THE CHRISTMAS TREE
FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE
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"Leaning over the back of her chair as she sat before the window, we talked about art and artists."—Page 12.
THE CHRISTMAS TREE:
A
BOOK OF INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT
FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE.
WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.
LONDON:
JAMES BLACKWOOD, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1858.
TO MY READERS.

THREE years ago—that is to say, about the Christmas of eighteen hundred and fifty-five—I wrote a few words of introduction to the first volume of the CHRISTMAS TREE. Then I said, my dear young readers, that I hoped to provide a treat from year to year at which many should make merry. This is the third volume of our little Annual, and my store of tales and poems is not half exhausted. We are about to rejoice and be glad and dance around another Christmas Tree, lit up with many a twinkling taper, and sparkling bright with many a quaint conceit and literary toy. It has been a pleasant occupation for me, during the autumn months, when you, perhaps, have been wandering by the sea-shore and picking out pretty shells and bits of coral from the ocean sands, to be searching about in my study for little tales and scraps of verse with which you may amuse yourselves during the long nights of winter. The time will come when books
full of wisdom and truth will engage your attention. You will, God willing, grow up into men and women and have children of your own; and think you it will not be a joy for me to know that, into those children’s hands you will place this little volume, secure in the knowledge that nothing it contains will harm their young minds, but that its perusal will bring them into loving acquaintance with good books, and, through them, with the great world of thought and action in which they are destined to take part? And thus, while the green leaves, and the lights, and the toys, hang from the boughs and flutter in the merry noise of many a Christmas gathering, may my little offering be not allowed to lie forgotten or unprized.

G. F. P.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Christmas Tree and the Toys that Jenny hung upon it</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Beech-tree</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Lesson from the Spider</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds and Flowers for every Month in the Year:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Language of Flowers</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Deserter</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Parable</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Walter Raleigh</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Early Primrose</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leech Barometer</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hen and the Diamond</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Good Turn deserves another: A True Dog Story</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come forth to meet the Spring</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mother's Influence</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Child's Inquiry</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Return of the Guards</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Story of Franklin</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Curious Circumstance</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dawn of May</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Maintop Audience</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vanity of Earthly Things</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bag of Gold</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Song of the Engine</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Children</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wonderful Cloth; or, the Birthright Test</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Solomon</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mother Tongue</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lifetime of Man: A Fable</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sail by Moonlight</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Little Sailor Boy</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Autumn Holiday</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Dream of Life</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flying Horse</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wreck of the Hesperus</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kangaroo Rat</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Baffled Traveller</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Song</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell to the Old Year</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE CHRISTMAS TREE

AND THE

TOYS THAT JENNY HUNG UPON IT.

[SEE FRONTISPIECE.]

ELL do I remember the day of my introduction to sweet Jenny Ward. She is my wife now, and well may I praise her, for a better little wife never blessed a man’s fireside and made his home merry with music, and love, and innocent pleasures.

I was a poor young man, just beginning the battle of life, with no better weapons than a little learning and a great passion for poetry and the fine arts. I had been intended by my father for the profession of the law, but soon I
put aside the ponderous volumes of Blackstone and Coke for the more pleasant reading that is to be found in Shakspeare and Spenser; and I was in a fair way of turning out a mere idler and dreamer. Disgusted with the law, I toyed with medicine, tried my hand at literature, took a turn at painting, and had serious thoughts of a clerkship in a government office, should the interest of my friends prove sufficient to procure me a berth. In fact, as my relatives all said, I was pretty good at anything I undertook, but excellent in nothing. They said I wanted resolution; and one, an old gentleman who had the reputation of being a phrenologist, declared that my organs of firmness and individuality were sadly deficient,—by which, I suppose, he meant that I was wavering, uncertain, and not to be depended on. However this might be, I had made up my mind to distinguish myself in the profession I should select, be that what it might. The difficulty, however, was what to choose. Chance decided it at last, and this is how it happened.

Twice in the street and once at a friend’s house I had met pretty Jenny Ward. Now, young men of twenty or thereabouts are very susceptible, and I confess that I longed to make the young lady’s acquaintance. I thought of her at night and wrote sonnets and love-songs in the daytime, in which I had rhymed “Jenny” with “many,” and “love” with “prove,” and did other ridiculous things which young fellows are prone to. But how to obtain a formal introduction I could not imagine. At last chance brought about what contrivance had failed to do. One fine morning as I passed her father’s house I saw a picture being carried in, and I lingered, naturally, to see what the picture was like. Well, as I lingered, who should come out of the house but my friend Vandaub,
the artist. I instantly seized him by the button, and began talking about the picture I had caught a glimpse of.

"My dear fellow," said he, "if you would like to examine it, I think I can oblige you;" and with that he boldly went up the clean white steps and knocked at the door. A servant opened it, and, to a civil request of the painter that he might show his friend the picture, replied that she would ask her young mistress. With that she retreated to an inner room, and presently returned with an invitation for us both to step in.

Well, we went in and examined the picture, which was hanging on the wall of the dining-room. I must confess that I was not much struck with my friend's performance; but I had gained admittance to Jenny's house, which was a great point, and my heart beat pit-a-pat at a great rate. In a few minutes Mr. Ward and his daughter came into the room, and my friend the artist formally introduced me to them. I noticed that there was a sly twinkle in Miss Jenny's eye as she bowed to me, and I could not help thinking that she guessed my motive in wishing to see Vandaub's picture. However, I was soon set at my ease by the charming elegance of her manner, and from that moment I felt that I was head over ears in love.

"My daughter is something of an artist," observed old Ward. "Jenny, my love, show Mr. Taplyn your last drawing."

I declared I should be delighted, and Jenny moved towards the door to comply with her father's request. I followed her from the room with a feeling of great pleasure; though I was rather nervous, I confess, when Vandaub begged to be excused any more lengthened visit, on the plea of previous
business engagements. But I was soon at my ease as the dear
girl led the way, laughing and talking all the while, to her
own little study.

We entered; and I was not long in improving the acquaint-
ance, you may be certain. It was one of the prettiest little
rooms you ever saw. On one side was a bookcase, and on
the other a great arm-chair, against which music-books and a
guitar were placed, as if they had been very recently used. A
round table, covered with an elegant cloth, stood before an
open window; and on the table were a vase of flowers, newly
cut, and a little easel on which was the drawing Jenny was
just then making, together with the brushes, pencils, water,
and box of colours necessary to the work. A singing-bird
hung in a gilt cage above the window, and a glass globe full
of gold and silver fish stood on a marble pillar by the side.
Curtains of blue damask shaded the window, from which was
visible a pretty scene, with land and water, an old castle, and
venerable trees, making up a picture of great natural beauty.
I forgot to tell you that Jenny Ward’s home was in a little
village on the banks of one of the largest of the Cumberland
lakes, whither I had gone to spend my autumn holiday.

Well, what with admiring the scene without, so naturally
beautiful, and the scene within, so charmingly domestic, and
yet so elegant, I soon engaged Miss Jenny in an interesting
conversation. Leaning over the back of her chair as she sat
before the window, we talked about art and artists, books and
authors, and various other pleasant subjects. In fact, we were
mutually pleased with each other, and from that time my visits
to Dovedale, which was the name of her father’s cottage, be-
came pretty frequent.
But what has all this to do with the Christmas Tree? Well, be patient, my dear young friends, and I will tell you.

