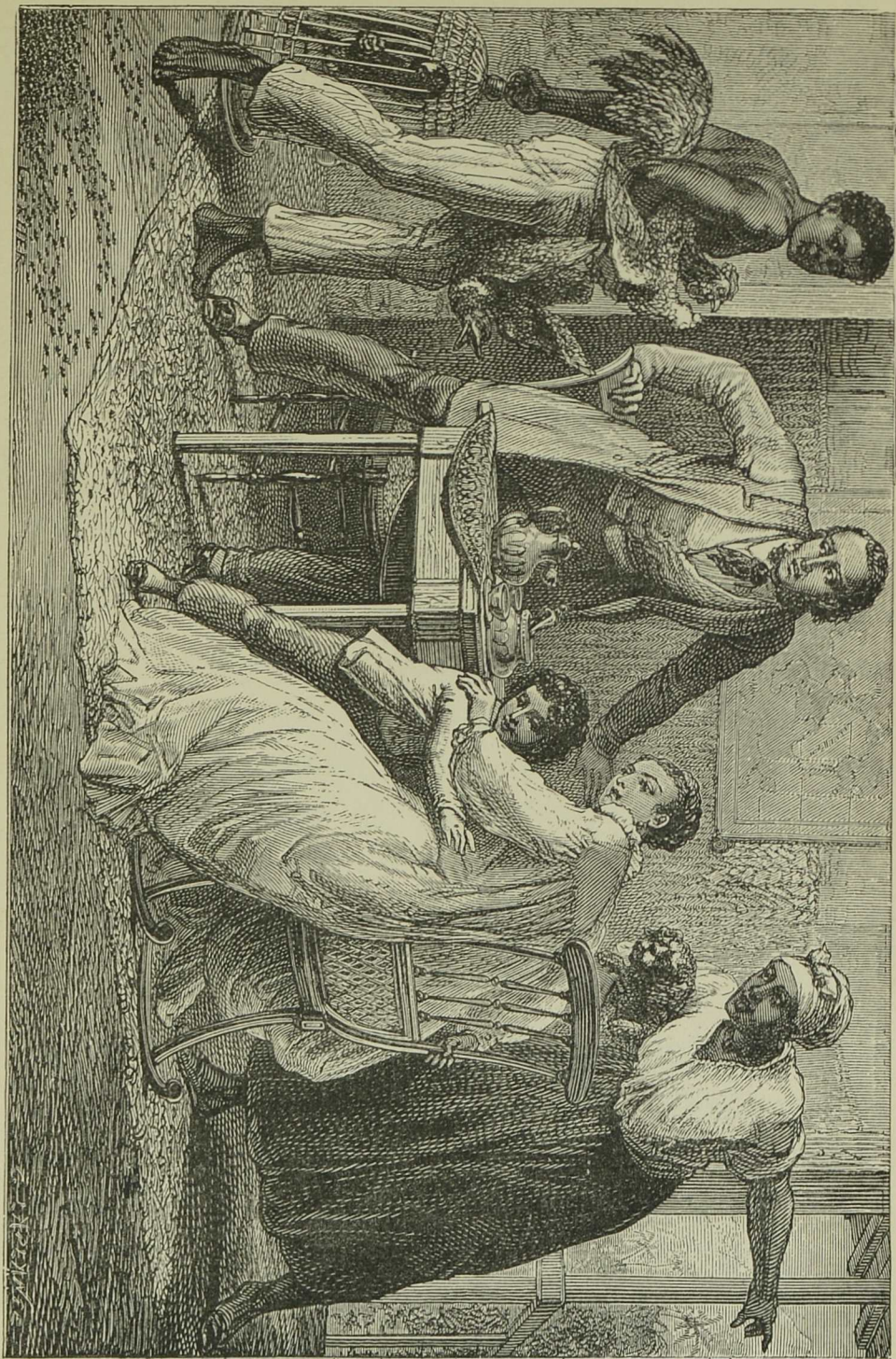
Sydney Pierce did not speak, but he remembered what his mother had often told him of the beautiful arrangements in the natural world, by which various races of creatures are made to conduce to the support and comfort of others ; nor had he forgotten Know-a-bit’s account of the poor Africans finding their termites to be delicious food.

“I’ve heard,” said the squire, “that in Tropical America there is a species of ants so useful in this way of clearing off rubbish, that when an army of them are seen on the march, the people throw open every box and drawer in their houses, that the ants may come in and make a clean sweep of all the centipedes, scorpions, and poisonous reptiles—to say nothing of cockroaches and beetles—that are apt to hide there in holes and crannies. Even rats and mice, lizards and snakes, are said to be hunted out and destroyed by these wonderful ants.”

“That kind of ants is called ‘foraging,’ and belongs to the genus *Eciton*,” remarked Mr. Gray. “These foraging-ants sally forth in immense hosts : their columns are sometimes a hundred yards in length !”

“Oh, they beat the amazons out and out !” exclaimed Philibert.

“And it is a curious circumstance that these armies



INVASION OF ANTS IN THE WEST INDIES.

of foraging-ants seem to be commanded by regular officers," continued Mr. Gray—"about one officer to each twenty common men—I beg pardon; I should say common ants."

"And have the officers gold epaulets on to show their rank?" asked Sydney playfully.

"No; they are distinguished by their large white heads, which go nodding up and down as they run along by the side of their men—I mean ants—to see that all are marching in proper order."

"Well, of all wonderful creatures that ever I have heard of, I think that ants are the most wonderful!" exclaimed Philibert. "They seem—these foraging-ants—to be like famous housemaids; and better than housemaids, if they clear the rooms even of snakes. But," he added, looking more grave, "I shouldn't like to watch the little fellows while they were busy at work, for fear lest—if they could not find cockroaches and lizards and snakes enough to please them—they should take a fancy to me."

"I should certainly advise you to take the precaution of getting out of their way," said Mr. Gray, with a smile. "The natives, it is said, when the insect army draws near, run out of their dwellings, and leave them for awhile to the ants. They know that the foragers will make themselves very much at home, and help themselves without need of assistance to whatever they

can find. When the insects have finished their useful work, they march off, and the people return to their houses, finding them all the more comfortable and safe from the visit of the foraging-ants."

"If a man should happen to come across one of the armies of ants, what would he do?" inquired Sydney.


"If he were a sensible fellow, he would take to his heels and be off," replied Mr. Gray.

"I think that it is time that you and I should be off too," observed the squire, rising from table, "for we have a good long ride before us, you know. And we'll follow the fashion of these foraging-ants by clearing the table," he added, pulling towards him a dish of beautiful grapes, of which he and his guest had just been partaking. "Sydney and Philibert, my lads, here's a bunch for each of you;" and, with a good-humoured nod to his son and young guest, by way of good-bye, the squire followed Mr. Gray to the old stone porch which led into the courtyard of Fairydehl Hall, where two saddled horses were waiting for the gentlemen, in charge of a mounted groom.



CHAPTER VIII.

FRISKET EXPLORING.



THE squire was much too courteous to have pulled the ripe bunches out of the china dish as roughly as he did, had he known that a lady was reclining in the midst of the fruit, resting so lightly upon it as not to rub the down from a single grape. We may wonder that, after all that Fairy Frisket had said to her brother of her dislike for mankind, and her love for a free airy life in the woods, we should find her in a dish of grapes in the dining-room of Fairy dell Hall. But the curiosity of the little lady had been fairly aroused; having seen something of the human race, she was inclined to see a little more, especially as she had not found it to be as utterly bad as her fancy had pictured. Fairy Frisket began to think that a large old house might be quite as great a curiosity as a rook's or a jackdaw's nest, especially as some of the building materials must have been brought from a very great distance.

Frisket had spent hours in the earlier part of the day in flying about the hall, or running up the edge of the staircase banister with those tiny fairy feet that did not disturb a particle of dust upon the carved oak. The pictures which hung upon the walls had greatly puzzled the fairy ; she had had her doubts at first whether the portrait of Lord Bacon in his high-crowned hat and large ruffle were not really alive,—only she had never heard of any race of men who had heads without bodies ; and though the ruffle might be a kind of huge white wing, it seemed to her scarcely suited to fly with. Closer examination convinced the fairy that the picture had nothing in it of life. What pleased Frisket most was a window of stained glass which she found at the end of a corridor. It would have been the prettiest of sights—could any one have seen it—to have beheld the little fairy fluttering in the coloured rays that came streaming through the diamond-shaped panes, her gossamer robe and transparent wings now catching tints of rich crimson, then of purple, and then of deep blue !

Bent upon exploring every corner of the curious old house, Frisket had actually found her way into the kitchen ; but the sight of a great joint of raw beef hanging up, and the scent of ham and of cheese, had soon sent the fairy flying away in disgust. She had lingered for a few minutes, however, chiefly attracted by the

huge fire,—the first fire, be it remembered, that Frisket ever had seen.

“Have these strange mortals,” mused the fairy, “managed to imprison within those black bars the wild Will-o’-the-wisp which I have sometimes seen at night dancing over the moor? even I never could catch it! Or are these red flames that go roaring up that dark passage flashes of lightning kept in a cage?”

That single kitchen-fire gave Frisket a greater idea of the power and skill of mankind than anything else in the large old dwelling; had she seen a lucifer match lighted, it would have struck her with amazement.

“Is that big mortal with a face like a poppy *feeding* that shining thing with lumps like stones, but blacker than beetles? Is it alive, that it darts upward, and curls around them, and licks them with bright red tongues, and utters such a joyous crackle, as if it enjoyed its meal!” exclaimed Frisket, as she watched the cook at the very commonplace occupation of putting on coals. The little lady drew nearer to examine the fire more closely, till the heat of the flame began to scorch her transparent wings; and annoyed by this, and the savoury scents of the kitchen, the fairy took her flight from the place, to rest herself after her wanderings amongst the cool purple and green grapes that appeared upon the dining-room table.

When the squire had disposed of the fruit, as we have

seen, between the two boys, Frisket returned to her former perch upon the soft velvet of Philibert's dress, resting her head against one of the yellow locks of the little boy's hair. Of course she curiously examined his linen collar, as it lay so close under her eyes, but she thought it as coarse as we might think a piece of rough matting, and said to herself that mortals were a very long way indeed behind the gossamer spiders.

"I say, Sydney, you don't get such jolly grapes as these at your home," observed Philibert Philimore, as he plucked at his fine large bunch.

"I seldom get grapes of any sort," replied Sydney; "and therefore, I suppose, I enjoy these all the more."

The fruit was indeed no small treat to the delicate boy, whose naturally feverish temperament made the cool juicy fruit especially refreshing. He only wished that his dear mother could have shared the rich purple bunch which he held in his hand.

The boys sauntered out of the dining-room into the large old hall, panelled with oak, and hung with ancient armour, stuffed foxes' heads, and stags' horns. This hall was an especial delight to Sydney, whose fancy peopled it with the knights and ladies of old. As Philibert and his companion crossed it, they met Mary coming from the little postern entrance with an empty jar in her hand.

"Little Simon Garland has just brought back the jar

which the soup was sent in. Do you wish to see him, Master Philibert?" asked Mary. Though she addressed herself to her young charge, she glanced at Sydney as she spoke.

"There's no use in our seeing him," said Philibert; "he has been given money, physic, and soup; I don't know what he can want more."

"Perhaps he would like us to give him a kind word too, and ask after his sick father," observed Sydney Pierce. His mother had taught him that it is not only help but sympathy that the poor should have from those who are richer; and his own heart told him that a smile and kind word will often give more pleasure than a present.

As Philibert had nothing more amusing to do, he went with his guest to the little low-arched door at which Simon Garland was waiting; the squire's son eating his grapes as he went, and throwing down the skins on the polished oak floor—an untidy proceeding, which offended the invisible fairy.

Frisket had, as we know, seen very little of human-kind. In the squire's comfortable home every one (except, perhaps, his young guest) appeared sleek and well fed; the squire himself was jovial and stout; Philibert's cheeks, though not rosy, were plump and round; the looks of every one of the servants showed that they were not stinted in regard to mutton and beef. Frisket

had an idea that almost all mankind were heavy and fat, and great was her surprise when human poverty for the first time met her view. With wondering pity she looked upon little Simon, with his face so thin and so pale, his neatly-patched clothes, and the coarse shoes that had been worn so long as to be past patching and mending.

“Alas ! poor child, he looks like a dry pea-pod !” said the fairy to herself ; “ I hope that there are not many of the human race like him !”

Could Frisket have glanced into many of the wretched abodes of the poor, she would have seen sights of sorrow that might have saddened even the blithe little fairy.

“How is your father, Simon ?” asked Sydney kindly, while Philibert stood by eating up his grapes as fast as he could.

“Father’s the better for the soup, thank’ee, master,” replied Simon, a grateful smile lighting up his thin little face. “But he han’t got rid of the fever yet—he lies a long time awake o’ nights,—the cough tries him so, and hinders his sleeping.”

“And makes his mouth feel hot and dry, I daresay,” said Sydney, who knew too well what it is thus to suffer.

“Mother al’ays puts a cup of water by father’s bedside at night, just to cool his lips. Taking a drop now and then, he drinks it all up afore morning.”

Frisket noticed that Sydney glanced down at the bunch of grapes which he held, then again at the boy, then once more at the sweet juicy fruit. She guessed the thought which was passing through the mind of Sydney, and watched with keen interest the first struggle against self which she had ever yet had an opportunity of seeing.



SYDNEY AND SIMON.

"I say, Sydney, there's our dinner-bell," observed Philibert, turning on his heel.


"The little glutton!" exclaimed the fairy; "he has eaten half a cluster of grapes already, and now he is eager for that heavy animal food!"

The moment that Philibert's back was turned, Sydney held out his own tempting bunch of grapes to the sick man's son. "This will refresh your poor father more than the water," he said; and hurrying away without waiting for thanks, he joined his little companion



CHAPTER IX.

THE BRUSH AND THE WAND.



“WELL done, Sydney Pierce, well done!” exclaimed the invisible fairy. “I shall stir your food with the golden end of my wand; you shall enjoy your dinner to-day; it shall be the sweetest that you ever ate in your life! I could almost wish that I myself were a child instead of a fairy, that I too might have a battle to fight and a victory over self to win—that I too might give up something to make a poor sufferer happy. This must be a nobler kind of pleasure than any that fairyland can afford!”

Philibert usually took his meals in his play-room, where he was waited upon by Mary. To the play-room, therefore, the two boys went at the summons of the bell, accompanied by the unseen fairy still perched upon Philibert's shoulder. A very savoury scent proceeded from the dish at the top of the table, which was

spread with a milk-white cloth, on which appeared plates, knives, forks, and spoons laid for two. The savoury scent was not agreeable to Fairy Frisket ; it reminded her of the kitchen, and the great joint of raw meat which she had seen hanging up there. But if the odour annoyed the fair lady, it had a very different effect upon the two boys.

“ I say, there’s something good in that dish ; I can tell by the smell ! ” cried Philibert. “ Whip off the cover, Mary ; we’re both as hungry as hounds ! ”

Sydney was the more hungry of the two, as he had not damped his appetite by eating half a pound of ripe grapes. Very tempting to him was the appearance of the nicely-browned cutlets, with the rich thick sauce around them, which met his view when Mary had lifted the cover from the dish.

“ I say, this *is* good ! ” exclaimed Philibert, grasping his knife and fork, and holding them upright, while his fat little fists rested on the table. “ Cook hasn’t given us veal cutlets before for ever so long ! ”

“ Veal—is that veal ? ” asked Sydney, in a tone that betrayed a little disappointment.

“ Yes ; jolly nice it is. Don’t you like it ? ” said Philibert.

“ I daresay that I should like it very much, ” replied Sydney ; “ but the doctor forbade my ever eating veal. ”

“ Oh ! the doctor’s a donkey ! ” cried Philibert ; “ and

you're not under his thumb at Fairy dell Hall. Just eat away like a man ; it won't do you a bit of harm."

Sydney hesitated for a moment, and then said with a little effort, "My mother would not wish me to take it." A pink tinge rose upon the boy's cheek as he spoke.

"But your mother is not here, any more than the doctor, and I won't tell of you!" cried Philibert, laughing, as he plunged his fork into the nearest brown cutlet.

"I'll do just the same as if she were here ; she trusts me," said Sydney. And again Frisket exclaimed, "Well done!" at this second little victory over self.

"But you don't mean to go without your dinner, I suppose," said Philibert ; and he put a large piece of the cutlet into his own mouth.

"Perhaps I can have something else ; only I am sorry to give trouble," replied Sydney, looking at Mary, who was bringing in a dish of green pease.

"Oh ! he'll fare like a fairy for once!" exclaimed Frisket, who was pleased at the idea of her favourite boy giving up what she considered the shocking habit of feeding upon meat. But the next words of Sydney undeceived her.

"Perhaps there is a little cold meat in the house."

"Certainly, Master Pierce ; there's sure to be a bit left from the cold shoulder of mutton. I'll fetch it directly," said Mary, and she quitted the room. She

was ever willing to serve "Master Sydney, who is such a thorough little gentleman, always civil and kind to every one," as the maid observed to the cook when she asked her for the mutton.

"Well, Sydney, you *are* a poor creature, if you dare not so much as venture on a bit of nice veal for fear of making yourself sick!" cried Philibert, munching as he spoke. The colour on Sydney's cheek rose higher than before; he looked as if he were about to make some sharp retort to the boy who could despise him merely for being less hearty and strong than himself, but he pressed his lips tightly together, and uttered nothing in reply. Again the fairy marked a silent victory over self.

But Frisket felt no need for the same self-command in a fairy; indeed, she had taken the idea into her tiny head, that, having once come amongst young mortals, she might do great things in the way of bringing them into good order. Twice she had refrained from touching up Master Philibert with her wee brush made of wasp stings, but now she gave him a brisk tap on the lobe of his fat little ear.