Time went on, and golden autumn was deepening into winter. The green trees on the lake side put on their sober livery of brown, while here and there the naked branches of the birch and the plane-tree gave sad warning of quickly-coming gloom. Jenny and I were in the habit of taking long walks together among the mountains of an evening, but now the sudden closing in of night as soon as the sun sank behind the hills obliged us to make them much shorter, so that soon the damp and darkness of the season confined us to the house. I was very much in love, I think, or I should not have stayed so long among the early winter fogs and rains of Cumberland. I was also very much perplexed occasionally, to think what I should do when the time arrived for me to go home. I was happy only in the young lady’s company, and never thought of the future except when I was alone. As for her, she was always busy and happy—always occupied with her drawing, or her music, or her embroidery, whenever I called, and never so pleased as when I attempted to assist her in anything she had in hand. Thus the hours, and days, and weeks flew by, and winter found me still at the cottage. Towards the end of November I received a letter from my father, inquiring how long I meant to stay in Cumberland, and whether I had made up my mind as to my future profession. Alas! I had not yet made up my mind, though I had promised myself every day that I would. Procrastination was with me indeed the thief of time. Now, however, there was no time to be lost. I could not talk to Jenny’s father about marrying his daughter, for I had no profession or wherewithal
to keep a wife; so I had a long talk with Jenny instead. The result of that talk was that we promised to wait for each other, no matter how long, and that I should return home to London and consult my father about a choice of profession.

With many sighs and tears we parted, and I came up to London. Once again in the great city, I began to look about me for something to do. What could I do to support myself and a wife, was the question. I had now a motive for exertion, and I set myself manfully to think, but my thinking produced nothing more than a determination to work hard when work should present itself. But work did not present itself, and to all my father’s advice about studying for the law I turned a deaf ear. I questioned myself about my abilities, and I found that I could write a little, but not well enough to set up for author; play a little, but not well enough to embrace music as a profession; draw and paint a little, but not well enough for an artist; I was tolerably proficient in languages, but not sufficiently so to teach them; I knew something of accounts, but dreaded the ordeal of a counting-house; something of medicine, but I had no taste for the avocations of a surgeon; something of law, but a thorough hatred for legal studies. What was I to do? My father was, as the world goes, a tolerably well-to-do man, but he had a large family, and not sufficient means to support me in idleness, even had he felt willing to do so, which he did not. I was a dabbler in many things, but, as my friends said, excellent in nothing. How I wished that somebody would choose a profession for me!

In the midst of my cogitations I received a note from Jenny, informing me that she was coming up to London. In a few days she came, and I introduced her to my parents and
sisters, by whom she was well received. In fact, I told the whole story of our courtship to my mother, and Jenny was, in consequence, invited to spend a few weeks with us at home. How happily the time passed I need not say; only one thing gave me uneasiness, and that was my future profession.

Christmas approached, and my sisters were all busy in preparing for that merry festival. Our house was full of company, among whom were many children. It was determined that Jenny should remain with us till Twelfth-night, when her father was expected in town in order to take her home. Meanwhile we were all very gay and happy; and, what with dancing and singing, and romping with the children in the evening, I nearly forgot the grand object of my previous reflections—the how to live when I got married.

Christmas-day arrived, and with it more company and more children. How merry they were, to be sure, and how great a favourite Jenny soon became among them! In the evening, when the lamps were lighted, there was singing and dancing, and hunt-the-slipper, and forfeits, and I don’t know how many other noisy games. About ten o’clock, at a signal from one of my sisters, the young ladies of the party left the room, with Jenny among them. Then said my father—

“Well, James, have you made up your mind yet?”

“Not quite,” I replied, laughingly; “I am waiting for something or somebody to give me a hint as to the line I should pursue in order to catch the fickle goddess Fortune.”

“Ah, my boy,” said my father with a smile, “waiting never accomplished much without there was working with it.
'Wait and work' is a very good motto, but 'work and hope' is a better."

Just then the ladies returned, and invited the whole company to follow them into the children's play-room.

With something of curiosity, the ladies, gentlemen, and children all rose and went out after my sisters. I tried to catch Jenny as she passed under the mistletoe branch that hung over the doorway, but she was too quick for me; so I ran after her to the room where all the company were assembling.

I can hardly describe the scene that met my sight. The room was brilliantly lighted up with coloured lamps hanging from the ceiling and the walls, and gaily festooned with green leaves and coronets of holly-berries and mistletoe. There was no furniture in the room, but in the centre, on the floor, there was placed a gigantic Christmas Tree, whose topmost branches almost reached the ceiling. It was loaded with toys and presents, and dazzling with light, which proceeded from a multitude of little tapers hung about among the dark fir branches in all directions; and numerous little glass globes, sparkling with various metallic colours, that made them look like balls of gold and silver, added to the beautiful effect.

The company, and especially the children, were astonished at the beauty of the Christmas Tree, and were loud in its praises; and presently, some musicians in the next room striking up a merry tune, all—men, women, and children—commenced searching about among the branches for the toys and presents that bore their names. Such shouting and laughing, and singing and scrambling, and giggling and romping; such merry noise, and innocent, light-hearted
gaiety; such joking, and quizzing, and bantering, as there was, as each one found the toy intended for him—I cannot describe, for the life of me. I only know that for an hour or more the fun continued, till nearly every one in the room had possession of a *bon-bon* in gilt paper, or a toy watch, or a box of sweetmeats, or a bundle of crackers, or something of that kind. There were sugar-frosted fruits and sweetmeats, with mottoes slily concealed inside, for the ladies and gentlemen; and little dolls, and little tops, and little coloured balls, and all kinds of toys and confectionery for the boys and girls, with numerous other things for which I can find no names. And the game at romps grew loud and gay as the minutes passed.

At last, as I looked on, Jenny came up to me and said—

"Why don't you look for your present, James?"

"I will," said I, awaking from a pleasant kind of dream; and I went up to the tree and searched among the tapers and the gilt balls, but could find nothing. At last, casting my eyes to the very topmost point of the pine tree, I saw suspended a little box, all bright with gold and colours. I brought a chair from the hall, and, climbing up, reached down the pretty toy. I examined it, and discovered the initials J. T., written in a hand I knew, on a little tablet on the lid. I felt hot and flushed as I brought it down, amid the cheers and laughter of the children; and as I looked upon it I caught Jenny's eye gazing tenderly upon my face. I opened it, and discovered inside a folded paper—nothing more. I tore the paper open in haste, and read these lines:—

"To say well and do well
   Ends with a letter;
THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

To say well it is well,
But to do well is better.
Then take the best part
Set down in this rhyme;
Consider it well,
And act it in time."

As I finished reading this legend, I turned round, and found Jenny at my elbow. To seize her and carry her to the mistletoe, to pluck a branch bearing a few white berries, and to kiss her affectionately, was but the work of an instant. I saw the kindness of the advice contained in the joking rhymes, and I loved her for giving it in so pleasing a manner.

Need I say more? In less than a year from that time I had discovered a profession that suited me exactly, and by the next Christmas we were not only engaged but married; and as year by year ever since we have kept up our merry sports, even now that we have half-a-dozen children of our own to join in them, I think of that beautiful Christmas Tree, and the toys that my dear Jenny hung on it.

G. F. P.
The Beech-Tree.

There's a hill by the Orwell, the river of hearts,
    And a beech-tree that grows on its side,
In a nook that is lovely when sunshine departs
    And twilight creeps over the tide.
How sweet at that moment to steal through the grove,
    In the shade of that beech to recline,
And dream of the maiden who gave it her love,
    And left it thus hallow'd in mine!

Here's the rock that she sat on, the spray that she held,
    When she bent round its grey trunk with me,
And smiled as with soft timid eyes she beheld
    The name I had carved on the tree—
So carved that the letters should look to the west,
    As well their dear magic became,
So that, when the dim sunshine was sinking to rest,
    The last ray should fall on her name.

The thrush twitters gay in that beech-tree at morn,
    The winds through its trembling leaves sigh,
And afar comes the sound of the waterman's horn,
    And the hum from the beehive close by.
THE BEECH-TREE.