"Wa-a-a!" yelled the boy, starting up from his seat, and clapping his hand over the place.

"What's the matter?" asked Sydney in surprise, unable to help thinking that Philibert was indeed "a poor creature," for giving such a roar like a baby.

“Something has stung me; some horrid ugly beast!—wa-a!” howled Philibert. Ah, if he could but have seen the face of Frisket when he gave such a description of a fairy!

Sydney good-naturedly jumped down and ran to the rescue, to find out the offending creature. That Philibert had been hurt was plain enough, for the big tears were running down his plump cheeks.

“I can’t see a wasp anywhere, nor any other insect,” said Sydney, after a search.

“I daresay it’s one of those dreadful foraging-ants, or amazons, or termites, or something!” cried Philibert, quite forgetting in his pain that none of these insects are natives of England. “I daresay it has hid itself in my clothes.” He jumped up and violently shook his blue dress. “Perhaps it is running down my back! O Sydney! O Mary!”—the maid had just returned with the meat—“do look for the horrid thing that has stung me right on the ear!”

Sydney looked and Mary looked amongst the boy’s clothes, under the collar, under the sleeves, about the table, below the table; but of course they looked in vain. Frisket did not choose to pull her tassel, and they might have searched to the end of their lives before they discovered the fairy.

If Frisket had hoped to mend the manners or improve the temper of Philibert Philimore by that rap on his ear,

she was to be disappointed. The boy returned to his veal cutlets in a mood like that of a wounded bear; while Sydney ate his cold mutton with a serene conscience, and the sauce of a good appetite. Young Pierce would have preferred the daintier dish, but he was happy in the consciousness that he was obeying his mother, and much enjoyed his simple food.

"I cannot bear to touch flesh with my fairy wand," murmured Frisket, "for veal and mutton are food which no fairy could ever abide; but if anything eatable appear on the table, I'll make the boy who gave away all his grapes taste something sweeter than anything which has ever yet passed the lips of a mortal."

The meat course was succeeded by a green-gage tart, a help from which was placed by Mary before each of the boys. Little guessed they who stood on the edge of Philibert's china plate, taking care not to dip her delicate little feet into the juice of the fruit, as she stirred it with the green end of her wand. Frisket then flew off like a butterfly, and, without alighting, plunged the golden tip for a second into the midst of Sydney's supply.

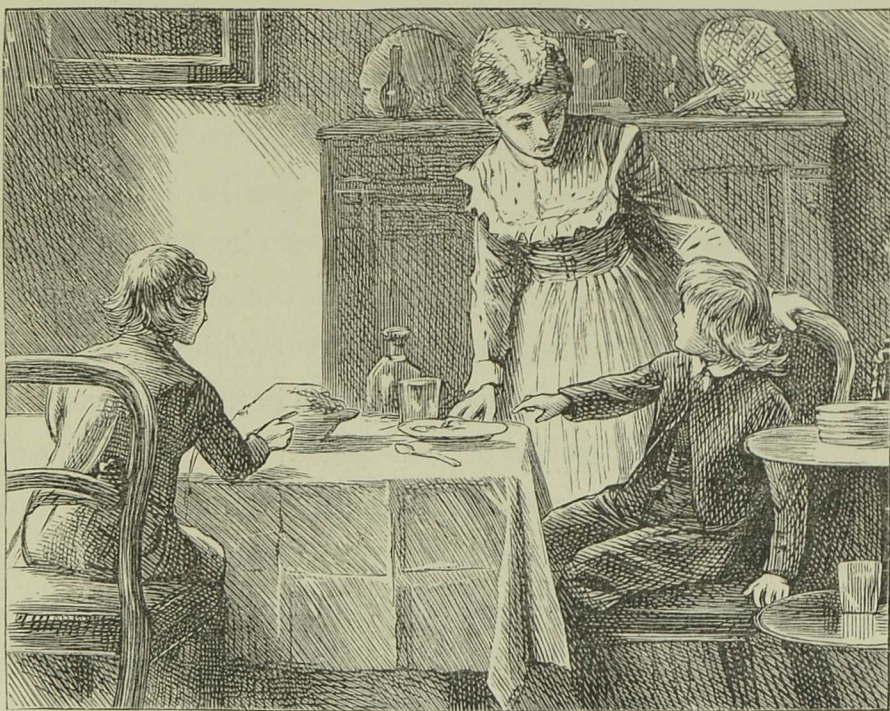
"What a horrid taste this tart has!" exclaimed Philibert, turning up his nose with a look of disgust when he had taken the first spoonful of the fruit tart before him.

"Why, Master Philibert, you always like green-gage tart better than anything else," said Mary.

"I don't like this, it tastes like soap—ugh!" exclaimed Philibert, pushing back his plate.

"Do you find anything wrong in the tart, Master Sydney?" asked Mary.

Sydney had just been thinking that he had never before in his life tasted anything half so nice. All the



THE BOYS AND THE TART.

sweetness of a bunch of rich grapes seemed to be gathered into every green-gage. He only smiled, however, and replied, "I cannot say that I find anything wrong."

Thus encouraged, Philibert tried another spoonful, but he could scarcely manage to swallow it. "Taste it

yourself!" he cried fiercely to Mary, pointing to the remains of the tart in the dish.

Mary tasted and thought it excellent: it had not been stirred by the fairy.

"I'll tell you what, Master Philibert," said Mary: "you've been making yourself sick by eating such a quantity of rich veal cutlet. I believe Master Sydney's mamma is quite right—veal is not wholesome for children. You do not like that nice tart because you're not in a humour to like anything."

"I don't like soap!" exclaimed Philibert furiously, flinging himself backwards on his chair, and kicking upwards at the table, which action set the glasses jingling and the fairy laughing, while neither Sydney nor Mary found it easy to keep from smiling. Perhaps there was some truth in the guess of the maid; at least some of my readers may have found themselves inclined to find fault with viands which hungry little children would enjoy, from having played the glutton like Philibert Philimore. *Greediness* often has the same effect as the green end of the fairy's wand.

"I wonder how you can behave so like a big baby, Master Philibert," said Mary to her spoiled young charge; "I'm really ashamed that Master Sydney should see you in your tantrums. You first roar and cry out that you are stung, when there's nothing near that could hurt you; and then complain of the nicest food, instead of

being thankful that you have dainties when others can scarcely get bread. I'm sure that, with all your playthings and pleasures, you ought to be the happiest boy in the world."


"I'm not happy at all!" growled Philibert; the fairy's green-tipped wand was at that moment touching his eyelid. "I'm tired of all my playthings, they are so ugly and stupid; and I don't see what pleasures I have. I don't like this great dull old Hall; it's the most gloomy place in the world!"

Sydney uttered an exclamation of astonishment. "Oh! it seems to me to be so grand, so beautiful; everything that I see here I admire so much; I can hardly fancy any place more delightful than Fairydell Hall!"

Of course Frisket's wand had touched his eyelid, but it was the golden-tipped end. Ah! little reader, whether you dwell in a cottage or a palace, a shop in a street or a castle amid woods, how do you view the objects around you? Are you pleased with and thankful for your blessings, or inclined to find fault with everything around you? Contentment is the golden end of the wand, and discontent is the green one. Wonderful is the difference made in every object by the touch of the one or the other!

CHAPTER X.

INSIDE THE CITY.

 "O you believe, Sydney, that anything will really come of Know-a-bit's touching us with that curious fancy-pomatum, as he calls it?" was Philibert's anxious whisper, when, on the evening of that day, the two boys were preparing for bed.

"The fairy has always kept his promises," replied Sydney, "so it seems as if we ought not to doubt him; though it is difficult to imagine being turned into an ant!"

"The pot of pomatum was so very, very small," observed Philibert.

"Ah! but perhaps a very little 'fancy' may go a long way," said Sydney.

Philibert was very restless and uneasy, and could not get to sleep for some time, perhaps owing to a feeling of fear and wonder,—perhaps from his having eaten too

plentifully of veal cutlet. Sydney slept long and serenely, but awoke at last with a sensation of the greatest amazement. The fresh, cool air of early morn was around him, the forest boughs waved above him; the morning star was growing pale in the clear blue sky, and in the east a bar of red gold showed where the sun was about to rise. What astonished Sydney,—for no expectation beforehand could prepare him for a sensation so exceedingly funny,—was to find himself quite close to the earth, and so small that he could have run up a blade of grass, or have hidden himself under a daisy!

“Oh!” exclaimed Sydney in amazement, “what would my mother say, if she knew that her boy was running about upon six little legs, no bigger than pin-points!”

If I am asked how Sydney in his new shape managed to utter such an exclamation, I must own that it puzzles me to give an explanation. It is true that he had a jaw and a tongue, but whether he was able to produce with them any sound which could be heard even by an ant, the most learned naturalist scarcely could undertake to decide. That ants have some kind of language understood by their companions—at least, that they are able in some way to ask for food or for help, or to give tidings where a prize may be found,—seems clear to those who have watched them closely. Some believe that this language is expressed by the motion of their feelers or antennæ; that it is something like the method

by which deaf and dumb people speak on their fingers ; while others suppose that these same quivering antennæ are actually to ants what *ears* are to us, and convey to them sounds too faint to reach man's less delicate sense. As Fairy Know-a-bit is never likely, dear reader, to turn either you or me into emmets, we shall probably never know exactly the nature of this ant language. Had we been ever so close to Sydney when he uttered his exclamation of wonder, we should certainly not have heard it ; and we should have seen in him nothing but a very commonplace rusty-coloured pismire, such as may be found running about in hundreds of woods in England.

"O dear ! Sydney Pierce, is that you ?" cried an ant close beside him. "Isn't it horrid to feel so dreadfully small ! I'm so glad that you are in the scrape as well as myself !"

"We had better make the most of our time while we are so small," observed Sydney the ant. "There's our hill : I'd no notion that it was so big ; why, it looks to me now as large as one of the Pyramids of Egypt. How our little companions here ever managed to raise it so high, puzzles my brain."

"I don't fancy going in !" cried Philibert. He was not possessed of a very stout heart either as a boy or a pismire. "I don't like at all being jostled in a crowd, and I'm sure that of all bustling busy places in the world an ant-hill must be about the worst."

"Are you in want of a guide, gentle strangers?" said a pismire approaching the visitors, and laying her little quivering antennæ on Sydney in a manner which he felt to be the perfection of ant-politeness. "I see that you do not belong to this community, and it might be agreeable to you if I were to conduct you through a few of the chambers and galleries in the city before us."

Sydney was astonished at a pismire having such an elegant manner and address; he little knew that it was Fairy Frisket herself who had chosen to animate the form of an ant, bent upon having a little frolic with her human companions in this their strange new position.

"We should be very much obliged to you indeed, Mrs. Ant, if you would kindly show us the way, and introduce us to the gentlemen and ladies inside the city," replied Sydney; "or they may think that we have no business to go wandering about in the place."

"Why, where are the little holes which we saw yesterday, with the ants running in and out of them?" cried Philibert Philimore.

"I've heard," observed Frisket, "that human beings put up shutters on their windows, and close their doors, at night; and much in the same way these wood-ants stop up their passages when darkness comes on, that they may labour or rest in peace and quiet in their homes. They are not like the brown ants, that love to go abroad in the night, and who used to be supposed to

be especially fond of moonshine. But see!—as it is dawn, the good people of the city are pulling down their shutters and opening their doors, which shows that they expect the day to be fine.”

“Would they keep their passages shut up then,” asked Sydney, “if they expected the day to be wet?”

“They keep their passages well closed in rainy weather,” observed Fairy Frisket; “ants have a great dislike to the rain.”

“I should not think that such a heap of twigs, straw, old grass, little bits of wood, and dried leaves could keep out the slightest shower,” observed Sydney.

“You show that you are not an experienced pismire,” said Frisket gaily. “You may notice that the whole hill before us is skilfully rounded in shape, so as to carry off water, and so constructed that even violent rains can soak in but a very little way. But there is an opening from which two active ladies have just succeeded in dragging several fragments of wood: will you please to walk in, young gentlemen; there is no need to knock here before you enter.”

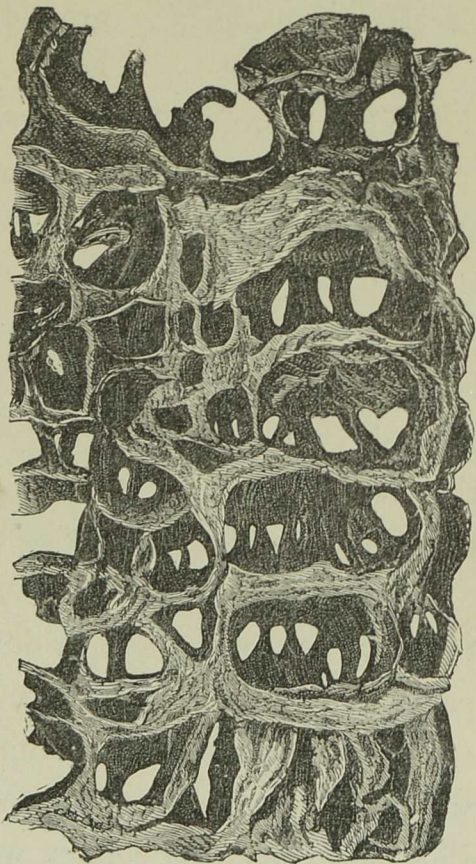
In trotted Fairy Frisket on her six little legs, closely followed by Sydney; but Philibert hung back,—he was afraid to enter what he considered to be a little black hole.

Sydney was astonished at the length of the passages which he now traversed in company with the unknown

fairy. His eyes being of course ant's eyes, he had no difficulty in moving about in what to human beings must have seemed to be utter darkness. He passed a great many wood-ants, who were exceedingly busy at their various occupations,—too busy, indeed, to pay any attention to him. Each was working by herself, without interfering with her neighbours, or appearing to need any direction or aid. Sydney soon discovered that what he had called an ant-hill was a great building (great compared to the size of the builders), with story raised upon story, long galleries, and ranges of rooms.

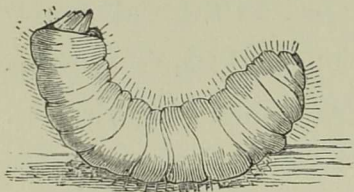
"What are those ants about that I see running down from the upper stories, carrying little white burdens?" asked Sydney, stepping backwards to let them pass, for they seemed in such haste, that had he stood in their way they might have run over his little body.

"They are the nurses, looking after the comfort of



SECTION OF AN ANT-HILL.

the pupæ—the baby-ants,” replied Frisket. “The weather promises to be so hot, that the upper stories will be too warm for the dear little pets; their nurses know that they will be cooler on the ground-floor, or down in the cellars.”



LARVA OF ANT.

“What careful little nurses!” exclaimed Sydney. “And when the weather grows cold, will they carry the children upstairs?”

“Up they go in damp, chilly weather, nurses and pupæ together. They know well enough that then it is not healthful to live on the ground, or under the ground. But you have as yet seen but a small part of the city: come this way, Mr. Ant, and take a peep at the tunnels and the galleries hollowed out yonder.”

“These are what we should call vaults,” observed Sydney, as they took a downward direction through passages formed in the earth itself with wonderful skill,—low themselves, but leading to a large middle chamber which was crowded with ants. “I know that Squire Philimore has beer-cellars, wine-cellars, and coal-cellars beneath his fine house; but human beings seldom care themselves to live in such dark low places. These ants seem to enjoy burying themselves alive.”

“Alive you may well say,” answered the fairy; “for they are lively enough, and busy enough, and don’t care

for plenty of light and air, as human beings are said to do. But these wood-ants go to sleep in the winter, huddled up in their little cells, and not requiring to eat or drink until the warm sunshine in spring calls them up to labour and pleasure again.



CHAPTER XI.

THE ANT-LION.



WE will now return to Philibert Philimore, who had remained on the outside of the ant-hill, feeling, it must be confessed, very nervous and uneasy in his strange new position. The ants soon began to swarm in numbers out of their city, and Philibert had to move from his place again and again to prevent his being jostled out of it by his active little neighbours. He was aware of a very strong and peculiar scent from the ant-hill, which reminded him that Know-a-bit had once informed him that vinegar can be made from ants.

"These rusty-coloured little fellows must be different indeed from those African white-ants," thought Philibert. "I'm sure that if these were dished up, no one would ever think them like sugared cream or sweet almond paste!"

"Get out of my way, you snail—you slug! What

are you standing and staring and doing nothing for?" cried an angry pismire, as he pushed past Philibert Philimore.

"There's more of the vinegar than of the sugar in his temper at least," thought the poor little boy in the shape of an ant.

"Come you here, lazy-legs, and help me!" said another pismire, who was trying in vain to pull along a bit of dried grass at least four times as long as herself.

Philibert stood stock-still. He did not choose to work; and very hurting to his pride it was to be bullied by an ant.

"We don't keep idlers here," cried the impatient pismire. "If you don't work, we'll bite off your head!"

The hint was enough. Philibert rushed at the dry bit of grass, and pulled and tugged at it for his life. He had never laboured so hard before.

"Where are we to take it?" asked Philibert, when stopping for a moment to take breath.

"Into the hill, of course; there's one of the walls that needs repairing. Pull the grass right into that doorway," said the ant.

Philibert had been afraid to venture into the ant-hill in company with Sydney Pierce; and now to go into a dark place where he would probably lose his way, and that with a pismire who had thoughts of biting off his head, was so exceedingly unpleasant, that the poor little

fellow could not make up his mind to do it. Philibert's end of the burden was nearer the hole than that held by his new companion, but, by a sudden movement, he managed to change its position.

"What are you about, you stupid?" cried the pismire. "We don't want to lay it across the door, but to carry it in."

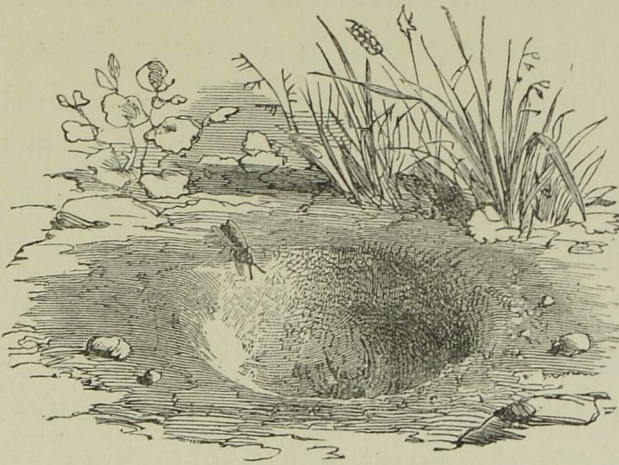
"I want you to take your end in first," replied Philibert, secretly resolving that he would not enter at all.

"You're an awkward pismire, if there ever was one!" cried the little labourer, turning his end of the burden, however, so as to drag it first into the hole.

No sooner had the wood-ant disappeared under the dark little doorway, than Philibert dropped the bit of dry grass, and took to his,—I must not say *heels*,—but his six little legs, and ran off at a tremendous pace, considering the smallness of their size. Nothing could stop him in his course, not even lumps of clod almost as big as peas. A hairy caterpillar lay in his way—Philibert was over her in a moment! The boy ant was running for his life, for he was dreadfully afraid that one of his new companions would bite off his little black head.

"More haste, worse speed," says the proverb; and poor Philibert Philimore was to prove the truth of the saying. Little thought he, as he scampered away from the hill, of hidden pitfalls, or of secret foes who lie in ambush for ants! Running over a sandy spot, down tumbled poor

Philibert into the trap which had been carefully prepared to catch such prey by the insect called an ant-lion. What was his horror to find himself suddenly plunging down the sandy pitfall, almost rolling into the powerful jaws of the dreadful creature lying in wait at the bottom!



LYING IN WAIT.


This creature was somewhat of the shape of a fat garden-spider, but with long slender mandibles to catch at its prey. Philibert certainly did not stop to examine its appearance closely, for, having tumbled into the pit, all his efforts were now directed to scrambling out of it again. The ant-lion was no more inclined to let a dinner escape than Philibert himself might have been. It was, indeed, quite unable to run after Philibert, for the ant-lion, though possessed of six legs, can only use two of them for walking, and that but to drag itself slowly *backwards*, so that it is clear that nature never

intended this creature to overtake its prey in the chase. But in the sand of the pit which it has digged, the ant-lion possesses a terrible weapon ; for if the insect cannot run, it can jerk and fling, as Philibert soon found to his cost. As the poor boy ant struggled up the steep sides of the pit, even the movement of his little legs brought loose sand tumbling about him ; while the ant-lion from behind sent a dreadful shower of it after him—sand-grains being to an ant much what sharp stones would be to a boy. Philibert struggled, scrambled, slipped backwards, then by dint of frantic efforts got a little way up the side of the pit, when a blow from a sand-grain knocked him down again, almost into the jaws of the hungry ant-lion ! Happily at that moment the hour during which the fairy spell lasted expired, and Philibert awoke with a scream, leaving the body of the pismire to serve as the ant-lion's dinner !



CHAPTER XII.

BLACK SPOTS.

HY, what on earth is the matter, Master Sydney?" exclaimed Mary, running into the room of her charge in alarm at the sound of his scream. Philibert, half raised on his elbow in his bed, was staring around him, and rubbing his eyes, looking bewildered and frightened. "Did anything hurt you, to make you scream like a baby?"

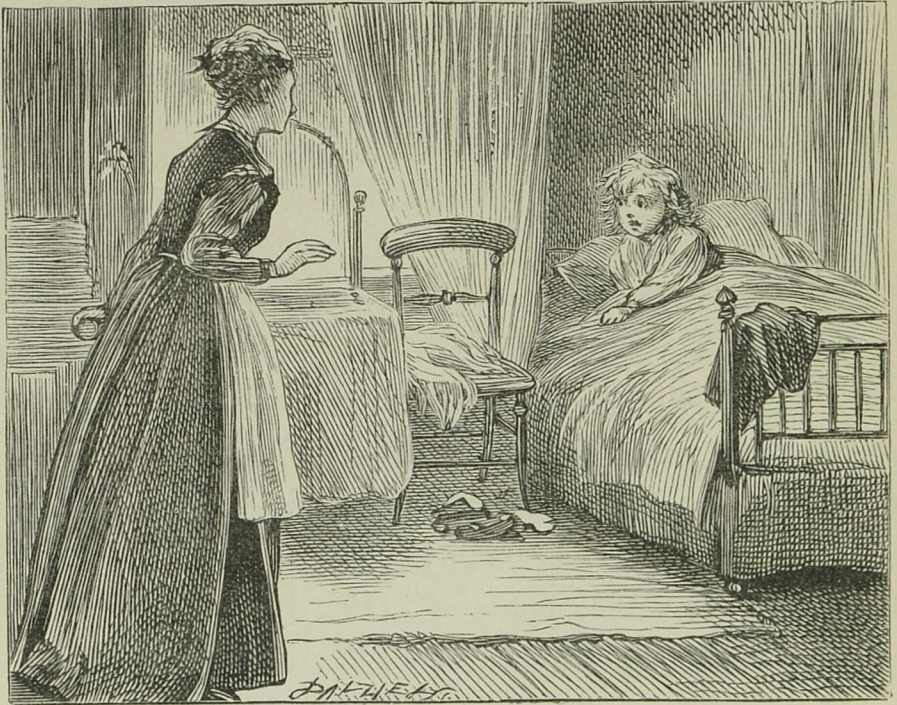
"You would have screamed too, if a horrid spider had been going to gobble you up!" cried Philibert fiercely.

Mary burst out laughing. "Where is this spider?" said she. "I should not have thought that a brave young gentleman would have been frightened out of his wits by a poor little insect."

"Little, do you call it!" cried Philibert; "it was bigger than myself—and so fat!"

Mary laughed more merrily than before. "You must have had a funny dream," said she.

"I've not been dreaming at all,—you know nothing about the matter," cried Philibert, who was highly offended, and not a little ashamed. He was sufficiently wide-awake now to remember that he would get into a great scrape with Know-a-bit if he mentioned to any one (except, of course, to Sydney, who was himself in



PHILIBERT'S ALARM.

the secret) anything about his intercourse with the fairy. Philibert could say nothing about fancy-pomatum to Mary, nor tell her the extraordinary adventure which he had had in the shape of a wood-ant. Not being able to give any explanation of his conduct, Philibert felt ex-

ceedingly vexed at having been heard to utter a scream, and then words which must, he knew, have sounded absolute nonsense. He almost danced about the room with passion when, while she was helping the little boy to dress himself, Mary remarked, with a provoking smile,—

“I shall take very good care, little master, that cook never sends up veal cutlets again for your dinner.”

Very sulky and ill-tempered was Philibert during all the time that he was washing and dressing; the soap flew one way, the sponge another; and the boy would scarcely stand still for a moment to have the parting made down the middle of his curly head of hair. Mary set down all this temper, of course, as the effect of eating veal cutlets. As savage as a bear the squire's son met his companion Sydney in the play-room before breakfast; while Mary went for the cups and saucers, the fresh milk, butter, and eggs.

The face of Sydney was bright with good-humour; Fairy Frisket, who was hovering near, had again touched his eyelids with the golden tip of her wand.

“O Philibert,” began the smiling Sydney, “what a curious, amusing hour we two spent with the ants!”

“Curious, amusing, indeed!” exclaimed Philibert with anger; “I don't know what *you* may think it, but *I* think it anything but amusing to crawl about upon six legs, and then to be nearly devoured by a spider! How dared you leave me in the lurch?”

"I leave you ! What do you mean ?" asked Sydney. "I only went into the ant-hill ; and I thought, of course, that you were coming in too. Why did you not follow that most polite little ant ?"

Philibert did not choose to reply, "Because I was too much frightened to venture," although that would certainly have been the most honest answer to have given. "I did not choose," he muttered, "to go into that horrid, dirty hole."

"I assure you that the place was neither dirty nor horrid, but extremely curious and interesting," said Sydney. "But do tell me of your adventures, Philibert ; I can't imagine how you managed to get into the web of a spider."

"I never said that I got into a web," replied the squire's son, as tartly as if he had been accused of getting into a jail ; "I tumbled down a horrid, crumbling pit-fall, at the bottom of which lay a fat gray spider, with dreadful long feelers, which jerked up such a lot of sand after me, that as fast as I clambered up I tumbled back again, almost into its gaping jaws."

"Oh, it must have been an ant-lion, not a spider," exclaimed Sydney with animation. "My mother has told me all about it ; and she said that though called a British insect, it is seldom if ever found in this country ; but it is common enough in France. There is no creature that I have ever wished more to see."

"I wish that you had had to do with it instead of me; I am sure that I saw much more of it than I liked," growled Philibert Philimore.

"The ant-lion has a strong flat head," said Sydney, recalling what he had been taught; "with one of its legs it will manage to place upon this head a load of sand, which it chucks upwards with wonderful strength, tossing as if it were a little bull. That curious insect will carry up out of its pit even a stone two or three times the weight of its body. Fancy what a head it must have!"

Philibert gave a little grunt, as if he took no great pleasure in hearing of the ant-lion's strength or skill, and muttered, "It's the ugliest beast that ever I saw in my life."

"But its beauty-time is to come," observed Sydney. "Mother says that the ant-lion makes for itself a case or coffin of sand, fastened together by threads of its silk; puts a silken web over the whole, and then goes to sleep as the chrysalis of a caterpillar does, turns into a pupa, and bursts out at last with four beautiful gauzy wings, and looks very much like that lovely creature the dragon-fly."

"I don't care to hear anything more about it; it's all stupid nonsense to say that that horrid little monster of a spider can ever turn into a creature with wings!" exclaimed Philibert. The ill-tempered boy added many

other foolish words to a speech which showed great ignorance—now abusing the ant-lion ; now his innocent companion for leaving him to the spider, as he persisted in calling the insect ; and now Know-a-bit, the fairy, for having dared to rub upon him that horrid fancy-pomatum.

I have mentioned that Fairy Frisket was present in the room, of course listening to all that was said ; and very indignant was the little lady at the conduct of the squire's spoiled boy. Frisket had taken into her tiny head the idea that she could, by means of fairy punishments, bring Philibert Philimore into much better order, reform his temper, and mend his manners. Certainly the boy had seemed none the better for the rap from the fairy's sting-brush, nor for the spoiling of his green-gage tart ; but Frisket, who had had no experience in teaching, and who was as positive in her own opinion as ignorant people often are, was resolved to keep to her punishment plan. Perching upon Philibert's shoulder once more, at every silly passionate word which he uttered the fairy tapped his cheek or nose with the green end of her wand, leaving wherever she tapped a tiny black spot behind.

Sydney Pierce did not notice any change in his young companion, because he was not looking at Philibert. As the squire's son was so much out of temper, Sydney thought it better to leave his passion to cool ; and trying to pay as little attention as possible to Philibert's bad

language, young Pierce was examining the pretty pictures which ornamented the walls. But when Mary re-entered the play-room with the breakfast on a tray, she had hardly set it down on the table before she exclaimed in amazement, "Why, Master Philibert, what is the matter with your cheek?"

Her exclamation made Sydney turn round and look. "It's all sprinkled with black speckles!" he cried.

Philibert pulled out his little silk handkerchief, and gave the fat cheek such a vigorous scrubbing that he made it as red as fire. But this had only the effect of making the speckles appear on a scarlet ground instead of rather a sallow one.

"Dear! *dear*! DEAR!" exclaimed Mary, each "dear" being uttered in a tone of louder alarm; "it's a black rash coming out on your face! That's not measles, nor chickenpox, nor smallpox!—oh! if my father, the chemist, were but here! I never heard of black spots—except—except in the plague!"

Philibert stared at Mary with his eyes and mouth wide open, then rushed in terror to a little mirror over the mantelpiece and commenced rubbing his face again with more energy than before.

"You had none of these spots when we met first in the morning," said Sydney, who little guessed that the ugly marks had been left by foolish and naughty words. Ah, little reader, if Fairy Frisket with her green-tipped

wand were perched on your shoulder, would that merry face of yours never be dotted with ugly black spots for naughty talking?

"I must speak to the squire directly about this," said Mary, as she hastened out of the room, feeling seriously alarmed. She met the jovial master of Fairy dell Hall at the door of his study.

"Please, sir, may I speak to you about Master Philibert?" said Mary, in a tone so anxious that it awoke a little alarm in the father.

"Nothing wrong with the child, I hope?" cried the squire.

"I don't know, sir, indeed," replied Mary, "but Master Philibert is so odd. He has been exceedingly fractious, has Master Philibert, both yesterday and to-day."

"He wants a little more of the rod, and a little less bread and butter," observed the squire, with a good-humoured smile.

"He awoke this morning with such a scream, sir, and cried that he was going to be eaten up by a spider bigger than himself."

"Dreaming, dreaming," laughed the squire; "the little chap had taken too hearty a dinner."

"And just now," continued Mary, "a black rash has broken out on one of his cheeks and the side of his nose."

"A black rash!" re-echoed the astonished squire,

every trace of a smile leaving his face. "This must be looked to at once;" and striding into his study, Mr. Philimore rang the bell loudly, and in half a minute rang it loudly again, which brought Thomas up in such haste that he nearly fell over the coal-scuttle, which careless Sarah, the housemaid, had left in the passage.

"Thomas, mount Brownie at once, and ride off to the town for the doctor!" cried the impatient squire. "Tell Dr. Grim that Master Philibert has been taken ill, and I beg that he'll come and see my son directly." Then, while Thomas hastened off to the stable to get Brownie saddled and bridled, the squire himself strode up the oak staircase to the play-room, taking two steps at a time.

"A black rash, as sure as a gun,—I never saw anything like it before,—can't imagine what can cause such a symptom!" cried the squire, as he examined the fat little cheek which Frisket had powdered with spots. The squire looked grave, Sydney looked grave, Mary looked grave, and poor Philibert, who began to fancy that something very dreadful must be going to happen, was ready to burst into a roar.

Fairy Frisket was astonished at all the alarm and trouble which she had occasioned by merely making a few little black dots on a mortal's cheek. Cowslips did not mind being speckled, the ladybird never seemed a bit the worse for the spots on her wings. Fairy Frisket,

we must remember, had never known sickness; the word "symptom" was like Greek and Hebrew to her; she had not an idea what measles, smallpox, or chicken-pox could possibly be.

"I'm really sorry that all these mortals should vex themselves so about a little speckling," said the fairy to herself; "I'll not dot Master Philibert's face any more, let him talk what nonsense he may."

The fear that he had some horrible illness coming on took away all poor Philibert's appetite for his breakfast; he ate scarcely quarter of a thin slice of bread and butter, and his nice fresh egg went untasted away. But, as we know, the fairy's spells never lasted very long, and almost as soon as Mary had cleared the breakfast things away, all the black dots passed away from the skin of her charge, causing almost as much surprise by their disappearance as they had done by coming at all.

"I don't think that there can be much the matter with you, Master Philibert, after all," said Mary, with a little sigh of relief.

"I say, Sydney, we'll go out into the woods," cried Philibert, as he and his companion strolled out of the play-room together; "I want to find the pit of that horrid spider, or ant-lion, as you call it;—that's not a bad name after all, for when I was an ant it was just like a lion to me."

"Oh! I should very much like to see it!" exclaimed

Sydney ; "it would interest my mother so much to hear all about that creature and its curious pit."

"Won't I smash the horrid little beast,—won't I crush it, and stamp upon it!" cried Philibert, grinding his teeth as he recalled in a spirit of fierce revenge what he had suffered in his fright. I may here observe, and I beg my young readers to remark whether they do not find my observation to be a true one, that they who are the most cowardly are very often the most cruel also.

"You would not punish a poor little insect for acting according to its instinct," cried Sydney. "It was no more wicked in the ant-lion wishing to eat you when you were in the form of an ant, than it would have been for Squire Philimore to have shot you had you been in the form of a hare."

"I do hate the ant-lion though, however you may choose to stand up for it, and I'll kill it!" said Philibert fiercely.

Happily for the ant-lion, the boys in vain searched for its pit-fall, though they had no difficulty in finding the ant-hill. Sydney looked down on the swarming pis-mires, with their black heads and rusty-coloured bodies, with a very curious feeling of interest and amusement.

"I never knew half of your cleverness and industry, you fine little fellows," he cried, "till I paid you a visit in your home! Nor had I a notion how very polite and pleasant you can make yourselves to a guest.

No lady in her drawing-room could have had nicer manners or a prettier way of talking than my little guide."

Sydney Pierce had no idea that his courteous companion on six legs had not been an ant, but a fairy.

"I can't say much for the manners of wood-ants," said Philibert, shrugging his shoulders; "at least *I* don't call it civil to say, 'If you don't work, we'll bite off your head.'"



CHAPTER XIII.

THE DOCTOR'S VISIT.