No echoes there wake but are magical, each  
   Like words on my spirit they fall;  
They speak of the hours when we came to the beech,  
   And listened together to all.

And oh! when the shadows creep out from the wood,  
   When the breeze stirs no more on the spray,  
And the sunbeam of autumn, that plays on the flood,  
   Is melting each moment away,—  
How dear at that moment to steal through the grove,  
   In the shade of that beech to recline,  
And dream of the maiden who gave it her love,  
   And left it thus hallow'd in mine!
A Lesson from the Spider.

— o —

BOY once accompanied his father into an orchard, and there discovered a bee in a spider's web. The spider had begun to kill the bee, but the boy liberated the bee and destroyed the web of the spider. The father, who saw it, inquired,—

"How can you esteem the instinct and the dexterity of this animal so little as to destroy its web, on which so much skill and labour have been bestowed? Did you not observe with what beauty and regularity the tender threads were arranged? How can you, then, be at the same time so compassionate and yet so severe?"

The boy replied,—

"Is not the ingenuity of the spider wicked, and does it not tend to kill and destroy? But the bee gathers honey and
wax in its hive; therefore I liberated the bee, and destroyed the web of the spider."

The father commended the judgment of ingenuous simplicity, which condemns the bright cunning that springs from selfishness and aims at mischief and ruin.

"But," continued he, "perhaps you will have done injustice to the spider. See, it defends our ripe grapes from the flies and wasps with the web it spins out to catch them."

"Does it do this," inquired the boy, "to protect the fruit, or rather to satisfy its own thirst for blood?"

"True," answered the father, "they concern themselves little about the grapes."

"Oh, then," said the boy, "the good which they practise without designing it is of no value. A good motive is all that makes a good action estimable and lovely."

"Very true!" said the father. "Our thanks are due to nature, who knows how to employ what is vicious and unfriendly in the preservation of what is good and useful."

Then the boy inquired,—

"Why does the spider sit alone in its web, whilst the bees live together in social union and work for the general good? Ought not the spiders to make a large common net?"

"Dear child," replied the father, "men can unite only in noble designs. The alliance of wickedness and selfishness carries the seed of ruin in itself. Therefore wise natures will not attempt what man has so often found impossible and destructive."

As they were returning home, the boy said,—

"I have learnt nothing to-day from that vicious insect."

"Why not?" answered the father. "Nature has placed
the malicious along with the friendly, and the evil with the good, that the good may appear lovelier and brighter in the contrast; and thus man can receive instruction even from the vicious.”
Birds and Flowers for every Month in the Year.

JANUARY.

Orphan hours, the year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry hours smile instead,
For the year is but asleep.

LL people, and especially young people, are fond of birds and flowers. Who can walk out in the fields on a morning in spring and not feel delighted as he listens to the voices of nature's own choristers, singing praises to the Great Maker from among the green leaves, or look upon the buttercups and daisies that spangle the meadows, without feeling what a beautiful world it is in which we live? Every month in the year has its own peculiar flowers; and at no
period during the whole twelve months are the beautiful birds absent from us. Even in bleak January, when the snow covers the ground, and the frost throws a veil over the windows, and the trees are bare, and we gather about the chimney-corner—even then the snowdrop shows its pale modest face; the pansy forces its tender leaves and pretty blue flowers up from the cold earth; the primrose and polyanthus begin to blossom, and the yellow furze and gorse bloom bright upon the common, and look beautiful by contrast with the dead brown of the earth out of which they spring. And then the groundsel comes forth as food for the birds, which even, in spite of the cold and snow, come twittering about the fields and begging at our doors. Larks congregate in thousands, and the bold Robin Redbreast hops on the window-sill and begs a
crumb from our hands. Every child knows the pretty Robin, and the story that is told of his covering the children in the wood with leaves when they were left by their cruel uncle to starve and die. The Redbreasts are among the prettiest of our native songsters; they remain all the year in our woods and gardens, and breed, summer after summer, in or near the same spot. The Robin lays its eggs twice a year; it feeds on all manner of insects, and in autumn is very fond of seeds and berries. In confinement the Robin is very voracious, eating readily from the hand of its master; but it repays us for all our trouble in rearing and feeding it by its sweet song. It is not a bird, however, which lives long in a cage, and it appears a pity to confine it. Nor are its "wood-notes wild" so pleasing in the house as among the trees and flowers. In January, too, the Hedge Sparrow chirps among the naked boughs, and the King-fisher watches for his prey over the half-frozen brook; the Snow Bunting twitters; the Song Thrush sings in the lonely woods, and the Nuthatch flies free about the fields, or, when the cold is very severe, even ventures to approach villages and barns in search of the insects on which it feeds, or the crumbs that good children scatter about on the frosty ground. This little bird builds its nest in the holes of old trees, and lays six or seven little spotted red eggs. It is very impatient of confinement, and cannot be kept in a wooden cage. It likes the flavour of hemp-seeds and oats, and its call to its mate sounds like "gru, dek, dek."

There is great difficulty in keeping the soft-billed, insect-eating birds, and they seldom live long, because we do not supply them with a sufficient quantity of suitable food. The hard-billed birds are more easily managed, as they all feed on
seeds. But we must beware lest the cat becomes too familiar with them, as a bird in a cage stands no chance against the attack of the domestic tiger. After all, perhaps it is best to keep no feathered favourites; for though they amuse us while they are in health, we experience much pain when we see them pine away and die. More pure and satisfactory enjoyment may be obtained in watching and listening to them in their native woods, singing the songs of freedom, and hopping joyfully from twig to twig in all the thoughtlessness of bird-life. Listen how the poet Cowper laments over his captive goldfinch:

-Time was when I was free as air,
The thistle’s downy seed my fare,
   My drink the morning dew;
I perched at will on every spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
   My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel, were all in vain,
   And of a transient date:
For caught and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
   Soon passed the wiry grate.
In Eastern lands they talk in flowers,
And they tell in a garland their loves and cares;
Each blossom that blooms in their garden bowers,
On its leaves a mystic language bears.

The Rose is the sign of joy and love,
Young blushing love in its earliest dawn;
And the mildness that suits the gentle dove,
From the Myrtle’s snowy flower is drawn.

Innocence dwells in the Lily’s bell,
Pure as the heart in its native heaven;
Fame’s bright star, and glory’s swell,
By the glossy leaf of the Bay are given.

The silent, soft, and humble heart,
In the Violet’s hidden sweetness breathes;
And the tender soul that cannot part,
A twine of evergreen fondly wreathes.

The Cypress that darkly shades the grave,
The sorrow that mourns its bitter lot;
And faith that a thousand ills can brave,
Speaks in thy blue leaves—Forget-me-not.
Then gather a wreath from the garden bowers,
And tell the wish of thy heart in flowers.
The Deserter.

In the early times of American colonization, when the Dutch held possession of that part of the United States now called New York, there lived an old burgomaster called Hans Klein. He was a stern man, but he had a pretty daughter, to whom all the young men of the district were glad enough to talk, if not to make love. The favourite suitor of them all, however, was one Claus Winthrop, a wild, harum-scarum sort of fellow, who cared more for him-
self than for the pretty fraulein Kate Klein. What the lass could see in the idle fellow nobody—at least, not any of the other young men in the neighbourhood—could make out, but she loved him nevertheless. Well, time went on, and Claus continued to court the pretty fraulein, though how he was to keep her if they got married everybody declared was a mystery, for he could not keep himself. But Claus did not talk of marriage, not he; courting, he said, was so much more pleasant. What business he pursued was a puzzle, for nobody ever saw him do any work. He used to lounge about the streets, and in and out of the burgomaster’s house, with his hands in his pockets, and sometimes with a long Dutch pipe between his lips; but always merry, light-hearted, and full of fun. At last, one day old Hans, taking his pipe from his mouth, and putting his disengaged hand into the pocket of his ponderous breeches, addressed our hero thus:—

“Claus Winthrop, you are a lazy fellow.”