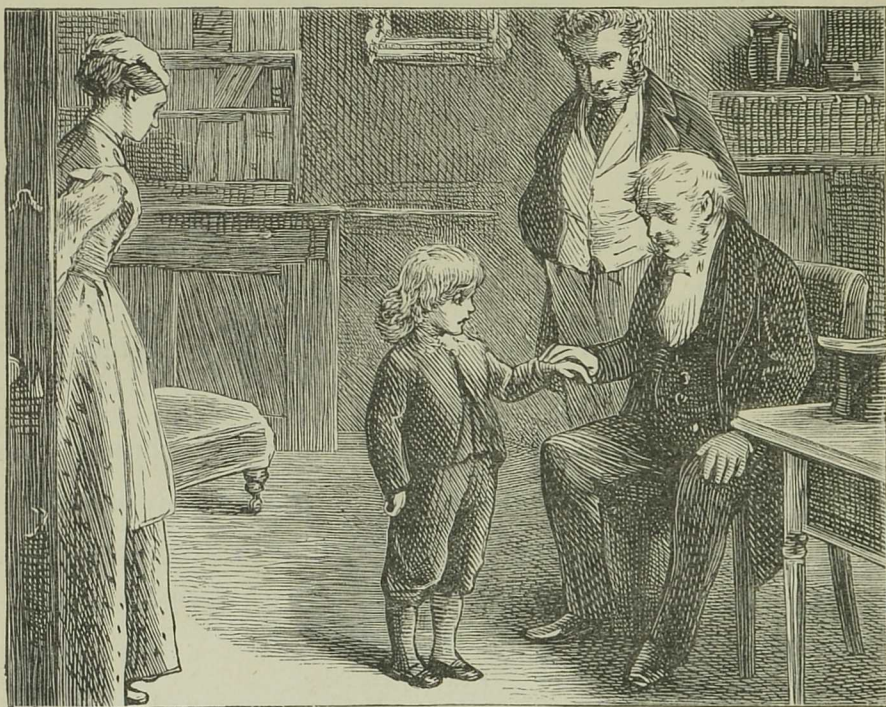


HILIBERT had had no appetite for his breakfast, but partly on that account, after his ramble in the woods, he had a tremendous appetite for his dinner.

“I wish that one o’clock would come!” he had exclaimed at least half a dozen times before the hour actually arrived, and he and Sydney sat down to a capital dinner of roast-beef, which was to be followed by rich plum-pudding.

Philibert, greedy as well as hungry, seized the first help for himself, like a very ill-mannered boy as he was, and was just going to put a large piece of beef into his mouth, when footsteps were heard in the corridor, the door was opened, and in stalked the thin, black-haired, hook-nosed, solemn-looking gentleman dressed in black, whom he knew to be Dr. Grim. The medical man was followed by Squire Philimore.

"Come here to the doctor, Philibert," said the squire, in a tone which made his son feel that the summons must instantly be obeyed. Slowly, and very unwillingly, wishing Dr. Grim a thousand miles off, the hungry boy put down his fork, and approached the medical man.



THE DOCTOR'S VISIT.

Dr. Grim felt Philibert's pulse, examined his tongue, looked at his cheek. "I do not observe any trace of a rash such as you mentioned," he said to the squire in a peculiarly deep and solemn voice, such as he might have spoken with had he been telling a patient that he was going to die.

"It went off as suddenly as it came on, sir," said Mary, to whom the puzzled squire looked for an explanation.

Again the doctor solemnly laid his cold fingers upon Philibert's fat little wrist. "Not a bad pulse," he gloomily observed,—whatever he might say, his manner was gloomy. "Pray," continued Dr. Grim, addressing himself to Mary, "have you noticed anything peculiar about the young gentleman?"

"He has been exceedingly odd, sir, in his ways, both yesterday and to-day."

"What had he for dinner yesterday?" inquired the doctor; while poor Philibert, hungry as a raven, was stealing furtive glances at the dinner-table, to which he longed to return.

"Veal cutlets, sir," replied Mary.

"Veal cutlets—most unwholesome!" said the doctor: "that would account for any derangement of the system. Did the boy eat anything besides?"

"Green-gage tart, sir; but he scarcely would touch it, he said that it tasted like soap."

The doctor nodded his head very gravely. "That shows that something was wrong," he observed.

"Wrong with the tart—not with me!" exclaimed Philibert, who could not restrain his impatience even in the presence of his father and the medical man, for whom he had a considerable awe.

"The tart was as good a one as ever was baked," observed Mary. "I tasted it myself, and Master Pierce enjoyed it very much; but then *he* had not touched the veal cutlets."

Again the doctor nodded his head, like one who begins to see his way clearly.

"You said, Mary, that my boy awoke this morning with a scream," observed Squire Philimore.

"A dreadful scream, sir, as if he were frightened out of his wits; and yesterday he roared out at dinner,—Master Pierce heard him as well as myself. He cried out that something had stung him on the ear, but though we searched in every direction, nothing could be found that could possibly have hurt him."

"What a blab she is," muttered Philibert; "if she'd had such a stinging as I had, she'd have roared out herself like a bull."

"I am sure that Master Philibert could not have felt well this morning, he was so very fidgety and cross."

"I *was* quite well, and I *am* quite well; never better in my life!" exclaimed Philibert angrily, trying, but in vain, to draw his wrist from the cold grasp of the doctor's fingers.

"My dear young patient," said Dr. Grim in his slow, solemn way, "you are not competent to judge whether you are or are not in good health. Loss of appetite in one so young is not a favourable symptom."

"I'm as hungry as a hound—as a whole pack of hounds!" cried out poor Philibert desperately.

"But you had a distaste for a nice green-gage tart, and—as I've heard from your father—you scarcely touched your breakfast this morning. It is clear that you are not as well as we wish you to be; but I think," here the doctor turned and addressed himself to the squire, "I think that we can soon put matters to rights. I will send a little medicine to be taken at night."

Philibert made a wry face,—he knew too well by experience what the doctor's medicine was like.

"And in the meantime," continued Dr. Grim, "our young patient, who is of somewhat too full a habit, must be kept to very light and simple diet. He must be given nothing but weak beef-tea, barley-gruel, and toast and water."

Such a sentence was dreadful to the famishing boy. "I want my roast-beef?" he exclaimed; and but for the presence of the squire and the doctor, Philibert would have stamped and roared with disappointment and passion.

"Weak beef-tea and barley-gruel," repeated Dr. Grim with grave decision; "and he must not fail to take the medicine at night. Any one can see that the poor child is suffering;" the tears were rolling down Philibert's cheeks, but he was only suffering from disappointment, hunger, and passion.

"I am glad, however, that you seem to think that nothing very serious is the matter with my poor little man," said the squire. "I thought myself that his complaint was only from a little over-feeding."

"Veal cutlets he must never touch again," observed the doctor.

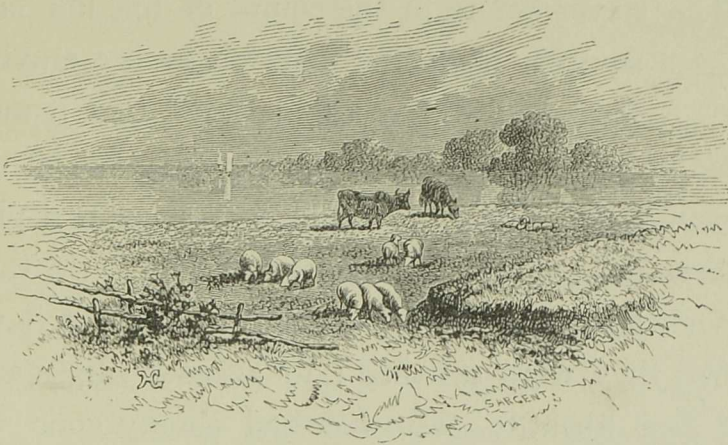
"Sydney, my boy, I'm afraid that your roast-beef is getting cold," said the kind-hearted squire, turning towards his little guest, who had been patiently waiting till the doctor should leave before beginning his meal. "Set to your dinner, and eat plenty; there's no fear of your taking too much. And you, Mary, go to the cook, and see about the beef-tea and the barley-gruel at once."

"I hate gruel—I never can touch it! mayn't I have plum-pudding at least?" almost sobbed out Philibert.

"Plum-pudding!" echoed the doctor, looking as he might have done had his patient asked for a dish of poison. "Beef-tea and gruel—and not much of them—must you have for your dinner; if you touch either meat or pudding, I'll not be answerable for the consequences."

And perhaps the doctor was not very far wrong after all, though of course the effects of Fairy Frisket's sting-brush and wand had misled him, as they had misled the squire and Mary, for none of his learned books had made any mention of fairies. Poor greedy Philibert was probably none the worse for a day of fasting, for he was, as

the medical man had observed, of too full a habit, being usually inclined to eat more than was really good for his health. But a miserable day was passed by the spoiled and self-indulgent child, who was tortured with actual hunger, so that he almost envied the natives of Africa their dish of white-ants or termites.



CHAPTER XIV.

I'D BE A BUTTERFLY.



HILIBERT PHILIMORE had gone to sleep hungry, and he awoke more hungry still; never before in the course of his life had the squire's pampered boy felt such a craving for food. It did cross his mind that it must be a dreadful thing to be poor and hungry every day in the year. Philibert now could feel some real pity for the Garlands,—the sick father unable to work, the thin children who for months had not known what it was to eat until they were satisfied; for what Sydney and the squire had liberally bestowed had chiefly gone to pay rent. It would be an excellent lesson for many a spoiled child who cares nothing for the sufferings of the poor, were he to feel, as Philibert did, for one day, how keen are the pangs of hunger

Philibert was not only inclined to be more ready to pity, but, perhaps for the first time, he had known

something of the feeling of gratitude. Sydney had been very kind indeed to his young companion when he believed him to be unwell, and knew that he was pining for solid food. Sydney had read aloud in the evening till his throat had grown weary and hoarse, and had then tried to amuse Philibert in every other way that he could think of. Sydney had even given away to the squire's son the present which he himself had been preparing for his mother,—a beautiful little model of the old gateway of Fairy dell Hall, which he, with great labour and care, had cut out of old corks, gumming little bits of moss over parts of it to give the effect of ivy. No brother could have been kinder to Philibert than Sydney had been, no sister more gentle and thoughtful; his conduct had had a far more softening effect upon Philibert Philimore than Fairy Frisket's sting-brush, or even her green-tipped wand.

"Oh! Mary, will you never get breakfast ready?" exclaimed the impatient boy. "I can eat at least half a dozen eggs, so mind that you bring me plenty!"

"Indeed, Master Philibert, I doubt that you should have one, before you see Dr. Grim again."

"But I must and will have one!" cried Philibert; "I should like one as big as my head! Do make as much haste as you can, for I am dying of hunger!"

If Philibert was only allowed to have one egg, and that not a large one, for breakfast, he made up for this

by his vigorous foray upon the slices of bread and butter. Mary could hardly spread and cut them as fast as her young charge ate them; and Sydney could not help laughing to see how the loaf was disappearing under the attacks of Philibert's appetite. The squire's son enjoyed his breakfast as much as if the fairy had stirred his food with the golden end of her wand, and Mary felt satisfied that nothing was now the matter with her troublesome charge.

After breakfast the two boys went out as usual into the delightful grounds which surrounded Fairy dell Hall.

"I should like to have another hunt for that horrid ant-lion," said Philibert Philimore.

Happily for the little "grave-digger," as Sydney called the insect, his sandy pitfall was not to be found, and Philibert amused himself with running races on the lawn with Sydney Pierce, more to his own enjoyment than to that of his guest, for Sydney, though strengthened by his visit to Fairy dell Hall, was yet too delicate to be fit for any violent exercise. While Sydney was stopping to recover his breath, pressing his hand against his side, Philibert caught sight of a beautiful butterfly, and instantly gave chase to the insect.

Now butterflies are, as may be supposed, special pets of the fairies, who look upon them much as ladies look upon their favourite poodles or parrots. As it happened, this butterfly was not only a pet of Frisket, but actually

on its way to a grand assembly of butterflies and moths to which that fairy had invited it. We may imagine, then, the displeasure with which Lady Frisket, who chanced to be hovering near, saw the squire's son rushing after her guest, now almost clapping his hand over the fluttering insect, now, baffled and panting, hurrying in



PHILIBERT AND THE BUTTERFLY.

some other direction after the prey just escaped from his grasp. Fairy Frisket flew to the rescue, and pursuing the boy, as the boy pursued the insect, gave Philibert a violent hit with her sting-brush on the back of his hand just as he had succeeded in capturing the butterfly prize.

Philibert uttered a howl, not only of pain but of passion, and punished the unfortunate insect for the deed of the fairy, by dashing it fiercely to the ground.

"Oh, don't kill it! don't hurt it!" exclaimed Sydney Pierce, running to the spot to plead for the beautiful creature. "Why should you be so angry with the pretty butterfly? It never did you any harm."

"Harm! if you'd been stung as I'm stung, you'd not say that!" exclaimed Philibert, who looked ready to stamp with fury upon the poor injured creature at his feet.

"The butterfly never stung you; it has no sting," said Sydney.

"I got stung in catching it," Philibert replied.

"That was surely no fault of the butterfly; it never asked or wished you to meddle with it," observed Sydney, with a smile.

Philibert was in no mood to bear even the mildest joke. "I'll not have you laughing at me!" he cried fiercely; "and why should you dare to interfere, if I choose to smash all the butterflies in the world?" So saying, Philibert stamped his cruel foot upon the helpless creature and killed it.

"It's too bad to torment or kill any of God's creatures, just because they are weak and can't defend themselves," cried Sydney, whose gentle and generous spirit always rose against wanton cruelty. "My mother says—"

"I don't care a straw what your mother says; and I won't have you lecturing me—a little, wretched, puny creature that you are!" cried Philibert, all the more excited with passion from Frisket's having given him a second sharp rap, this time across the bridge of his nose.

"I am your guest, Philibert Philimore!" said the indignant Sydney, who would never himself have insulted any one while on a visit to his home.

"I know that well enough," retorted Philibert, holding his nose, and half dancing with pain; "glad enough you are to come from your smoky den of a house, and get our good roast-beef and plum-pudding instead of endless cod-liver oil!"

The insolent taunt stung Sydney to the quick; had his mother been at her home to receive him, he would have asked the squire to let him instantly return thither; but her absence in Scotland tied him, as it were, to the dwelling of the mean-spirited, inhospitable boy, who loved thus to insult his guest. Sydney's heart seemed to rise into his throat, and it was certainly no feeling of fear that prevented his returning the taunt with a blow. But Sydney remembered that "*he that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city*;" and restraining himself from uttering even a retort, he turned from the squire's spoiled son and went off into the shade of the wood. Sydney could not have trusted himself, at that moment, to utter a single word.

Few things calm a troubled spirit so much as a quiet saunter amongst green trees and the other fair objects of nature. Sydney's anger had been very hot, but it soon cooled down when he found himself alone under the spreading beeches. All was so peaceful and beautiful there! A sense of wrong, however, rested on the mind of the boy. Sydney remembered how hard he had tried to make Philibert happy—how he had given to him what his own dear mother would have valued so much—how he had been as kind and thoughtful towards the squire's son as if he had been his own brother. It is hard to bear rudeness under any circumstances, but doubly hard when it comes in return for unselfish kindness. Sydney, as he sauntered along the mossy woodland path, hummed to himself one of his mother's favourite songs, which had been written by Shakespeare :—

“ Blow, blow, thou winter-wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!

“ Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;

Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not !
Heigh-ho ! sing, heigh-ho ! unto the green holly :
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly :
Then, heigh-ho, the holly !
This life is most jolly !”

Sydney was just finishing the last line of Shakespeare's song when he saw something on the path before him which attracted his attention. It was neither forest-flower, nor lichen, nor curious insect. It was a pretty little pearl brooch, which had been a birthday present to Philibert, and which the squire's son constantly used to fasten his collar.

“Ah ! there's Philibert's brooch—the jewel that he is so proud of wearing !” exclaimed Sydney aloud, as he picked it up from the moss in which it was lying embedded. “He must have dropped it while he was hunting for the ant-lion here in the wood. Well, if he loses it, he gets what he deserves : I don't see why I should take the brooch to such a thankless, ill-tempered boy ; let it lie there till he find it—I'm sure I don't care if he never does !” Sydney dropped the jewel on the moss, walked two or three paces from the spot, and then paused.

“Am I doing what is right ?” he said, still speaking aloud, little dreaming that any one could hear him. “Am I not showing a spirit of mean revenge, and acting as I would *not* like another to act towards me ? No, no ; I must forgive as I would wish to be forgiven

myself. I'll take the brooch to Philibert directly ; he may now be in trouble from its loss."

Again Sydney stooped and picked up the jewel ; but as he raised himself, what was his astonishment at beholding, poised upon a long curling fern-leaf, the most beautiful little creature that ever had met his gaze !



SYDNEY FINDS THE BROOCH.

There was Frisket herself, with her fluttering gossamer robe, her tiny wand, her transparent wings, and the golden tassel which she had just pulled, hanging from her bright girdle. In his start of delighted surprise, Sydney again dropped the brooch.

"Child of earth," said the musical voice of the fairy, "well may you gaze with surprise upon her whose form was never before visible to one of your race. I have twice seen your triumph over self, your pity for the poor, your obedience to your mother, and now your generous forgiveness towards one who so little deserves it. I have watched your control over your temper, your watch over your lips, your compassion for the helpless and weak. You have made me break my firm resolve never to show myself to one of the race of mankind. I thank you for pleading for my poor little guest; I thank you for showing that mercy which seems so little natural to the human species."

Confused, blushing, scarcely knowing how to answer so singular an address from the bright little being before him, Sydney replied to Frisket: "I am very glad indeed, lady fairy, if I have done anything to please you. But I think that there must be some mistake; I could not show mercy to a fairy,—I can hardly suppose that any friend of yours could ever need my help or my pleading."

"No, indeed," replied the smiling Frisket, who was amused at such an idea; "no fairy friend would ever require aid from any poor mortal. But a fairy's guest might, and did; the poor butterfly, crushed by your cruel companion, was on her way to visit me by special invitation. I have summoned all the butterflies and moths that haunt the garden and pleasure-grounds of

Fairydell Hall to meet me at Violet Dell, a retired spot in this wood. They will there recite their own deeds, whether as caterpillar, grub, or winged creature, and give an account of their labours in providing homes for their future offspring. I have promised to the insect that shall be found to excel the rest in industry and skill, that, as a reward, I will tip her wings with gold. I will then feast all my guests upon honey-dew, and dance with them a round in the air, under the sunshiny sky."

"What a pretty sight it will be!" exclaimed Sydney, to whom this "butterflies' ball," with a fairy for hostess, seemed something delightful and strange.

"Would you like to see it?" asked Frisket

"Oh! above all things!" cried Sydney.

"Then you shall take the place of my poor little favourite," said Frisket, "and for one hour animate the beautiful form out of which that cruel boy stamped the innocent life."

Sydney began to consider whether he would wish to accept the unexpected offer of the fairy. It might be well to see or to sing about a "butterfly's ball and a grasshopper's feast," but to enjoy an insect's pleasure at the risk of sharing that insect's fate would be quite a different thing. Fairy Frisket was, however, too quick in her movements to allow much time for reflection. Sydney merely caught a glimpse of her fluttering robe

as she flew towards him, pomatum in hand, and before he could utter a word—a word in human language, I mean—down dropped his form on the moss and fern, where it lay for an hour under a tree, wrapped in the deepest slumber. At the same moment, the poor butterfly which Philibert had crushed suddenly spread its bruised and injured wings, animated by the mind of the boy. The insect flew towards a retired space in the wood, all surrounded by hawthorn, holly, and larches, garlanded by wild roses and blackberry sprays, and carpeted with moss so green that any one acquainted with the tastes of fairies must have guessed that it was one of their favourite haunts. So thick was the brushwood, so tangled the foliage, that the clearing in the wood was as much shut out from the view of man as if it had been fenced round with marble walls. No human foot had ever left its print upon that soft carpet of moss. In spring-time the air of the fairy dell had been fragrant with violets, from which Frisket had given it its name; the violets had long ago faded, but pretty little pink convolvuli tinted the ground, and the tall purple fox-glove shook its speckled bells over the grass. In spring the nightingale had sung all night long from a hazel bush, while fairies danced to his music; the nightingale had long been silent, but the squirrel leaped from bough to bough and cracked the nuts of the hazel, and the robin hopped lightly on the spray, and uttered ever and

anon that cheerful note which would be heard even when winter should have come to strip the trees of their foliage. A little bubbling runlet of water, very shallow and very clear, flowed through Violet Dell, singing its own soft song, making the moss still greener, and kissing the pretty wild flowers that trembled over its brim. The spot was quiet and lovely, well suited for a fairy queen to hold her court in when she called around her the bright-winged creatures of the air. It was such a spot as Shakespeare may have had in his mind's eye when he wrote his well-known song,—

“I know a bank whereon the wild-thyme blows, —
Where oxlip and the nodding violet grows.
There sleeps the fairy queen,—there sleeps some times o' the nights,
Lulled in their flowers, with dances and delights.”



CHAPTER XV.

BUTTERFLIES' MEETING.



“H, this is delightful, this is enchanting!” cried Sydney Pierce in butterfly language, about which hangs the same mystery as about that of the ant. None of the *Lepidoptera* species (such is the long name given to the race of butterflies and moths), except the death’s-head moth, is, I believe, known to utter any sound which human beings would call a voice. Butterflies do not roar, or bark, or bray, or mew,—they neither screech nor sing; but we may suppose that, like our friends the ants, the four-winged *Lepidoptera* have some way of speaking to each other with their quivering antennæ.

It was, indeed, very delightful to Sydney, upon that bright morning in August, to be able to spread wings to the light breeze, and to bask in the glowing sunshine! Who that can imagine the pleasure enjoyed by a butterfly during a life which is sometimes measured but by

hours, would wish to shorten that little span of delight? It had been amusing to Sydney to find himself in the



DEATH'S-HEAD MOTH.

shape of a pismire, able to enter and to explore a dark ant-hill. But how much greater was his enjoyment now, when he rose aloft in the air, and joined the gay throng of Lepidoptera that were hurrying from all quarters to join the *fête* given by Fairy Frisket!

Near the little sparkling stream, the fairy sat on her mossy throne to receive her guests. The throne was bedecked with every variety of wild flower that could be found, in wood, hedge, or mead, at that season,—every one of them spangled and tasselled with dew-drops, that sparkled like many-coloured jewels. A rose-oetle—beautiful insect! like a great emerald in his

armour of glossy green—had crept to the place, to act as the fairy's footstool; he feared not the pressure of her light foot. Fairy Know-a-bit sat at his sister's side, to assist her judgment; and Sydney saw with pleasure the familiar form of his acquaintance the learned fay. But even Know-a-bit had come to the butterflies' feast in brighter garb than that in which Sydney had seen him, when the home of the fairy was the large red-edged book in Squire Philimore's study. A gossamer robe of light green half covered Know-a-bit's student's gown; though, of course, the robe being thinner than gauze, it was easy to see through it every fold of the garment beneath it. A tiny white plume of thistle-down adorned the fairy's black cap; and being stuck on one side of it, gave him quite a dashing appearance.

What an assemblage of butterflies came fluttering through the air at the call of Fairy Frisket! Sydney had had no idea that there were so many kinds of winged creatures in England as appeared now in Violet Dell. Some, indeed, came from various counties; and except on such an extraordinary occasion as this, would not have been found together. But a meeting of the *Lepidoptera* held by a fairy is not a thing that happens every day, or even every year.

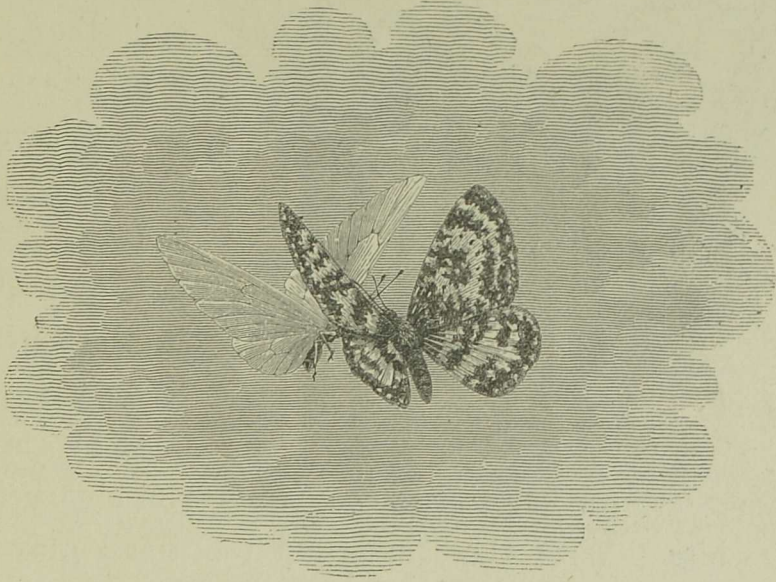
There were the fritillaries: the silver-washed, with the under side of its burnished green wings streaked with silver; and the pearl-bordered fritillary, ornamented

with delicate spots like the gems of the sea. The brimstone and clouded yellow butterflies appeared gorgeous in orange and gold, looking all the gayer by their contrast to the smaller tawny heath butterflies that had fluttered to Violet Dell from their home on the nearest common. A host of little blue butterflies appeared, seeming, to the fancy of Sydney, like moving azure blossoms. There were the chalk-hill blue, the pretty holly blue, and the dear little Bedford blue, the tiniest of British butterflies. From the top of an oak-tree came down in stately majesty the purple emperor, and the pretty painted-lady followed close behind him. The handsome cabbage-butterflies—the white, green-veined, and orange-tipped—left the squire's kitchen-garden, to appear at the court of the fairy. There Sydney beheld the magnificent peacock-butterfly, with large eye-like spots on its wings; and the beautiful dappled tortoise-shell, throwing into the shade the tribe of modest little brown skippers, which some think to be connecting links between butterflies and moths. Moths, be it known—a genus called by the learned *Phalæna*—may be known from their butterfly brothers and sisters by having no little knobs at the end of their feelers. These little knobs, like the buttons of Chinese mandarins, serve to distinguish the more dignified butterfly from the more lowly moth. It would be a great mistake to suppose that all moths are gray-tinted, dull little creatures, or all butterflies splendid and gay.



SOME OF THE VISITORS TO VIOLET DELL

One of Fairy Frisket's most splendid guests was the red admiral, that, to grace her feast, appeared long before his usual season,*—his rich dark wings streaked with broad bands of red and white. Of course, there

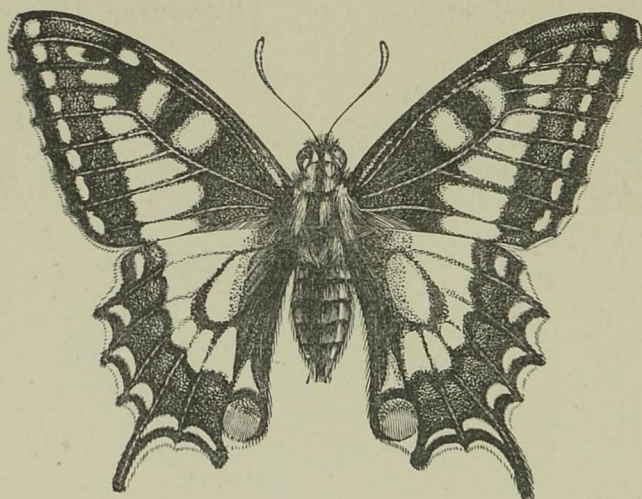


BUTTERFLY AND MOTH.

were plenty of white butterflies, whose appearance is familiar to every one who has lived in the country; but Sydney had never seen before one yellow and black flutterer, large in size, and very peculiar in shape—her hinder wings seeming to be lengthened into tails; from

* It must have been owing to a fairy spell that such a variety of the *Lepidoptera* species appeared in the month of August. Some butterflies have both a spring and an autumn brood. The copper butterfly, it is said, has three broods in the year. But my young readers (unless specially invited by Fairy Frisket) must not expect to find all of her guests in any one month of the year, any more than in any one county of England. The brimstone butterfly, for instance, "though common in the south of England, is not frequent in the midland counties. It is found in gardens and fields, sometimes on a sunny morning as early as February or March."

which no doubt the handsome swallow-tail butterfly has been given its name.



SWALLOW-TAIL BUTTERFLY.

With the butterflies came a vast host of moths. Sydney saw the gold-tailed moth and the small ermine-moth, whose larvæ so destroy the beauty of our hawthorn-trees in the summer. Then came the lackey-moth, whose caterpillar had worn so gay a livery of blue, yellow, and white. With these appeared the small gray and green oak-moth; and the beautiful tiger-moth, in robes of scarlet, white, and brown,—the creature that, in its caterpillar state, is so very well known by the name of woolly bear. It is strange that a creeping bear should thus change into a winged tiger!

But I must not linger now to describe all the butterflies and moths, or even to name them. Sydney wished that (as in parties given by the human race) there were some one to announce each guest by name on his or her first arrival. The little hour during which the power of the fancy-pomatum lasted, was not nearly long

enough to enable Sydney to hear all the speeches made by various members of the gay meeting. I shall but give the few which he heard with curiosity and amusement as, one by one, the butterflies and moths preferred their claims to the prize offered to them by the fairy.

First came the coarse, stout goat-moth, which brushed hastily past butterfly Sydney, leaving a very disagreeable odour behind her. The manner of the goat-moth was forward and bold: she seemed to think that she had a right to speak before every one else, perhaps on account of her age; for she had been a larva (caterpillar) for three whole years before she had become a moth! This is a very long life for an insect, and had given the goat-moth an opportunity of doing a great deal of caterpillar work.

"I've just come from my home in the old willow-tree," cried the goat-moth, "and I wish, lady fairy, that you had chosen some better hour for your meeting; for every one who knows my habits is aware that I hate flying about by daylight!"

"I am sorry to have put you to inconvenience, lady Goat-moth," said Fairy Frisket politely, as she bent down her head over a leaf of sweet-brier, which was to her what a scent-bottle and a fan are to a lady. The pretty fairy was too well-mannered to express what she felt; but she wished that the goat-moth would say her

say quickly, and fly back again, as fast as she chose, to her old willow-tree.

"I have little doubt that I shall both win your favour and gain your prize," continued the goat-moth, coming much nearer to the fairy than was at all pleasant to a being possessing such a delicate sense of smell. "I've famous jaws,—that is, I had when I was a larva,—and there's not one of the *Lepidoptera* that better knew how to use them." The goat-moth looked proudly around her as she spoke, as if to defy the whole host of butterflies and moths to match her exploits. "If you fly to my old home, lady fairy, you'll see how I've tunnelled and bored, making passages for myself, now just under the bark, now right inwards to the very heart of the tree. I should not wonder," the goat-moth went on, "if the very next gale blew the willow right down, —I've so weakened it with my boring,—and then I may boast that a single caterpillar has laid a tree low in the dust!"

A murmur of surprise was heard through the assembly of butterflies and moths.

"I was not only clever in digging and boring," said the goat-moth, "but skilled in house-making also. I wish that I could have carried hither my curious cocoon; but I've not half the strength now, as a moth, that I had when I was a caterpillar. I formed my cocoons (I had more than one) of wood-chips of various sizes,

nicely fastened together upon a silken framework. You observe that my boring in wood supplied me with plentiful store of building materials, besides the elegant silk with which nature had furnished me, in common with many other caterpillars."

"I have had the pleasure of seeing one of your ingenious cocoons, lady Goat-moth," said Fairy Frisket: "it was so large, that, if cut in twain, I could have used it for two foot-baths." This was the fairy's way of describing the size of a cocoon about two inches long; for, not being learned like her brother, the fairy knew nothing of the terms of measurement used by mankind.

"I am glad that you have seen it," cried the goat-moth; "I hope that you noticed its beauty!"

"To own the truth," replied Fairy Frisket, "the cocoon appeared to me to be rather rough, as if it were made of saw-dust."

"But the inside—the inside!" cried the goat-moth: "nothing can be smoother and neater than it was. I polished it up to the highest degree, and then took a long nap in it during the winter, lying as snugly in my wooden cocoon as any bee in her waxen cell."

Know-a-bit, who till now had been silent, though looking, as he always did, very wise, grave, and attentive, here put in a word. "I may be mistaken," he observed; "but I think that our clever friend here, the lady Goat-moth, has been mentioned in ancient books,

and that her larva is the famous Cossus, or tree-grub, that was well known to the Romans."

The antennæ of the goat-moth quivered with pride, and she looked as conceited and saucy as a moth could possibly look. Her deeds were then recorded in books,—and by Romans! She knew not what Romans might be, but supposed that they were probably some race of gigantic men, as fairies never publish any kind of works; and though some insects eat books, none have ever yet been known to write any.

"And what did the Romans say of my distinguished ancestors?" asked the goat-moth proudly.

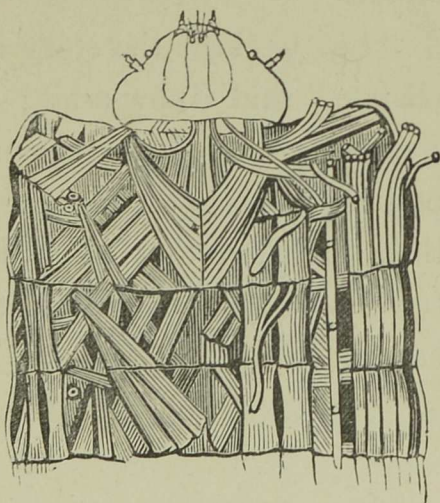
"They said that they were good eating," replied Know-a-bit.

Fairy Frisket, polite as she was, could hardly refrain from laughing as the poor goat-moth dropped her wings in sudden mortification at an answer so unexpected. It seemed no great honour or pleasure to be eaten by Romans, whatever they might be.

Know-a-bit, to comfort the poor insect, to whose pride he had given so sudden a fall, observed,—

"The larva of the goat-moth is, I know, very remarkable for its prodigious strength, which, allowing for the vast difference between their sizes, is far greater than that of the most powerful man. Members of the human race often pride themselves on their strength of body: they each possess about five hundred and twenty-nine

muscles, or organs of motion, by which they turn themselves, lift burdens, bend, rise, walk, and work—do whatsoever they will. But you, Madam Moth, in your larva state, were possessed of more than four thousand muscles; and could, by means of them, if I mistake not, raise with ease a weight more than ten times greater than your own.”



DORSAL MUSCLES OF THE COSSUS
LIGNIPERDA (MAGNIFIED).

“That is wonderful!” exclaimed butterfly Sydney.

“It would puzzle one to find a man who could easily carry on his back ten other men as heavy as himself!”

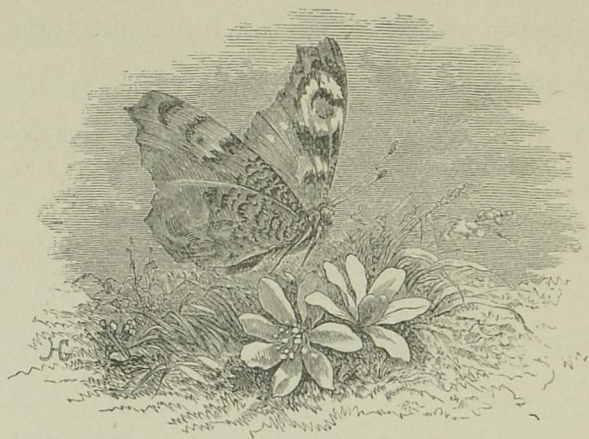
“Were it not taking up too much of the time of this honourable assembly,” cried the goat-moth, “I should like to prove to them how great was my strength, by relating an adventure which befell me this very year, when I had the misfortune to fall into the hands of cruel man.”

“Is it possible that, after falling into the hands of man, you should live to tell of your adventure?” exclaimed Fairy Frisket.

“No thanks to him,” said the goat-moth. “I owed my escape not to man’s mercy, but to that prodigious

strength to which the honourable and learned fairy on your right hand did me the honour just now to allude."