“Am I?” said Claus, in reply: “well, perhaps I am—what then?”

“Why this, then—you don’t marry my daughter.”

“Very well,” replied Claus, “then I’ll go for a soldier.”

“Go anywhere but into my house,” returned Hans, quietly resuming his pipe.

What more was said on the occasion, and whether Claus quarrelled with his sweetheart or not, and whether old Hans repented the pain he caused his pretty daughter, I cannot tell; but certain it is that the next morning saw the departure of Master Claus Winthrop from the neighbourhood.

And as certain it is that the next news they heard of him was that he had entered the army then raised in defence of
the colony against the English. For many months little more was known of Claus than that he was getting to be a good soldier, so that old Hans was fain occasionally to joke with his daughter about her lover, and say that he would turn out right after all. He used occasionally, when he could get away from the barracks for a day or so, to visit the pretty Kate, and at such times he and old Hans would sit in the garden behind the house and gravely smoke a pipe together, rarely saying a word in the intervals of their solemn enjoyment.

At last the regiment to which Claus belonged was ordered to depart on service to a distant part of the colony; and for a long while neither father nor daughter heard anything of the young soldier.

Rumours reached them, however, occasionally, that Claus had got into disgrace on account of his wild doings. Out of sight, and therefore beyond the influence of his sweetheart, he had joined some tipplers in his company, and had more than once been severely reproved by his commanding officers. Indeed, they had heard that he had been flogged for drunkenness. And so, with scanty news of her lover, the poor fraulein was fain to sit in her little room, and fret about his idling propensities.

One fine afternoon, as Hans was sitting in front of his house, under the shade of a spreading tree, quietly enjoying his pipe, and gravely watching the curls of smoke that rose into the sunny air, he was startled by the appearance of Claus, all hot and dusty, coming quickly towards him.

"What now, young man?" asked Hans.

"Hide me—I've deserted," gasped Claus.
said man for the pretty truant Kate Klein. What the lass could see in the mere fellow nobody—at least, not any of the other young men in the neighborhood—could make out, but she loved him nevertheless. Well, time went on, and Claus
continued to court the pretty truant, though how he was to keep her if they got married everybody declared was a mystery, for he could not keep himself. But Claus did not talk of marriage, not he. Courting, he said, was so much more pleasant. What business he pursued was a puzzle, for nobody ever saw him do any work. He used to lounge about the streets, and in and out of the burgomaster's house, with his hands in his pockets, and sometimes with a long Dutch pipe between his lips; but always merry, light-hearted, and full of fun. At last, one day old Hans, taking his pipe from his mouth, and putting his disengaged hand into the pocket of his ponderous breeches, addressed our hero thus:

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One evening, as Hans was sitting in front of the shade of a spreading tree, quietly enjoying the last rays of the setting sun, he was startled by the appearance of Claus, coming quickly towards him.

"Young man," said Claus, "where is your sister?"

"Here, young man," asked Hans. "Have you been deserte"ed?" asked Claus.
The old man rose hastily from his seat, and went into the house, calling "Kate, Kate!"

Soon the fugitive was received by the weeping girl, and led into the house. The same afternoon, however, saw him led away by a couple of soldiers, and marched between them through the town towards the fort at the sea-side.

For a week or more they heard nothing of the unfortunate youth. They were denied admittance to the fort, and all that they could learn was that, driven to desperation by the disgrace he had undergone, and smarting with revenge and pain, he had deserted from his regiment.

The old man and his daughter exerted themselves in order to see whether they could not obtain a pardon from the governor, but all their efforts seemed vain. "Death is the penalty for desertion, and the discipline of the army must be kept up," said the governor in reply to their solicitations.

And so, early one morning, Claus was led forth into the courtyard of the fort, stripped of his military attire, and told to kneel and receive the reward of his disgraceful breach of discipline. Only the captain of the regiment and three soldiers were present. The latter had already their muskets pointed, awaiting the word to fire; across the mind of the kneeling criminal flashed wild thoughts of home and Kate; and the captain had raised his hand, and was about to give the word of command, when—

"Pardon, pardon!" cried a wild voice.

The captain paused irresolutely, and the soldiers looked passively at their bound and trembling comrade kneeling on the ground.

In another instant a tumultuous group rushed confusedly
into the courtyard, with Kate Klein in their midst. "Pardon!" burst from the lips of the trembling girl; and, handing a paper to the captain, she sank fainting in the arms of her father.

I cannot tell you how the maiden obtained the governor’s consent to the young soldier’s release; I can only tell you that there was great joy and feasting in the house of the burgomaster for many days after, and that the idler was reclaimed.

I have heard, too, that in the war that followed, young Claus highly distinguished himself, and by his subsequent good conduct wiped away the stain from his character. Many years afterwards, when the British had quiet possession of the city, which they called New York, old Hans might be seen sitting under the great tree in front of his house, with romping grandchildren about his chair.
Parable.

A man, through Syria's desert speeding,
His camel by the halter leading,
The beast grew shy, began to rear,
With gestures wild to plunge and tear;
So fearful was his snort and cry,
The driver was obliged to fly.
He ran, and saw a well which lay
By chance before him in the way.
He hears the snorting camel near,
And lost all consciousness in fear.
He plunged not in the shaft, but crept,
And hanging 'neath the brink he kept.
A blackberry-bush its bed had found
Within the gaping fissures round;
Hereto the driver firmly clung,
While loud his doleful wailings rung.
He looked on high, and lo! he saw
Above his head the camel's jaw,
PARABLE.

About to seize him as his prize.
Then in the well he cast his eyes;
A dragon on the ground he saw,
That gaped with fearful, yawning jaw,
His prey there ready to devour,
When it should fall into his power.
Thus hovering between the two,
Another evil met his view:
Where in the stony fracture hung
The bush’s roots, to which he clung,
He saw two mice within the crack,
The one was white, the other black:
He saw the black one and the white,
How they the roots alternate bite;
They gnawed, and pulled, and dug around,
And tore from off the roots the ground.
When he the crumbling earth espies,
On high the dragon casts his eyes,
To see how soon, with load and all,
The bush, torn by the roots, would fall.
The man with anxious terror quailed,
Besieged, surrounded, and assailed;
While in this doleful situation,
Looked round in vain for his salvation.
And as around he cast his eyes,
A little nodding branch he spies,
With berries ripe, nor did he feign
His lustful longing to restrain.
No more the camel’s rage he saw,
Nor in the gulf the dragon’s jaw;
No more the mice that gnawed the root,  
When he beheld the luscious fruit;  
Right good he deemed them to appease  
His cravings, and he plucked at ease;  
And thus his fear, his doleful lot,  
Were in the juicy sweets forgot.

"Who is the fool," methinks I hear  
Thee ask, "who thus forgets his fear?"  
Know then, O friend, that man art thou!  
But take the explanation now:

The dragon, lurking on the ground,  
Is Death's grim yawning gulf profound;  
The threat'ning camel standing there  
Is Life's anxiety and care.
'Tis you who gasp, 'twixt life and death,  
Upon the world's green bush for breath.  
The two that, gnawing at the tree,  
Soon shall the bush as well as thee  
Deliver to the dragon's might—  
The mice—their names are Day and Night.  
Concealed, the black one gnaws away  
From evening to the dawn of day;  
The white one gnaws and undermines  
From morn until the sun declines.  
And, 'midst these horrors and alarms,  
Thou lustest for the berries' charms,  
Forgetting camel Life's distress  
And dragon Death in the abyss,
PARABLE.

As well as mice, the Night and Day,
And dost alone attention pay
To snatching trifles, as they peep
From near the grave so dark and deep.
Sir Walter Raleigh.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.
(From the Portrait at Greenwich.)

This gallant and accomplished soldier, statesman, navigator, and poet, celebrated alike for his discoveries, his high fortunes, and his sufferings, flourished during a period that is rich in great names. With Elizabeth as his sovereign, and Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, and Bacon for his contemporaries, Raleigh may be said
to have lived in an extraordinary age. The exact period of his birth is not certainly known, but the year is generally believed to have been 1552, the sixth year of the sixth Edward, and the place a farm called Hayes, near Tavistock, in Devonshire. His family were of noble lineage, and at an early age he was

Queen Elizabeth.

sent to Oxford for his education, soon after which he went to France for his accomplishments. France being at that time embroiled in civil wars, a select troop of gentlemen were allowed by Queen Elizabeth to embark for that country, under the command of Henry Champeron, in order to assist
the persecuted Protestants. Among these gentlemen soldiers was the young Raleigh, then only seventeen years of age. On their standard they bore the motto—*Finem det mihi virtus*, "Let valour decide the cause."

On his return from this expedition, in which he distinguished himself with honour and credit, Raleigh was intro-

![Sir Martin Frobisher](image_url)

duced to the court of the Queen, who had a high opinion of his gallantry and abilities.

The genius of Sir Walter was of an eminently speculative character. He wrote poems, projected discoveries in the New World, handled his rapier, and played the accomplished courtier, with equal grace and facility. He entered the ser-
vice of his Queen about the year 1569. As a reward for services performed, Elizabeth granted him part of the forfeited estates of the Earl of Desmond, in Ireland, whither he went with his regiment in the year 1580. On his return he projected an expedition of discovery in North America, and an

attack upon the countries over which the King of Spain held sovereignty. In these enterprises he was associated with the famous Sir Francis Drake, Sir Martin Frobisher, and Sir John Hawkins, the great naval heroes of the time.

His exploits both by sea and land gained him the good-will
of Queen Elizabeth, who employed him in several negotiations, and promoted his projects in America by granting him numerous privileges. He discovered Virginia in 1584, founded a colony there, and soon the introduction of new objects of cultivation, such as tobacco, potatoes, &c., the use of which he promoted, bore witness to his efforts for the prosperity of his country. The contests he had with the Spaniards, in vessels equipped at his own expense, and the services he rendered in parliament, raised him still higher in the favour of the Queen, who appointed him to posts of eminence. The riches and honours showered upon him, however, excited envy, and made him many enemies. Among these were Leicester, and afterwards the still more formidable Earl of Essex, who succeeded in keeping him for some time at a distance from the court. The victory, however, which Raleigh gained over the fleet sent by Spain to invade England; his cares and his labours for the discovery and conquest of Guiana; his bravery and skill as a sailor in the expedition to Cadiz; and, lastly, his talents as an orator in the House of Commons, suspended the effects of the hatred he had unintentionally aroused. That hatred could not openly appear till after the accession of James I., the successor of Elizabeth. Then Raleigh cruelly expiated the favours he had received from "good Queen Bess."

Stripped of all his employments, and accused of high treason, he was arrested in 1603, and condemned to death, by a commission in which his greatest personal enemies sat as judges. This terrible sentence had scarcely been pronounced when the most lively interest took the place of enmity. Raleigh was regarded as a hero unjustly accused; his eminent
qualities and the services he had rendered the state were remembered with enthusiasm. A general cry arose in his favour, and the king was obliged to postpone the execution. Conveyed to the Tower the 15th December, 1603, Raleigh underwent a long captivity, of which his death was the only visible termination. He did not, however, sink under his load. The presence of a beloved wife, who had resolved to share his prison, the education of his children, the cultivation of the arts and sciences, afforded him not only consolation but enjoyment; and when, at the end of twelve years, he recovered his liberty, his great soul had lost none of its energy.

Quitting his prison on the 17th of March, 1616, without, however, having been discharged from the sentence, Raleigh, desirous of obtaining entire immunity by new services, undertook (March 28, 1617) an expedition to Guiana, where his former researches led him to think he should find gold. But this enterprise excited alarm in the Spanish court, which induced the feeble James to unite with it for the purpose of destroying Raleigh. Betrayed by the English monarch, and resisted by Spain, commanding a vicious and insubordinate crew, delayed and impeded by sickness, bereaved of a beloved son, Raleigh failed in his objects, and returned home only to be a butt for the slumbering vengeance of his adversaries. Many noblemen and gentlemen came forward in his behalf; but accused of piracy, and persecuted by Spain, Raleigh had an enemy in the king; and seeing that he had no chance of obtaining justice in England, he attempted to escape. He was betrayed, arrested, and again thrown into prison. Spain demanded his head. The king granted the demand; his
only trouble was to find a legal means. He resolved to revive the sentence that had been passed fifteen years before. Raleigh prepared for death. The queen and several powerful personages interceded. The Spanish ambassador insisted; but the king, firm only in evil, kept his promise. Raleigh learnt with indifference the efforts that were made to save his life.

At last the 29th of October, 1618, was fixed for him to die. The day happened to be Lord Mayor's Day. Raleigh asked the executioner to show him his axe. Feeling the edge of the fatal instrument, he said—"It is a sharp remedy, but it cures all evils." The executioner fell on his knees to ask Raleigh's pardon. Then the victim, turning successively to all who were present, asked them to pray to God on his behalf, and, laying his head on the block, gently raised his hand as a signal that he was prepared to die. The axe fell, and a great man left the earth.
The Early Primrose.

Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire!
Whose modest form, so delicately
Was nursed in whirling storms,
And cradled in the winds,—

Thee, when young Spring first questioned Winter's sway,
And dared the sturdy blusterer to
Thee on his bank he threw,
To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale,
Unnoticed and alone,
Thy tender elegance.

So virtue blooms. Brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity, in some lone walk
Of life she rears her head,
Obscure and unobserved;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear
Serene the ills of life.
The Leech Barometer.
The Leech Barometer.

A very ingenious apparatus has lately been shown, by which common leeches have been made to perform the office of a weather-glass. It is known that various plants and animals give signs of approaching changes in the weather, by closing their leaves, making uneasy movements with their bodies, and so on. With the knowledge of these facts, the inventor of the Leech Barometer set about preparing the instrument of which the engraving is a representation. The leeches are confined in bottles; and as the weather changes they alter their positions in the water in such a manner as to affect the floats and strings of the instrument, and so give warning of the coming storm or sunshine. ‘During a continuance of warm weather they remain snug and almost motionless at the bottom of the water, but as soon as any moisture in the air betokens rain, they rise and float about as if uneasy. ‘On the approach of thunder or any violent storm their extreme anxiety and their frequent struggles betoken in the most unmistakeable manner the electrical state of the atmosphere. This instrument must, however, be considered rather curious than useful.
The Hen and the Diamond.

A hungry hen, in time of dearth,
Picked up a diamond of worth,
And buried it again in earth.

She spake: "What joy were it for me,
Could but the lovely stone I see
A grain of wheat or barley be!"

Well may abundance be deplored,
When all the treasures that we hoard
No real enjoyment do afford!
Birds and Flowers for every Month in the Year.

FEBRUARY.

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blow;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snow.