"Let us hear the story of a caterpillar's adventures, madam," said Know-a-bit; and though, as it seemed to Sydney, some of the butterflies shook their wings impatiently,—being more eager to tell their own stories than to listen to that of the goat-moth,—no one ventured to object, and the stout, sturdy insect thus told her tale.



CHAPTER XVI.

ADVENTURES OF A CATERPILLAR



WILL not long detain you—(I see that some of my hearers are a little impatient)—with an account of my tunnelling and boring in my favourite old willow-tree. One day last spring, as I was making my way through a bit of the timber particularly tough and hard, I was startled by a horrible noise and a sudden shock, which sent such a thrill through my frame as I could never forget were I to live (as I know that I shall not) for three more summers and winters! A very little time passed, and then again came that terrible sound; the whole tree seemed to quiver and shake; and then suddenly the daylight—the unwelcome daylight which I shun—flashed upon me! Some being of the human race was cutting down, with a bright sharp instrument, a branch from the tree in which I was dwelling.

It was the first time that I had ever seen a man, and

certainly he looked to me a horrible monster ; while he seemed to think not much better of me.

“Here’s an ugly grub,” he observed, “that’s eating its way right into the wood ; I wonder, now, what they call it ! I’ll take it home and keep it. My boy is coming from London to-morrow, and he’s curious about all these strange kinds of creatures ; maybe he’ll like to examine this one. I’ll put it by in the little drawer of my table.”

So the man carried me home. I think that I can feel now the pressure of his horrid, hard, rough fingers ! Happily for me, my captor had not far to go—for the willow grew hard by his home—and he wanted to keep, not to kill me. I was soon shut up in darkness—quite securely, as he supposed—in his deal-wood drawer.

“Ha, ha !” laughed I to myself, “here’s a fine wide tunnel that man has bored, and very neatly he has done it. There’s plenty of room for me to turn myself here. But if that blundering fellow thinks that he can keep the free-born caterpillar of a goat-moth his prisoner here, he’ll find he is very much mistaken !”

So, feeling quite at home at that kind of labour, I set to work with my good strong jaws at the side of the drawer in which I was confined. The wood was harder than that of my willow ; but what cared I for that ? My muscles were strong, my spirit was bold ; before night was over, I had gnawed my way right through the

side of the drawer, and when the daylight dawned I was crawling down what the man had called a table. I might have thought it the stem of a sapling tree, but that it had neither sap within it nor bark upon it.

It now appeared to me that all my worst troubles were yet to come. I suppose that I was in one of man's dwellings. I don't know whether he calls it a cocoon; but if a cocoon it be, it is one of prodigious size, and it puzzled even the grub of a goat-moth to know how to make her way out of it.

As I was wondering in which direction I should turn, to my horror in came my human enemy, and almost put his foot upon me as I was crawling over the floor.

"Why, if that caterpillar has not eaten its way out!" he exclaimed. "What jaws the ugly creature must have! But I'll put it into a tumbler; it can't bite through glass, I'll be bound."

Again he took up his unlucky prisoner, and writhe and twist as I might, I could not escape from those dreaded fingers which held me so firmly. I was dropped into a bright kind of cocoon, that looked as if made of pure water, for I was able to see right through it: it did not shade me at all from the daylight, as my dear old willow had done. But this was by no means the worst of it. This tumbler was a hundred times harder than any wood that I ever had met with. In vain I tried to bite the smooth slippery surface; the man had spoken

too truly, not even the grub of a goat-moth could make its way through what he had called glass.

"I'm a lost caterpillar!" sighed I, as I lay at the bottom of the tumbler, quite worn out with my fruitless efforts. But I did not lie long inactive in my prison. "Up and be doing—never despair!" is the motto of the goat-moth larva. "I am not only strong to bite," I said to myself, "I am also clever to spin. I can not only bore a tunnel through wood, I can make a ladder of silk."

Gaining new vigour and courage from hope, I instantly set to work. I found, to my joy, that though my jaws could make no mark upon glass, yet that my gummy silk would stick to its surface. Bravely I went on with my labour, and before very long my strong wedge-shaped head was peeping over the edge of the tumbler.

"How shall I descend now?" thought I. "I must let myself down, as I helped myself up, by a silken ladder."

I might have saved myself the trouble of thinking, for the man—my tormentor—at that moment caught sight of his active prisoner.

"Why, if this lively caterpillar isn't making its escape again!" he exclaimed. "The creature seems resolved to get off one way or another; but I'm more than a match for a grub, though I never saw the like of this one."

So saying, my tormentor knocked me down again to the bottom of my glass cocoon or prison, and then

suddenly turned it over, giving me another tumble in the tumbler, on the hard surface of what I heard the man call a plate. The hard, slippery, shining glass now shut me in above, as well as all around, so that there could be no possible use in climbing. Below me was the plate, just as hard as the glass, so that there was not any weak point which I could attack with my jaws.

“Now, I’ll put a good heavy book on the tumbler, to keep it down,” said the man, “and my ugly grub will be kept as secure as if locked up in an iron safe, while I go to meet my boy at the railway-station.”

I lay very still in my shining prison, till the man had quitted the place. Notwithstanding my fatigue, my disappointments, and my bruises, neither my courage nor my strength had failed me yet. As soon as I felt sure of not being observed, I crept round the edge of the glass trying to find any place where it did not quite touch the plate, so that I might see some opening, be it ever so small, into which I might squeeze my hard wedge-shaped head. Happily for me, just in one part there was either a trifling sinking in the plate, or a trifling rise in the glass, for the two did not exactly fit the one to the other, and air from without came through. Here was an opportunity not to be lost by the grub of a goat-moth! Now were my four thousand muscles to be brought into play. The glass was moderately heavy,

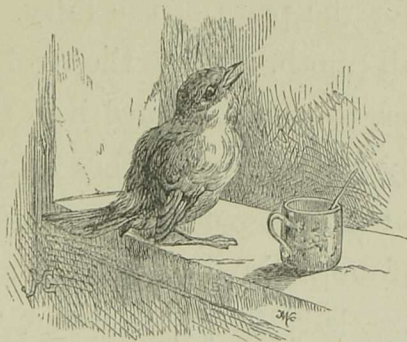
the book* was tremendously heavy ; but I was strong, bold, and determined, and I knew that my liberty, if not my life, depended upon the success of the effort which I was making.

A fearful effort it was. With my head I lifted glass and book a little, then a little more : never surely before had caterpillar attempted so difficult a feat ! My whole head was squeezed under my prison at last ; and where the head can manage to go, the whole body can generally manage to follow. Ha, ha ! I laugh whenever I remember that day, to think how the huge man must have looked, when he came back with his boy, to find the glass tumbler empty, with the big book resting upon it, and the caterpillar nowhere to be seen !

I was pretty well knocked up by the time that I had drawn my whole length through, and I stopped to curl myself up and rest for a little ; but I dared not rest long, for I had a great deal of ground to crawl over, and I feared that the man would return before I could hide myself out of his sight. Luckily for me, he had left the door of his great cocoon open ; for what with gnawing and spinning, and climbing and pushing, and lifting, and crawling what seemed to be a terribly long way, I had no strength left, as you may believe, for any more boring through wood. Much as I dislike the daylight, I was

* The book was Lardner's "Encyclopedia of Gardening;" a very heavy volume, containing about 1500 pages. For the account of this feat, really performed by the caterpillar of a goat-moth, see "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," vol. xi., p. 184.

glad enough to find myself once more in the free open air, and not far from my own willow-tree. How I managed to reach it, I scarcely can think; I would have given anything then for the wings with which I fly now that the caterpillar has been changed into the moth. But were I now to fall again into the hands of barbarous man, as I heartily hope that I never may do, I could not now gnaw my way through the drawer, I could not now spin my ladder of silk, I could not now lift both tumbler and book,—I could but beat my wings against the glass in helpless despair! Yes; I could no longer perform these feats of strength and of skill which must have filled the mind of man himself with admiration and amazement.



CHAPTER XVII.

BORERS, WEAVERS, AND LEAF-ROLLERS.



WHEN the goat-moth had finished her tale there was a great clapping, not, of course, of hands, but of wings, and then a few seconds of silence. There was not another member of the Lepidoptera race present that could boast of such feats of strength, and the goat-moth looked proudly around her, as if certain that no rival would dare to contend with her for the prize of the fairy.

A very small moth, called the wolf-moth, had the courage, however, to come forward into the middle of the circle formed by the winged tribes around the flowery throne. While the most splendid butterflies kept modest silence, the wolf-moth thus addressed Fairy Frisket :—

“If your prize, lady fairy,” said she, “were offered to the largest and strongest of our race, I should certainly not have taken the trouble to come here to try to win it. I cannot lift up a prison on my head ; and as for the

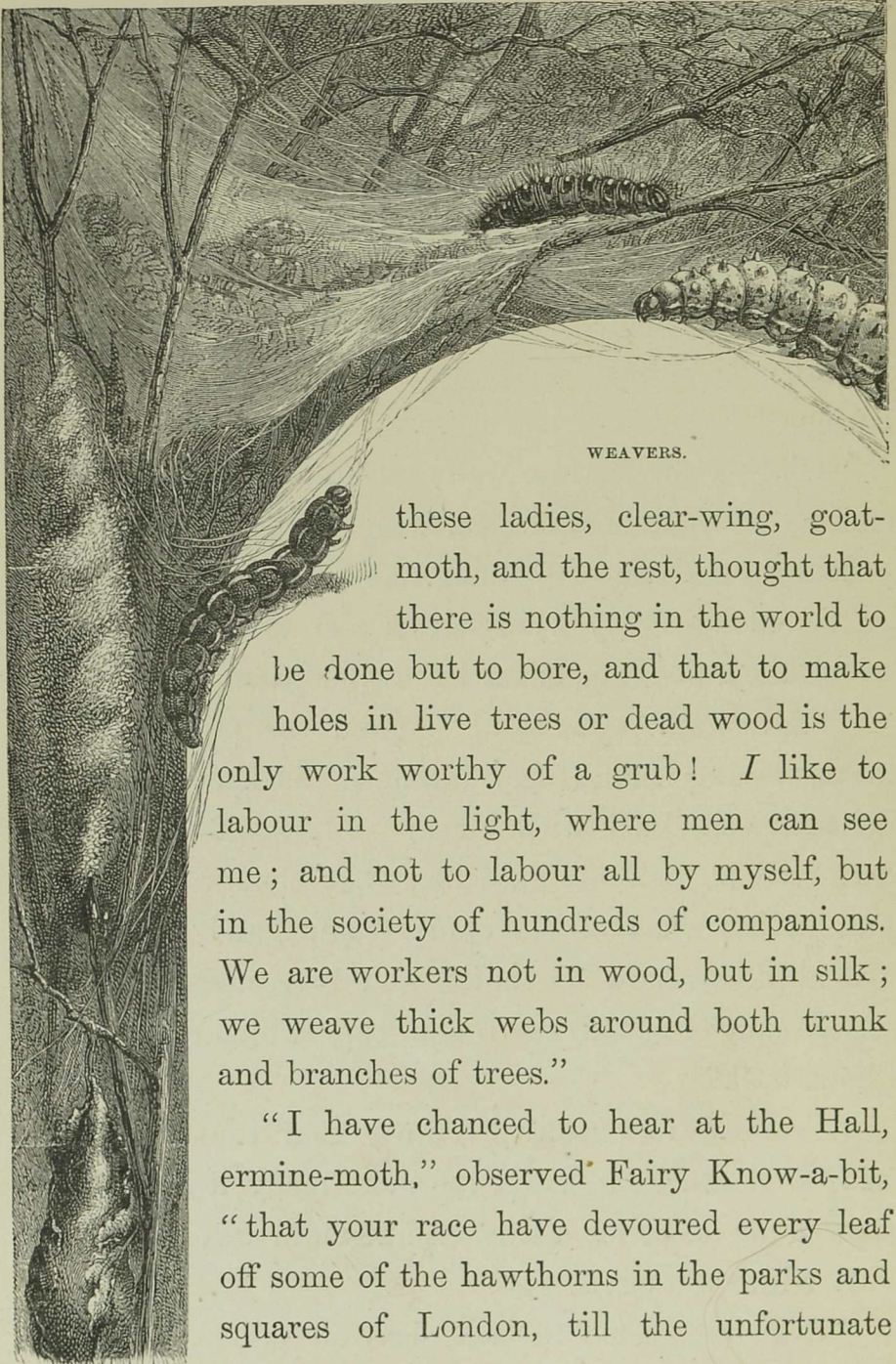
number of my muscles, I do not believe that the sharpest-eyed mortal would ever attempt to count them. But the prize is offered to the member of the Lepidoptera race that has shown most skill in making her home. Now, if Mrs. Goat-moth is a great borer, I am a great borer also ; if she digs her way into old willow-trees, I make mine through hard deal planks. If I am not so big and so strong as she is, my work is all the more curious."

"Oh ! as for boring, we're all famous for that !" exclaimed a whole host of clear-wing moths, of which some looked to the eye of Sydney like wasps, and some like gnats (though they were neither), so that he wondered to see them at all amongst the Lepidoptera.

"And so am I—so am I !" cried the pretty leopard-moth, waving her feathery antennæ, and her white wings delicately speckled with black. "Look at the squire's fruit-trees ! Ask his gardener what enemy he fears to find in the wood of his apple, walnut, and pear trees ! We all know how to tunnel and bore, and make ourselves snug beneath the rough bark which covers us in like a wall."

It seemed to butterfly Sydney that the smaller the winged creature might be, the more ready it appeared to answer for itself, for a tiny ermine-moth was the next to flutter into the circle.

Really it seems to me," she said pertly, "as if all



WEAVERS.

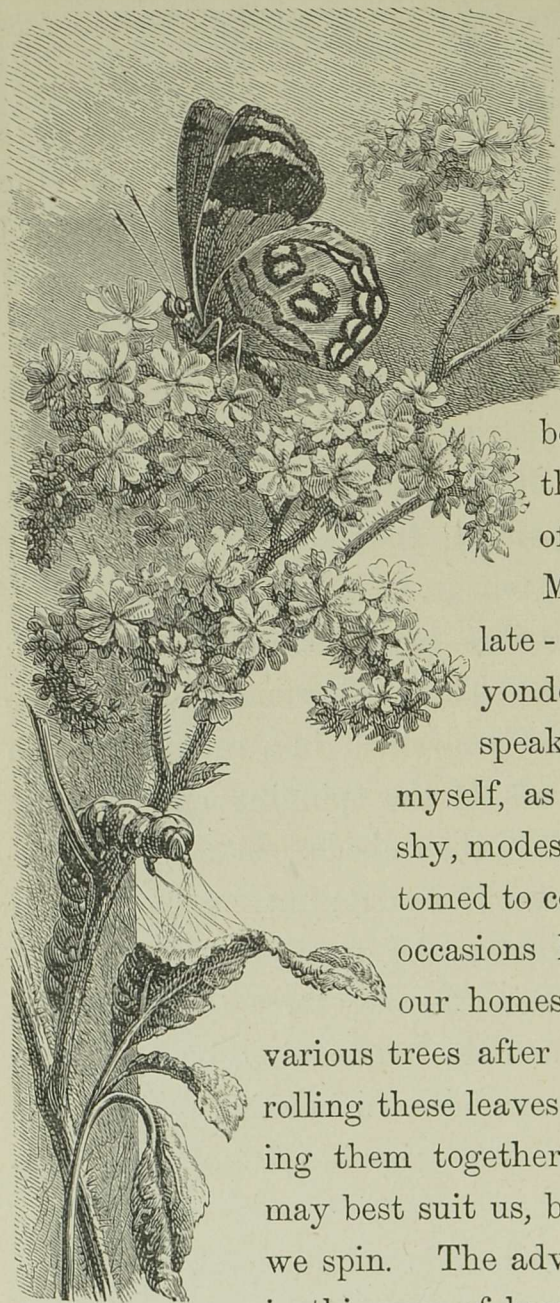
these ladies, clear-wing, goat-moth, and the rest, thought that there is nothing in the world to be done but to bore, and that to make holes in live trees or dead wood is the only work worthy of a grub! *I* like to labour in the light, where men can see me; and not to labour all by myself, but in the society of hundreds of companions. We are workers not in wood, but in silk; we weave thick webs around both trunk and branches of trees."

"I have chanced to hear at the Hall, ermine-moth," observed Fairy Know-a-bit, "that your race have devoured every leaf off some of the hawthorns in the parks and squares of London, till the unfortunate

trees were in June as bare as they would be in December."

"Pray do not address me as ermine-moth; our race are accustomed to town life and town manners," said the tiny creature, "and there we are known by the name of *Iponymeuta Padella*. And pray let us not be reproached with eating up the leaves of the May trees. Many mouths make light work. The leaves grow again on the boughs which we have stripped when we take our chrysalis nap; and while other trees look dusty and black with the smoke of London, those on which we have feasted burst out into foliage, to enjoy a second spring. Few of the winged tribes have their work so much noticed by men as ours. The whole stem of a May tree will sometimes be entirely swathed in a robe of grayish silk, in which thousands of the spinning and weaving *Iponymeuta Padella* make their abode. Man would willingly drive us out, or smoke us out; but, ha, ha, ha! our numbers baffle his powers: he may slay the largest, fiercest beasts in creation; he may force the horse and the ox to serve him and do his bidding, but the tiny *Iponymeuta Padella* keeps her own hawthorn-tree in the very midst of man's greatest city in spite of all his ill-will."

"I hope that I may be allowed to speak for just a few moments," said the pretty little oak-moth, as with a timid air she came forward. "My work, and that of my



LEAF-ROLLER.

sisters, does not show the strength of jaw possessed by the borers, nor perhaps the amount of labour displayed by the spinners, of the *Lepidoptera* race, yet may it be thought not unworthy of the attention of this great assembly.