VER all the landscape stern Winter reigns in the beginning of February; but towards the middle of the month the sun shines out, and Spring begins to make its appearance. The Crocus and the Daffodil flower amid the snows; the Willow-tree and the Hazel put forth their buds; and the Speedwell and Shepherd’s-purse peep out, with the Violet and the Snowdrop, among the wet green leaves.
of the fields. February is a month of change. The frosts of its early days give way, and the ice and snow melt into the thirsty earth, from which sweet flowers spring up to gladden us with the promise of coming Summer. The Turtle-dove coos on the yet leafless boughs; the Yellow-hammer comes twittering about the barn in search of insects, grain, and seeds; the Wagtail hovers about the banks of the rivers, and looks about for a mate; the Rook and the Raven build their nests high up among the topmost branches of the Ash and Beech trees; the House-Pigeon hatches its eggs in the farmyard; the brown Wood-Owls hoot in the dark woods at night; the Marsh Titmouse begins his two sharp notes; the green Woodpecker makes a loud cry; the Partridges pair; the Pheasants crow; and the Stone Curlew clamours in the fields. Nature is changing her dress, and puts off the hoar-frost for the green leaves of Spring. About St. Valentine's-day many birds pair, and, like young lovers, go billing and cooing together on the budding branches. In the garden, if the weather be mild, we must set to work in right good earnest, for our Auriculas, Carnations, and other flowers need fresh earth and careful attention. Their houses are not the houses they can dwell in longer, and they need removal; and so we transplant our Carnations to the places in which we intend them to blow. Flowering shrubs and evergreens need pruning, and the weeds that have sprung up in our flower-beds must be carefully removed. The mould must be loosened, so that the heat and moisture—the sunshine and tears of heaven—may fall upon the earth, and call forth her floral children. Many a beautiful little flower has already peeped forth in our garden. The trailing Speedwells, the
green-flowered Mercury, the bright golden stars of the Celandine and the Primroses, are already singing Aves to the coming Summer.

February is often a beautiful month, and towards its end many fine days appear, on which the farmer goes to work with plough and harrow. Then down come the Crows, and Rooks, and Ravens, and spread themselves over the freshly turned clods, in search of worms and insects. Little buds come upon the black twigs of the trees, and the water runs free in stream and rivulet. Nature awakes from her sleep, and the flowers show their beautiful faces to the sky. The birds sing; and, to all who spend much time in the open air, what more soothing than their little notes, which seem to welcome the springing up of the flowers that, towards the end of this month, deck the fields and begin to make the garden gay?

Among our winter visitants is the Siskin, called by many the Aberdevine, and by some the Black-headed Thistle-finch. It is somewhat like, but smaller than, the Goldfinch; its crown and throat black, back greyish green, lower parts yellow, the sides black-streaked. The Siskin is seen occasionally searching busily among the buds of the Alder, Birch, and Larch. The Siskin’s song is not thought highly of for itself, but it is paired with Canaries, and thus a bird is obtained whose song is not too loud for a room. The Goldfinch, called in many parts of the country the Redcap, being also the Goldie and Goudspink of Scotland, and by some the Red-fronted Thistle-finch, is aptly characterized in many points by these varied names. Its rich crimson throat and forehead; the dark patch on the hinder part of the head and
neck, preceded anteriorly by a broad white band passing over the throat; its back umber brown passing to ochre yellow at the tail; the beautifully alternating tints of black and yellow on the wings; the black quill feather tipped with pure white—all distinguish it by a richness and splendour of plumage from every other British bird. Combining also with these attributes of colour a compact, somewhat slender and elegant shape, and very pleasing, affectionate, and docile qualities, by which it is taught to draw its food and water, and to manifest, by various signs and little playful antics, a knowledge of the presence, and a disposition to obey the commands, of its master or mistress, we need not wonder that it is sought out for the cage with a greediness which threatens its extirpation in many parts of the country.

The ingenuity of the Rooks during this season is often very amusing. One Sunday afternoon one of the black fellows was observed hammering with his bill with great force at the joint of a twig on a tree which he had evidently selected for some part of his new nest. Finding he could not strike the twig off, he threw himself to its point, and hung awhile, trying, no doubt, whether his weight would bring it away. This, however, also failed; and returning to his perch at the joint, with a croak brought his mate to his assistance. Both, after some apparent consultation about the matter, threw themselves to the point of the twig. Still it would not do, and they were compelled to return to the perch, from whence one of them flew off, and shortly arrived with two assistants. A long consultation then took place, and it was amusing to observe the conclusion they had come to as to their modus operandi. Three of the Rooks threw themselves
upon the point of the twig, while the fourth with great vigour attacked the joint, and ultimately the much-coveted twig was severed from the branch, and carried off to the nest with a crowing of gratification which nearly drowned the noise of the other denizens of the rookery.
One Good Turn Deserves Another:
A TRUE DOG STORY.

There was a ship called the Washington, bound for China, filled with passengers. On board this ship were an officer of the army and his wife, with their only child, a little boy of five years of age, and a large Newfoundland dog, called Bobby.

Bobby was a great favourite with all the people in the ship, because he was so brave, so good-tempered, and so funny and playful. Sailors as well as passengers all liked brave Bobby. He would romp on the deck with anybody that chose. Sometimes, when the ship was going slowly, he would jump overboard and dash through the sea after a biscuit, or anything else that might be thrown in for him.

But his most constant playmate was a little boy, the son of his master. This boy was a merry little fellow, and as fond of Bobby as Bobby was of him. They used to make a fine noise in their droll games of play, rolling over and over each other like a couple of young porpoises. And though the little
boy was sometimes rather rough in his frolics with Bobby, and hit him on the head and back, yet Bobby was always gentle as a lamb to him.

The voyage had been very safe and pleasant, until within three days' sail of the Cape of Good Hope. Evening was coming on; the sun was setting in dark clouds, so that the dusk had commenced unusually early. The night watch of the ship had been set, and the wind had risen so that the ship was sailing very fast. The boy and the dog were romping together, tugging each other, when on a sudden the ship gave a heavy roll, and the child fell overboard splash into the sea.

It had by this time become so dark that objects could not be distinguished many yards distant. A general cry of "A hand over!" was made by the men who saw the boy fall. Two or three men ran, heaving down lines, and a stray coop that was found lying by the capstan, while the officer of the watch sang out, "Bring the ship to—bring the ship to, or the boy is lost!"

The order was scarcely given when Bobby, now for the first time missing the child, gave a loud bark, and, seeming to guess what had happened, cleared the taffrail with a bound; and the captain and boy's parents, with the other passengers who had come on deck to learn the cause of the outcry and bustle, saw the dog swimming away like a mad creature in the direction of the stern.

It was too dark to see him distinctly; however, he was dimly perceived to dive, and then dimly to appear again above water, and snatch at something. It was, however, too dusky for anybody on deck to be sure what it was that he really saw. The dog was now out of sight, and nothing was visible but
the surface of the water. The mother covered her eyes with her hands, not daring to look, fearful lest she should see the corpse of her darling child floating on the waves; while the father, equally unhappy, jumped into the jolly-boat, which the men, in all haste, had been getting ready, that he might spare no effort to recover his beloved son.

It was many minutes before the jolly-boat could be lowered and manned; the men rowed with all their might in the direction they had seen the dog take at first. The darkness had so much increased that the sailors could hardly see, and began to give up the child as lost.

The father in great misery sat at the head of the boat, trying to see through the surrounding gloom, and listening anxiously to every sound.

"I hear a splash—I hear a splash on the larboard quarter!" said he, starting up; "pull on—be quick—it must be my child!"

The helmsman turned the tiller, the men pulled with redoubled force, and in a moment the faithful Bobby, with the child in his mouth, was alongside. Poor creatures! they were nearly exhausted when they were hauled into the boat. The father took the child into his arms, and the faithful Bobby sank down to the bottom of the boat, panting and almost lifeless.

The men rowed back to the ship. Great indeed was the mother's joy when she saw her child, that she thought was gone for ever, in the arms of his father, and good Bobby with him also. They all got safe on board the ship again, and the father, thanking the sailors for helping him to recover his son, went down into the cabin with the mother, child, and
dog. Every remedy was used that the doctor of the ship advised, to make the half-drowned boy well again.

Bobby, after he had shaken the water from his shaggy coat, could not be persuaded to leave the child's side. There he stood, licking one of his little hands, till the child became so much better as to be able to stroke and hug him as usual. Brave Bobby seemed as happy as anybody when both the father and mother hugged and praised him too. And when the boy could speak again, they made a little party in the cabin, where before all had been sad.

After this circumstance of saving the child's life in so brave a manner, there was not a man on board that ship but loved the dog as a father might love his child, and well did Bobby deserve it.

At the Cape of Good Hope some of the passengers were to be landed, and among others the master of Bobby, with his wife and child. All those who remained in the ship were sorry to part with good Bobby.

The boats were prepared for the passengers and their luggage. All those who were to leave had got into the boats, the little boy was in his mother's lap, and Bobby, whom the sailors were holding to pat and take leave of, was just going to leap into the boat after his master, when the officer stood up, and told the sailors to hold him tight by the collar until the boats should have rowed some way towards the shore. "You will see what a strong swimmer Bobby is," said he; "let us start before him, and he will soon overtake us; when I hold up my handkerchief, let him go."

"Ay, ay!" cried the sailors, and two of them held him by the collar. Poor fellow! he thought he was to be left behind,
and he did not like it. He tugged and hauled, and yelled and barked to get to his friends, but it was of no use. The boat put off without him. He was let loose as agreed on, and was soon over the side.

All the people in the boats, as well as those on board the ship, were eyeing Bobby with delight; and he had just reached midway between the ship and the boats, when the creature set up a shrill howl, and threw himself out of the water. Everybody thought he had got the cramp; but oh! no; the flash of white that glanced like lightning close against him the next minute told the truth; and "A shark! a shark!" sounded from boats to ship, and from ship to boats, in one loud cry. All stood trembling, with their eyes fixed upon the unfortunate dog. The boats stayed still for an instant, the men resting upon their oars, as if panic-struck. But again, in another instant, one of the boats was to be seen putting back, the men rowing with all their might.

Poor Bobby! he kept swimming away right and left, now diving, now doubling, as if he knew his danger, while every now and then he gave a short, fierce howl, and showed his grinders, never giving the vile shark time to turn its back, which it must do before it can give the fearful bite.

The poor dog swam and dodged with a skill and speed, and maintained the unequal contest in a manner, that surprised everybody, but it was evident that his strength was nearly exhausted, when the boat that had put back came sufficiently near for him to hear himself called, and encouraged to hold out. "Here, Bob, here!" The shark turned on its back, and opened its horrid jaws. "Poor Bob! dear Bobby!" shrieked the boy; and a lad who stood at the head of the
boat, hoping to save the dog, threw a handspike that he held at the ravenous monster. But the lad was in such a flurry, from terror and anxiety, that he missed the shark, and the spike fell into the water.

At this failure the child screamed aloud with agony of fright and sorrow.

"Oh! save poor Bobby, save my dear, dear Bobby!" and everybody thought poor Bobby was gone; when the father of the child, who, ever since the boat had come within gunshot of the shark, had been watching for the proper opportunity to save the faithful dog, fired. The gun was levelled with so true an aim, that he shot the cruel shark through the head, and splintered those horrid jaws that were ready to devour poor Bobby. The shark sank, the sea became tinged with blood, and the father, throwing down the gun, stretched out his arm, and pulled the dog, exhausted with fatigue and terror, into the boat, before the shark, who was not quite dead, could again rise to the surface of the water. The child threw his arms around the poor dog's neck; the sailors of the ship, who were all intently on the watch, and the men in the boats, set up one loud shout of joy—"Hurrah! hurrah! Bobby is saved—the shark is killed; hurrah! hurrah!"
Come Forth to Meet the Spring.

Let us forth and meet the Spring, love! tho’ a sweeter sunshine lies
In the soft and azure splendour of thy own beloved eyes;
Yet a voice of murmuring music comes through our lattice old—
A breath that sighs of violets, far down the dusky wold,
And up from tomes and musings our hearts have taken wing—
Come forth from fireside shadows, come forth and meet the Spring!

Soft from the May-time’s dawning, thy cheek shall rosier glow
With a blush to me as charming as the bloom of long ago;
Once more our time of wooing, sweet memories shall renew.

Thus, by the forest streamlet, the silvery willows grew;
COME FORTH TO MEET THE SPRING.

And thus from grey and gnarled roots where velvet mosses cling
Peep'd forth the yellow primrose—Love met us in the Spring.

In the soft and dewy Spring, love, ere golden youth was o'er,
May hung with bridal garlands our happy cottage-door;
And though many a cloud has darken'd around us since that day,
Thy love still sheds around my path the beauty of the May!
Then let us forth with hearts as blithe as birds that round us sing;
We'll have a woodland holiday—come forth and meet the Spring!
GOOD boy generally makes a good man," said the mother of Washington; "George was always a good boy." Here we see one great secret of his greatness. George Washington had a mother who made him a good boy, and instilled into his heart those principles which raised him to be the benefactor of his country, and one of the brightest ornaments of the world. The mother of Washington is entitled to a nation's gratitude. She taught her boy the principles of obedience and moral courage and virtue. She in a great measure formed the character of the hero and the statesman. It was by her own fireside that she taught her playful boy to govern himself, and thus was he prepared for the brilliant career of usefulness which he afterwards pursued. We are indebted to God for the gift of Washington; but we are also indebted to him for the gift of his inestimable mother. Had she been a weak and indulgent and unfaithful parent, the unchecked energies of Washington might have elevated him to the throne of a tyrant, or youthful disobedience might have prepared the way for a life of crime and a dishonoured grave.
Byron had a mother just the reverse of Lady Washington; and the character of the mother was transferred to the son. We cannot wonder, then, at his character and conduct, for we see them to be almost necessary consequences of the education he received and the scenes he witnessed in his mother’s parlour. She would at one time allow him to disobey with impunity; again she would fly into a rage and beat him. She thus taught him to defy authority, human and divine; to indulge without restraint in sin; to give himself up to the power of every maddening passion. It was the mother of Byron who laid the foundation of his pre-eminence in guilt. She taught him to plunge into that sea of profligacy and wretchedness upon whose agitated waves he was tossed for life. If the crimes of the poet deserve the execration of the world, the world cannot forget that it was the mother who fostered in his youthful heart those passions which made the son a curse to his fellow-men. Had Byron and Washington exchanged cradles during the first month of their infancy, it is very certain that their characters would have been entirely changed; and it is by no means improbable that Washington might have been the licentious profligate, and Byron the exemplar of virtue and the benefactor of nations.
The Child's Inquiry.

"Earth is so beautiful, dear mother,
    I should not like to die,
Although they tell me there are worlds
    More bright beyond the sky;
But, dear mother, in that distant land,
    For this home I should pine;
The little children have not there
    A father kind as mine."

"Jesus, my child, the helpless loves;
    In Scripture, we are told,
He gathers all his wandering lambs
    Within one cherished fold.
Come, read that book of Holy Word:
What says the prophet of the Lord?
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not known,
The wonders of God's mighty throne."

"And yet how pretty are my flowers!
    How sweet the linnet's song!
And dearer still my own pet lamb—
    How could I leave it long?"
"The flowers of earth, my child, will fade—
The petted lamb must die;
And singing birds, when winter comes,
Far, far from thee must fly.
But buds and blossoms round the gate
Of Eden ne’er decay;
And birds of Paradise are there,
With plumage always gay.
Read in the book of Holy Word:
What says the prophet of the Lord?
The eye hath not seen, ear hath not known,
The glories of Jehovah’s throne."