My friend, the chocolate-coloured lilac-moth yonder, has asked me to speak for her as well as for myself, as we leaf-rollers are a shy, modest race, not at all accustomed to come forward on grand occasions like this. We make our homes in the leaves of the various trees after which we are named, rolling these leaves into tents, and fastening them together into whatever shape may best suit us, by thread of silk which we spin. The advantage which we find in this way of housing ourselves is this: our leaf supplies us at once with board

and lodging,—we live *on* the leaf, while we live *in* the leaf; we can never know want, for we eat the house which we dwell in.” Then, shyly begging the pardon of the fairy and all the butterflies and moths for having detained them so long, the oak-moth spread her delicate leafy-green wings, and flew back to the side of her chocolate-coloured friend, the moth that rolls up the leaves of the lilac.

“Let none despise the art of leaf-rolling,” cried the splendid red admiral butterfly; or, as the learned call her, the *Vanessa Atalanta*. “I and my friend here, the painted lady, both choose the same way of forming a home for ourselves. I have a fancy for nettles, and she for the leaf of the thistle. The sting of the nettle alarms not my bold caterpillar, though the human race seem to dread it; and the tough, spiky thistle-leaf yields to the strength of the lady’s powerful larva, who bends it at her good pleasure to form the wall of her dwelling.”



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LIFE OF A BUTTERFLY.

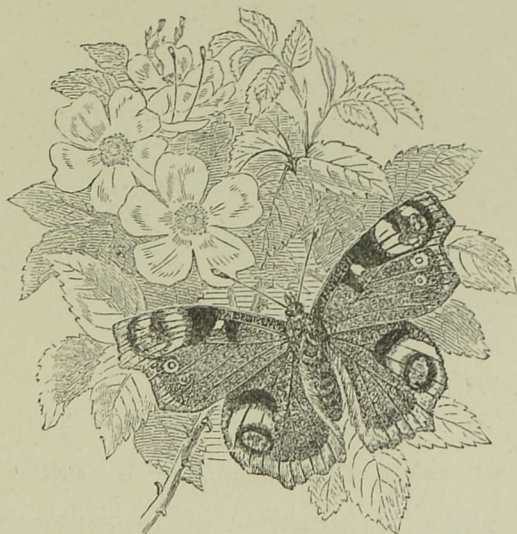


SYDNEY had listened with such curiosity and interest to the accounts given by various insects of their way of forming their dwellings, that he had excited the attention of a beautiful peacock-butterfly that chanced to be near him.

If butterflies appear lovely even to the human eye that cannot distinguish the plumage on their wings from dust, how exquisite did they seem to the microscopic sight of Sydney! As he looked on the wing of the peacock-butterfly beside him, he beheld it covered with tens of thousands of the most delicate scales, one overlapping another, arranged in regular rows, and tinted with the loveliest hues! Never had he beheld any work of human art to be compared for finished beauty with that bright butterfly's wing. Perhaps the peacock was pleased with his look of silent admiration, for she turned to address the stranger.

“One would fancy,” she observed, “that all these things were new to you ; yet you would be as dull as a chrysalis if you did not know already all about boring, spinning, and leaf-rolling.”

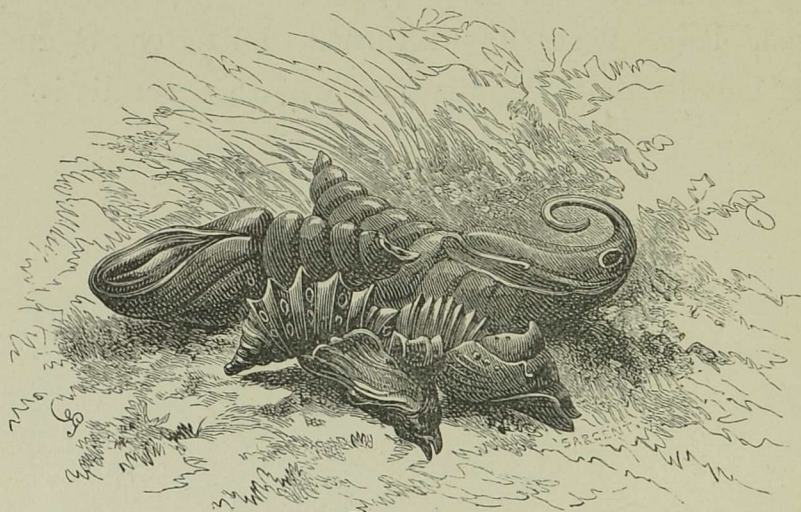
“I am afraid that you will think me very stupid indeed, lady Peacock,” returned butterfly Sydney ; “but I really am not quite sure what a chrysalis is.”



PEACOCK-BUTTERFLY.

If an insect could look astonished, the butterfly certainly did so ; as much amazed as you, dear reader, might feel if a companion confessed to you that he was not quite sure what kind of a creature a boy could be. The peacock, however, only observed :—“It is singular that you should not know the changes in your own condition. I see that you are a purple emperor, one of the noblest of our race, that soars aloft at noontide above the loftiest

trees—so high that it is almost lost to view. Perhaps these bold flights into upper air may have some injurious effect upon memory. I, who am of a less aspiring nature, have a clear recollection of all that has ever



CHRYSLIDS.

happened to me in my changeful life, except, of course, during my chrysalis slumber. I can recall the time when I was a black caterpillar, dotted with white, and armed with long black spines, feeding with numbers of my companions on the leaves of the common nettle."

"Oh! I must have seen you," exclaimed Sydney Pierce, who remembered a repulsive-looking caterpillar just answering to this description, a creature from which he had turned in disgust. "But who would ever have thought that that ugly caterpillar—I beg your pardon," he cried, interrupting himself, for he felt that he had

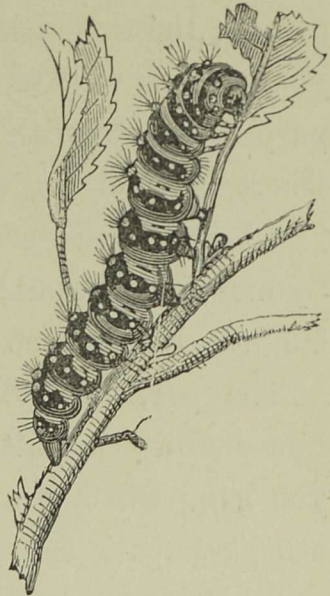
just said something very rude—"that that black caterpillar could ever have turned into a butterfly so exceedingly lovely!"

"One cannot always judge of butterfly by caterpillar," observed the peacock good-humouredly.

Seeing the beautiful butterfly so willing to enter into conversation, Sydney was inclined to ask a few questions, but expressed a fear that he was preventing her from listening to the speech which the red admiral at that moment was making.

"Oh! it matters not," replied lady Peacock. "I know all that my companion can say; her home, like my own, when we were caterpillars, was amongst the leaves of the nettle. She used to pull those leaves together, and fasten them as well as she might. I remember that she was then of grayish-green colour, with a yellowish line down each side; and her chrysalis was brownish above, and gray-green below, and was adorned with fine golden spots. We are connected with each other: the red admiral is called *Vanessa Atalanta*, and I am *Vanessa Io*."

"Very pretty names," remarked Sydney, "but not very easy to be remembered."



CATERPILLAR OF PEACOCK-BUTTERFLY.

"It strikes me that your memory is remarkably weak," observed the peacock-butterfly. "I see that your wings, purple emperor, have been cruelly bruised; perhaps the same accident that injured them has dulled your wit as well as your plumage. You are the first purple emperor with whom I have ever conversed; pray, where did you live when you were a caterpillar?"

"I never was a caterpillar in my life!" exclaimed Sydney, who would have burst out into a roar of laughter had it been possible for a butterfly to do so.

The peacock looked at him in amazement, thinking him doubtless a butterfly out of his wits. "Where did you hang when you were a chrysalis?" she asked, with a little impatience.

"I don't even know for certain what a chrysalis is," replied Sydney, who, though ashamed of his ignorance, was in his butterfly form as frank and truthful as he had been in that of a boy.

The peacock jerked her bright wings upwards in astonishment; Sydney fancied that the eyes upon them flashed brighter in scorn.

"I wish," said the poor purple emperor, "that you would tell me what *you* remember, instead of asking me what *I* remember. Only I may be preventing your making your speech, and winning the prize from the fairy."

"I am not going to make any speech at all," said the

peacock. "There is nothing wonderful about my work; and even if there were, I should not care to have my wings tipped with gold."

"They are splendid enough already," thought Sydney; "no fairy touch could improve them."

"So," continued Vanessa Io, "if you like to listen to a very simple tale, I will tell you what I recollect, though mine is but the common experience of butterflies. I have not, like the goat-moth, or, as we should call her, the *Cossus Ligniperda*, any curious adventures to relate."

"I should like to hear all that you can tell me of your childhood—I mean your caterpillarhood," replied Sydney, who hoped that the power of the fancy-pomatum might last until he had heard from a butterfly her own account of her early life and education.

"My first recollection," said Vanessa Io, "is of breaking my egg-shell, and finding myself, with a number of little black companions, safely cradled in the fold of a nettle-leaf. I need hardly say that we quickly set about eating, that being the principal occupation of every caterpillar. I sometimes wonder now at my loss of appetite; a little sip of honey from a flower is all that I care for. When I was a caterpillar, I would eat up ten times my own weight in a very short time."

"It is a happy thing," observed Sydney, "that human beings are not so hungry in proportion to their size."

"We were troubled with no cares," continued the peacock. "Each of us being furnished with sharp little bristles, the very birds would scarcely have wished to touch us; and there being so many of us together, our lives were very sociable and pleasant. To our minds, there was no plant on the face of the earth to be compared to a nettle. We grew fast: our race do grow very fast; four-legged and two-legged creatures do not increase in size and weight as we do, or a kitten would grow into a cat bigger than the largest waggon that ever moved along the highroad, with whiskers as long as corn-stalks! I never remember being frightened but once, and that was when a donkey came browsing by the side of the highroad, and cropped off a thistle that was growing quite close to our leafy retreat. The only trouble which I knew at this period of my life was that of changing my skin."

"Changing your skin!" exclaimed Sydney.

"Of course I changed it," said the butterfly, surprised at her companion's look of wonder. "It's the most natural thing in the world to get out of one's skin."

"I can't say that I think so," observed Sydney.

"Why, I thought that all creatures did so," said the peacock, whose knowledge was, of course, of a very limited kind. "Snakes do so, as well as caterpillars; I am not quite sure about donkeys and horses, but human beings certainly change their skins."

"I never heard that before," exclaimed Sydney, his wings shaking with mirth.

"I've seen a man changing his skin—I've seen it with my own eyes," said Vanessa Io, in a very positive manner, for she was rather provoked at the doubt expressed by what she considered to be the most stupid butterfly in existence. "A man came close up to the hedge under which our nettle-plant grew, and he pulled off the skin from all the upper part of his body in a twinkling. He seemed to have no trouble such as we have. Instead of feeling languid and sickly as we do, as soon as he had thrown off the skin, he set to work at clipping the hedge with the greatest activity and vigour."

"It was not his skin, but his *jacket*, that the man pulled off!" cried Sydney, extremely diverted at Vanessa Io's mistake.

"I don't know what you mean by a jacket," replied the butterfly, rather offended. "It was an old brown skin, and the new skin under it was whitish, with a brown line on each side. The oddest part of the business was, that when the man had done clipping the hedge, he came, stooped down, picked up his old skin, and put it upon his body again. A caterpillar would have scorned to do such a thing!"

"Caterpillars don't wear jackets," murmured Sydney to himself, thinking what strange, ridiculous mistakes may be made, both by butterflies and human beings, if

they judge of the habits and ways of others only by their own.

“When I and my companions had reached our full size,” said Vanessa Io, continuing her account, “we felt that we had something to do besides eating, and so we began to spin, fastening coarse silken threads to the nettle-leaves which we lived in. This was, of course, to prepare a quiet resting-place in which we might remain during our chrysalis state. I have but a dim recollec-

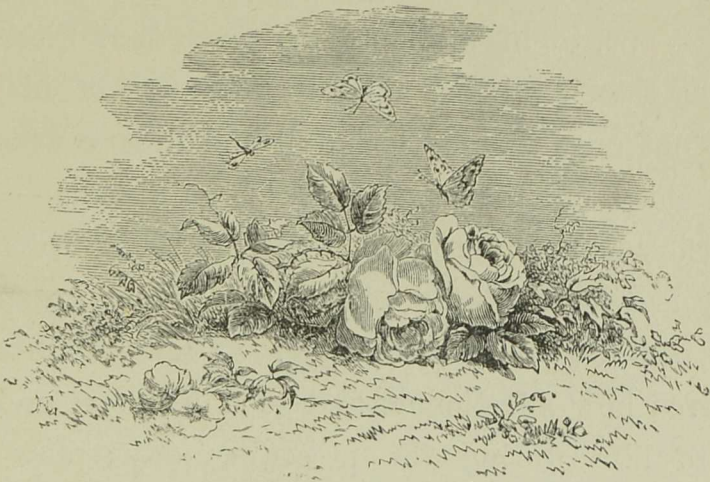


BUTTERFLY EMERGING
FROM ITS CHRYSALIS.

tion of what came over me after I had finished my spinning. I experienced a kind of dulness and deadness, and then went to sleep at my ease. How long I remained in this state I know not. I have heard that my colour was green, with golden tints upon it, and that I hung suspended by my tail; but all that I myself can remember is the delight which I felt this morning, when I burst into new and glorious life! No more a prisoner to earth, I soared aloft in the air; my home no longer a nettle—my motion no longer wriggling or crawling; the creeping thing had been given wings—the black, spiny caterpillar had become—”

“Dear me!” exclaimed Sydney, awaking suddenly from his slumber under the tree, and rubbing his eyes; “here am I, down again upon the earth, not a butterfly,

but a boy! It almost seems to me as if I had come down to a caterpillar state, as I cannot rise one yard from the ground. I wish that I could have heard the end of Madam Peacock's story. I'm afraid that she will set down purple emperors as the most uncivil as well as the most stupid of butterflies. Well, I have at least learned one good lesson,—Not to despise or to dislike the most common and most ugly of creatures, since the black spiked and spotted caterpillar of the nettle turns into the glorious peacock-butterfly!"



CHAPTER XIX.

A FRIEND IN NEED.



WE will now return to Philibert Philimore, whom we left on the lawn in pain and out of temper, ready to quarrel with all the world, because discontented with himself. No sooner had he, by his insolence, driven Sydney Pierce from his side, than Philibert bitterly repented of his folly. It was not only that he felt dull and dreary when thus left all alone, but that as soon as his pain had lulled, and his passion had time to cool, Philibert began to consider that he had been unkind and unjust, and ungrateful too, in his conduct towards Sydney. Young Philibert remembered how affectionate and good his companion had been to him during the preceding day; how ready Sydney had shown himself to give up his own pleasure, his own will; how thoughtful he had been of the comfort of the boy who had now requited his kindness with insult. Before the visit of Sydney to Fairy dell Hall, Phili-

bert had thought little about anything but what concerned his own enjoyment; he had been a thoroughly selfish boy. But the constant example of one who considered others, and found his pleasure in giving pleasure, had not been without its effect on the mind of the squire's spoiled son. Philibert had learned to believe, though he acted as if he did not remember, that

“To live for self is to live for sorrow;
The well-spent day brings the happy morrow;”

and he could not now do what was very wrong without feeling uneasy afterwards.

Philibert was now exceedingly lonely and sad. Sydney had gone into the woods, and Philibert knew that it would be no easy matter to find him there; and even if he should find him, young Philimore felt that unless he should ask his companion's pardon, it could hardly be expected that what had passed would be forgiven and forgotten.

A noble-minded and generous-hearted boy, in Philibert's position, would have determined to do the wise and right thing at once,—by all means in his power show his regret for his conduct, and try, as far as he could, to make amends to his friend. But Philibert, though beginning to see what was the course of duty, had not brave resolution to follow it. He was vexed with himself, he was unhappy; he felt not only that he was in trouble, but that he had deserved to be so; yet, instead of making a

struggle to get out of it again, the spoiled boy only sat down upon a seat at the edge of the lawn, and burst into tears.

"Why, Philibert, my little friend, what is the matter?" said a sweet gentle voice, as some one approached him, walking over the closely-mown grass. Philibert had no



A FRIEND IN NEED.

need to look up through his tear-dimmed eyes to know who was speaking to him, for no one but Angela May, the vicar's daughter, ever spoke in so loving a tone to the squire's motherless boy. If the selfish heart of Philibert really cared much for any one in the world but

himself, it was for her who had more than once soothed his childish sorrows by speaking to him holy words of counsel such as he had seldom heard from any lips but her own.

Philibert made no answer to the question of the lady, so Angela came and sat down by his side. Taking his little fat hand in her own, and speaking as a kind elder sister might speak, she asked him the cause of his sorrow.

"Sydney has gone away," half sobbed the unhappy boy.

"What!—back to his home?" inquired the young lady.

"No; yonder—into the wood."

"Is that all? We soon shall find him," said Angela cheerfully. "Shall you and I go exploring together?"

"I don't want to find him; I won't go after him," muttered sulky Philibert.

"What! has Sydney treated you unkindly?" asked Angela.

Philibert, with all his faults, was too honourable a child to say "Yes," though his pride would not let him honestly answer "No." As a kind of half-measure, he replied, "He didn't want me to kill the butterfly—that was no business of his!"

"And why should you kill it?" said Angela, softly pressing the hand which she held. "O dear Philibert! there is so much sorrow and pain in this world, that I could not bear to inflict one needless pang upon one of

God's creatures. Let them be happy while they may, and make me glad by seeing them happy. Do you not remember the beautiful promise in the Bible, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy?*"

"I am sorry that I killed the butterfly," said Philibert in a very low tone.

"If you tell Sydney that you are sorry, why should not you and he be happy together again?"

"He's angry with me—I jeered him—I called him a bad name—I said that I didn't care for his mother!" murmured Philibert.

"Then you will go and frankly ask his forgiveness," said Angela.

"No, I won't; I won't ask Sydney's forgiveness," cried Philibert, flushing with pride, and drawing his hand away from the gentle clasp of Angela's. The squire's son was silly enough to fancy himself above Sydney Pierce, because his own father happened to be much richer than his companion's widowed mother. To ask forgiveness is always humbling to pride, and Philibert shrank from doing so.

"Dear Philibert," said his friend, "I think that I know something of what is passing in your heart now, for I too have a heart in which wrong thoughts and proud feelings will often arise, and they have given me more trouble than anything else in the world."

Philibert looked up with surprise into the gentle face

of the lady. He knew that every one acquainted with her character spoke of the goodness of the vicar's daughter; and he had heard it observed that she was rightly called Angela, for that she had the temper of an angel. Philibert could hardly believe that she had ever been troubled by pride or ill-humour; but when he looked into her honest blue eyes, he could see that she had spoken in earnest.

"Yes, Philibert, I have to pray earnestly to God to help me to conquer myself, my unruly passions, my rebellious will; and I have to keep a very close watch indeed over the enemies within, lest they take me unawares, and get the victory over me. There is one thing which I have made a rule always to do, though, like yourself, I have often felt very unwilling to do it."

"And what is that?" asked Philibert, who still could hardly believe that Angela, so good, so gentle, so kind as she was, could ever really have an inward struggle such as she spoke of.

"Whenever I have spoken an unkind or hasty word, I *first* ask forgiveness of God (for we must never forget that to sin is to displease our Heavenly Father); and then I make it my rule to ask pardon openly of the person, whoever he or she may be, whom my word may have offended."

"Not if she were a servant!" said Philibert.

"If a servant, if a school-child, if a beggar," replied Angela May.

"I don't believe that you have often to ask pardon at all," said the boy.

"Not very often of my fellow-creatures," answered the vicar's daughter; "at least, not very often since I was a very young girl. The knowledge that my conscience would have no peace, that I could not rest till I had made what amends I could for hasty speaking, has had a wonderful effect in helping me to curb my tongue, and control a temper naturally hasty. Now, dear Philibert, let me advise you, as a friend, to adopt this little rule of mine. When you are convinced that you have been ungenerous, unkind, or unjust to any one, take the very first opportunity of frankly asking forgiveness."

Philibert looked uneasy and grave. "I don't think that I need say anything to Sydney *this time*," he observed, speaking slowly, and after a pause. "He is such a good-natured fellow, that I daresay when we meet he'll go on just as if nothing had happened. After all, it does not much matter to him whether I say that I'm sorry or not."

"But it does matter *to you*, dear Philibert;" and again the soft hand of Angela rested upon that of the boy. "You have owned to me that you have done wrong, and never can *true peace* be yours till you have made what amends it is in your power to make." Seeing that

Philibert looked undecided, the young lady went on:—
“I am reminded of a little incident which happened to myself when I was a child, not so old as you are now. I lost my way in your woods, into which I had wandered to look for nuts. I became frightened and anxious, for I knew not in what direction to turn. The more I tried to get out of the thicket, the further and further I seemed to wander into it. The ground was moist with recent rain, and the print of my little shoes could be seen on many parts of the path by which I had come. I often thought of retracing my steps, but I was very unwilling to do so, for I knew that I should have many brambles to repass, and I hoped to make some short cut, and get to the edge of the wood by some nearer and pleasanter way. But all my hopes were vain. I grew sadly weary and disheartened; the shadows were falling around me, and though I had called out till my voice was hoarse, no one had come to my help. ‘I must go back on my steps after all,’ thought I, resolving to do at last what I ought to have done as soon as I had found that I had lost my way. But I had made up my mind to take the right course *too late*. I could but track my footsteps for a few yards, before it became too dark for me to see the prints. After trying and failing, I sat down in despair, and cried as if my heart were breaking. Darker and darker grew the night, more piercingly chilly the air, and I became very faint with hunger, terror, and cold.

If my friends had not come with torches to seek for their little lost child in the wood, I do not suppose that I should have lived to see the dawn of the morning."

Philibert had listened with interest to Angela's account of her childish adventure, not uttering a word until she had ended it. He then observed: "I like your story, but I don't see that it has anything to do with my asking Sydney's forgiveness."

"I have often thought of that evening in the woods, dear boy, when, having wandered from what I felt to be the straight way of duty, I have found myself in any doubt as to how I should return to it. I seem to hear a voice in my heart (there is such a voice in yours, dear Philibert), saying, *Retrace your steps at once, do not wait till it be too late to do so.* Especially in this matter of asking forgiveness, let us try no round-about way. Let us never be content with a hope that, through the generous forbearance of one whom we have offended, things will go on again as if nothing had happened. Let us force ourselves, however our pride may rebel, to own that we have done wrong. The pain of such a confession is soon over; we have probably regained a friend; we have certainly done what is pleasing in the sight of our Heavenly Father, and are likely to enjoy once more that holy peace of mind which can never be ours while we have one unrepented sin."

"Angela, I will—I will ask Sydney to forgive me!"

cried Philibert, rising from his seat. "I wish I had you always with me to tell me what is right; I have not a mother, as Sydney Pierce has, or perhaps I should be more like him."

These were lowly words to fall from the lips of the squire's spoiled boy; they gladdened the heart of Angela May, and rising, she gave Philibert a kiss as loving as might have been pressed on his cheek by his own mother had she been living. Perhaps it was the pressure of Angela's hand upon Philibert's shoulder that made his little collar fall off upon the grass. The young lady stooped and picked it up.

"I thought," observed Angela, as she gave it to Philibert, "that your collar was fastened with a little pearl-brooch."

"Oh yes; I hope it is safe!" exclaimed Philibert in a tone of alarm.

"I can see no brooch," replied Miss May, bending down and looking to the right and to the left. Philibert fell on his knees to search; the grass had been so closely mown, that had the brooch been there he must have seen it almost directly.

Angela examined the boy's dress, to see if the brooch had by any chance dropped under the velvet. Philibert shook himself violently, in the faint hope that the jewel might drop out of some fold. All was in vain, and the little boy looked ready again to burst into tears.

“ Oh, papa will be so vexed, so dreadfully vexed ! ” exclaimed Philibert. “ He gave me that brooch on my last birthday as such a very great present, for it had been mamma’s before she married. Papa made me promise that I would take such care of it, and never part with it all my life long ; and now I’ve lost it—I’ve lost it ! ” Philibert shook himself violently again, but rather from vexation than from any hope of shaking out the brooch.

“ We must search for it well ; never despair of finding it. Where have you last been ? ” inquired Angela May.

“ In the woods yonder,” replied Philibert ; “ we were hunting for an ant-lion. We could not find that, and I’m afraid that we shall never find such a very little thing as my pearl-brooch neither.”

“ We will try at least to do so,” said Angela ; “ come, and I will help you to search. How glad we shall be if we discover it at last ! ” And taking hold of Philibert’s hand, the young lady went with him to the wood, looking carefully about her from side to side, as her companion retraced (as far as he could remember them) the steps by which he had come.

For more than an hour Philibert and Angela thus searched for the brooch, the young lady trying to cheer and encourage the boy, who grew sadly tired and disheartened, and who, but for her, would have soon given up in despair all attempt to find his lost treasure. It was exceedingly inconvenient to Angela to give up so

much of her time. She had come to see the gardener of Fairydell Hall, to procure from him some cuttings of rare plants which the squire had offered to give her, and had intended to hasten back as quickly as she could to welcome a dear friend from London, whom she had not seen for years, and for whom she was procuring the cuttings. But Angela, impatient as she felt to return home, did not even let Philibert see that she was in a hurry. She seemed to have nothing to think of but how to comfort and help the poor little boy. This was indeed the principal reason why Angela's gentle words of advice were seldom without effect: the vicar's daughter practised herself what she preached; her counsels and her example went ever together. While Angela was helping Philibert to search for the jewel, that his father might not be displeased by its loss, she found an opportunity of dropping in a few words about that priceless pearl, peace of conscience—that gift so far more precious than all the gems to be found in the land or the sea.



CHAPTER XX.

THE FAIRY'S MISTAKE.



THE fairy's prize had been given, her feast of honey-dew had been enjoyed, the meeting of butterflies was over. The last bright-winged member of the Lepidoptera had fluttered away from Violet Dell; even the rose-beetle had crept away from his station at the feet of the fairy. But Frisket still sat on her flowery throne, her golden-tipped wand drooping from the tiny hand which held it. The blossoms in her wreath were beginning to fade, but the fairy did not seem to be inclined to spring up on her glassy wings to seek for fresher and brighter.

"It can scarcely be that you are weary, my sweet sister fay," said Know-a-bit, who was still by her side; "still less can it be that you are sad; yet, were you a mortal fair, instead of a fairy, I might think that you now were both sad and weary. Has the meeting of butterflies and moths been less well attended than you

had expected? It seemed to me, after my long seclusion amongst books, as if to a bed of flowers the power of motion had been given, petals being changed into wings, and stamen into antennæ, till all the air was alive with beauty. Or were you mortified at having to bestow your prize upon an insect that you favoured less than the rest?"

"I should certainly have preferred tipping the wings of the peacock-butterfly with gold," replied Fairy Frisket; "but I was not, at the moment when you addressed me, thinking either of butterflies or moths. *They* give me no cause for vexation or displeasure. Each has her own place in the world,—her leaf to roll, or her cocoon to spin; she lives, works, and dies exactly as she was intended by nature to do. I was thinking, and, I own, thinking sadly, of human beings, and especially"—here there was indignation in the tone of the little fairy—"of that wretched, selfish creature, Philibert Philimore!"

"I do not see why my fair sister should trouble herself especially about him," said Know-a-bit blandly.

"I cannot endure to see a creature endowed with mind, and all kinds of powers that might make him so grand and so noble, leading such a *caterpillar* life!" exclaimed Frisket, springing to her feet, and looking as angry as a pretty little fairy could look, as she struck the ground with her wand. "Yes, I repeat it, a caterpillar's life;

and worse than that, for he has not even taken to spinning or leaf-rolling! Philibert seems to care for nothing but eating, drinking, and amusing himself. He is ready indeed to sting and annoy,—some caterpillars can do that also,—he wantonly killed my purple emperor, he insulted his kind companion; he is not only like a creeping creature, but a black-spotted, spiny caterpillar, in spite of his blue velvet dress.”

“My dear sister fay,” said quiet Know-a-bit, smiling at her angry impatience, “it is the black-spotted, spiny caterpillar that turns into the Vanessa Io, the bright peacock-butterfly, at last.”

“The selfish caterpillar of a boy will never turn into anything but a selfish caterpillar of a man!” exclaimed Fairy Frisket. “I have done all that I could to rouse and improve him; it is no fault of mine if Philibert remain the contemptible creature which he is. I’ve hit him over the ear, over the hand, and over the nose with my sting-brush; it only made him roar and stamp! I’ve speckled his face, I’ve stirred his food, I’ve—”

Even sober Know-a-bit could scarcely help bursting out laughing at his sister’s account of her fashion of improving a troublesome mortal. “That may not have been the best way of managing a boy,” he observed; “you tormented his skin, you spoiled his dinner, but you never reached his heart.”

“His heart!” repeated Frisket more slowly, “I doubt

whether Philibert has a heart at all ; and if he has, I don't know how to get at it."

"Hardly, I fear," observed Know-a-bit ; "hearts seem to be things quite out of the reach of fairies. I have never found the way to Philibert's yet, though he and I so often have met. But you, sister fairy, have never shown yourself at all to that boy."

"And never will !" cried Frisket with petulance ; "at least, never till that caterpillar of a boy shows himself able to rise a little from his nettle-leaf of selfishness and pride. If he did so, there is no saying whether— But he never will !" cried Frisket, interrupting herself in the middle of her sentence.

"But suppose that Philibert *should* rise from that nettle-leaf ?" said her brother.

"Then indeed I would pull my tassel, then would I show myself to a mortal, and he should meet the smile, and enjoy the favour, and receive the gifts of Fairy Frisket."

While this conversation between the fays was going on in Violet Dell, at another part of the wood Angela and Philibert, now thoroughly wearied with the fruitless search for the brooch, were seated on the trunk of a fallen tree, earnestly talking together.

"I suppose—I suppose that I ought to do it," said poor Philibert with a heavy sigh ; "but it will be harder to confess to papa that I have lost the pearl-brooch, than to beg Sydney's pardon for my rudeness. Papa will be not

only vexed, but angry ; for he forbade me ever to wear that brooch when I played about in the wood."

"You see, dear boy, that the good resolutions which you have been making will be put at once to the proof," said Angela May. "You have a thorny bit of ground to go over ; you have to conquer fear, as well as to wrestle down pride. But when you lay your head down on your pillow to-night, how thankful you will be if you can remember a painful duty performed, a victory won over self."

"I *do* mean to turn over a new leaf, I do mean to try to be a different boy from what I have been," said Philibert ; "and I will ask for help as you have told me to ask. I hope in time to think of others, as you and Sydney are always doing, and be loved as you and he are. But before I go home and confess to papa that I have lost my pearl-brooch, would you mind helping me to search for it just a little longer? Oh! how glad I should be to find it! Never will I disobey papa again by wearing it in the wood."

Tired as she was, and very anxious to get back to her home, Angela May would not refuse the request of her poor young friend. The two began again their wearisome search, shaking fern leaves, examining mosses, looking in likely and unlikely places for the jewel which Philibert had dropped.

"Oh! there's Sydney!" exclaimed Philibert suddenly ; "how I do hate having to ask his forgiveness!"

"Don't delay—do the right thing at once, or your resolution may fail you," said Angela.

Little Philibert's cheek had been pale with weariness, but now it grew red with shame, as, making a strong brave effort to overcome his dislike to humbling himself, he ran up to his companion, while Angela followed more slowly.

"Sydney—I beg your pardon—I've behaved very badly—I hope you'll forgive me!" gasped Philibert, out of breath, less from the effect of running than from the difficulty which he had in bringing out such a sentence.

"Oh! don't think about that any more, dear Philibert," cried Sydney Pierce in his open, frank, kindly way. "See, here's something of yours that I've found." And he held out the little pearl-brooch.

Philibert jumped for joy at the sight; he seemed to be getting back his jewel and his peace of mind together.

"Oh! you dear old fellow!" he exclaimed, grasping the hand which Sydney held out with the brooch, and wringing that hand warmly; "you don't know what a kindness you have done me. I am ten times more sorry than I was before at having treated you so badly, since you return my evil with good. But I'm going to try to be a very different companion to you in future; I'm going to try to keep my temper, and remember my duty, and forget myself, like you and dear Angela May."

An exclamation of astonishment burst from the lips of

the young lady, who came up to the boys at that moment, an exclamation not caused by her having overheard the last sentence of Philibert. The boy, who had glanced towards her as he spoke, struck by the amazement and admiration expressed in Angela's face, followed the di-



THE BROOCH RESTORED.

rection of her eyes, and uttered in a loud tone of delight, "Oh, what a beautiful, beautiful fairy!"

Yes; Fairy Frisket had pulled her tassel, and Know-a-bit had pulled his, and there they appeared in full sight of three mortals, poised on their glassy wings, their gossamer robes glistening in the sunlight that streamed through

openings between leafy boughs,—the loveliest little brother and sister that ever were seen. Angela, who had never even heard of Know-a-bit, was, of course, the most astonished of the three spectators; but Philibert Philimore, the once spoiled boy, was perhaps the happiest of them all, as he listened to the tinkling music of Fairy Frisket's address:

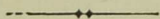
“Philibert Philimore, you have learned a lesson, and one has been taught even to a fairy! I have learned that good words may have more power than a sting-brush, kindly deeds than the wand of a fay!—

Not gilded rod of fairy-wood,
But love, content, and gratitude,
Give sweetest taste to common food,
Make everything seem fair and good!

Oh that every self-willed child would try to cast off his old evil habits, as the black larva casts off his dark skin, and would rise to a higher, nobler, happier existence, far above the nettle-leaf of selfishness,—as from the creeping, crawling caterpillar springs up into glorious life the bright-winged Vanessa Io!”



I N D E X.



Amazon-Ants (<i>Formica rufescens</i>), ..	49	Negro-Ants,	51
Ant-Lion (<i>Myrmaleon formicarius</i>),	105	Painted-lady Butterfly (<i>Cynthia car-</i>	
Aphis,	55	<i>dui</i>),	142
Blue-Butterflies,	142	Peacock Butterfly (<i>Vanessa Io</i>), ..	166
Brimstone-Butterfly,	142	Purple Emperor Butterfly (<i>Saturnia</i>	
Cabbage-Butterfly (<i>Pontia brassica</i>),	142	<i>pavonia</i>),	167
Clear-wing Moth,	161	Pupæ,	53
Clouded Yellow Butterfly,	142	Red Admiral, or Admirable Butter-	
Ermine-Moth (<i>Yponimenta padella</i>),	161	fly (<i>Vanessa Atalanta</i>), ..	165
Foraging-Ants,	72	Skippers,	142
Fritillaries,	141	Swallow-tail Butterfly (<i>Papilio ma-</i>	
Goat-Moth (<i>Cossus ligniperda</i>), ..	147	<i>chaon</i>),	146
Heath-Butterfly,	142	Tiger-Moth (<i>Arctia caja</i>),	146
Lackey-Moth (<i>Clisio campa neus-</i>		Tortoise-shell Butterfly (<i>Vanessa ur-</i>	
<i>tria</i>),	146	<i>tica</i>),	142
Leaf-rollers,	164	White-Ants, or Termites,	40
Lepidoptera,	130	Wolf-Moth,	160
Leopard-Moth,	161	Wood-Ants, or Pismires (<i>Formica</i>	
		<i>rufa</i>),	49
		Woolly Bear,	146

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