"But, mother, I’m so happy here,
With everything to love—
Why should I leave this pretty world
For one so far above?"

"Alas! poor child, when sickness comes,
And takes away thy bloom,
And suffering has made thee seek
Those joys beyond the tomb—
Then, when thine eyes are dimmed with tears,
Thy heart torn with despair,
Thou’lt ponder on the sacred page,
And find thy comfort there;
For in that book of Holy Word,
Well speaks the prophet of the Lord—
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not known,
The splendours of God’s shining throne."
Ah, passing few are they who speak,
Wild, stormy month, in praise of thee!
Yet though the winds are loud and bleak,
Thou art a welcome month to me.

Little can be done in the garden during the stormy month of March; but even in March there are many fine days when the flowers can be looked to. The Tulips now require protection; so do the Anemones, and Hyacinths, and Ranunculus. Cold, rain, and frost will play sad havoc with them, if great care be not taken. The Daisies, and the Marigolds, and the Periwinkles, and the Violets—hardy children of the earth—may stand March weather, and be the better for it; but cultivated flowers are of another sort. The Hyacinths are beginning to spring up,
and other flowers are putting forth their strength; but the seeds of Hollyhock, of Hellebore, of Campanula, of Foxglove, of Tree Primrose, of Shrubbery Mallows, have still to be sown. Now let all such parts of the garden as are not yet in order be raked and smoothed, so that they may be ready to receive seeds. For March is the seed month; and among the wild flowers of the fields the Shepherd’s Purse, the Wood Anemone, the Crowfoot, the Marsh Marigold, the Golden Saxifrage, the Dog Violet, and the Periwinkle flower. The birds, too, increase in number with the leaves. Goldfinches and Wrens sing; the Ringdove coos; the Sand Martin and the Swallow make their appearance from other lands, and the Gold-crested Wren and little Blue Titmouse chirp their merry notes. In this month the Blackbird lays its four or six green spotted eggs among the bushes, and calls its “zirr tak tak” to its mate; the Raven sits; the Wheatear appears from afar in flocks a thousand strong; the Turkey lays her eggs in hidden places in the woods or the farmyard, or anywhere but in the nest provided for it; the Blackcap is heard in the thick copse-woods, feeding on insects and berries; the Ring Ousel is seen in the fields, and young Ducks are hatched in the farmyard. The Chaffinch also appears, and, with its short, lively, dashing note, which is frequently uttered as early as February, is a welcome harbinger of the coming Spring. In this country it is not much prized for its song by the bird-fanciers—hence, fortunately for itself, it sports and warbles amid hedgerows and gardens under the broad sky rather than within the bounds of a wiry prison. In Germany, on the contrary, it is sought and so highly valued for its musical powers that a peasant or artisan will walk miles to hear a bird, possessed by some one
in a distant part of the country, with a richer note than ordinary, and will give large sums, almost his little all, to purchase it. The Germans and Dutch have great patience in training birds, and probably the short lively note of the Chaffinch is by their art prolonged. The Brambling, or Mountain Finch, is also seen in this month. It has the head and back mottled with brown and black, the shoulders and wings finely tinted with fawn colour, mingled with bars and patches of white and black, the rump feathers white. It is a bird that rarely visits us except in windy, stormy weather. In years when beech-nuts are abundant it is said to come in great numbers. Its call-note is a monotonous chirp. It breeds in Norway and the northern mountainous countries.
The Return of the Guards.

THREE years—an age of glory and of pain!—
Since we with blessings, and with shouts and tears,
And with high hopes, pursued your parting train—
With everything but fears.

Too lightly then, perchance, we let you go;
For war is sweet to those who never tried,
And hearts are sullen, which refuse to know
Its splendour and its pride.
Forth from beside our hearths we saw you pass,
And guess'd that battle must be stern and strong;
War's shapes we saw, but dimly, in a glass,—
It shapes of wrath and wrong.

We saw not, Heaven in mercy did not show,
The fiery squadrons rushing to their doom,
An army in its winding-sheet of snow,
Slow sinking to the tomb.

We saw not Scutari's piled-up agonies,
Nor those blest hands and hearts that brought relief;
Splendours and glooms were hidden from our eyes,—
What glory and what grief!

One thing we saw, one only thing we knew,
That come what might, ye would not bring to shame
The loved land which had trusted thus to you
Its wealth of ancient fame.

Therefore the old land greets you, whose renown
In face of friend and foe ye well upbore,
Handing the treasure of its glory down
Bright, brighter than before.

And greets you first, as owing you the most,
The Lady whose transcendent diadem,
Unless she ruled brave men, would cease to boast
Its best and fairest gem.

But ah! if through her bosom there is sent,
Nor hers alone, a pang of piercing pain,
With tearful memories of the brave who went,
And come not now again—
All who have made a holy land for aye
(Such consecration is in glorious graves)
Of that black barren headland far away,
Foam'd round by Euxine waves:

Yet shall this sadness presently depart,
Leaving undimmed the splendour of this hour;
We rather thanking Heaven with grateful heart
For their high gift and dower,

Who, ending well, have pass'd beyond the range
Of our mutations; whom no spot or stain
Can now touch ever; for whom chance and change
Not any more remain.

Shout then, ye people; let glad thoughts have way;
Shout, and in these their absent fellows greet—
Yea, all who shared with them of that fierce day
The burden and the heat.

Nor yet forget that when in coming time
By many an English hearth shall men recall
This two years' chronicle of deeds sublime,
Then first, perchance, of all,
They, talking of dread Inkermann, shall tell,
When that wild storm of fight had pass'd away,
How thick, by those low mounds they kept so well,
The noble Bear-skins lay.
HATEVER the light in which we view the histories of perils and adventures, it is certain that the endeavour to discover what is called the North-West Passage has been fraught with the most stirring and romantic incidents that ever befell the navigators of any country. The sad story of Franklin, the arctic navigator, is now closed, and we may tell of its principal events as of a chapter in the history of Popular Delusions. From the time of Columbus and Raleigh to the present day the dream of a passage round the northern end of the continent of America has engaged the attention of maritime nations; but, without stopping to speak of previous attempts at arctic discovery, let me tell you of the last melancholy expedition that was fitted out for this purpose.

On the 19th of May, 1845, with good spirits and in robust health, the arctic expedition sailed from England; her majesty’s government having deemed it expedient that a further attempt should be made for the accomplishment of a north-west passage by sea from the Atlantic to the Pacific,
and for that purpose the ships "Erebus," 370 tons, and the "Terror," 340 tons, were fitted out and placed under the command of Sir John Franklin, K.C.H. He was directed by the admiralty instructions to proceed, with all despatch, to Lancaster Sound, and, passing through it, to push on to the westward, in the latitude of $74\frac{1}{2}$ deg., without loss of time, or stopping to examine any opening to the northward, until he reached the longitude of Cape Walker, which is situated in about 98 deg. west. He was to use every effort to penetrate to the northward and westward of that point, and to pursue as direct a course for Behring's Straits as circumstances might permit. He was cautioned not to attempt to pass by the western extremity of Melville's Island until he had ascertained that a permanent barrier of ice or other obstacle closed the prescribed route. In the event of his not being able to penetrate to the westward, he was to enter Wellington Sound in his second summer. He was further directed to transmit accounts of his proceedings to the admiralty by means of the natives and the Hudson's Bay Company, and, after passing the 65th meridian, to throw overboard daily a copper cylinder, containing a paper stating the ship's position. It was also understood that he would cause piles of stones, or signal-posts, to be erected on conspicuous headlands at convenient times. In the July following letters were written by Sir John Franklin and his companions, all bearing evidence of their buoyant and hopeful spirits. On the 26th of the same month the "Erebus" and "Terror" were seen in latitude 74 deg. 48 min. north, longitude 66 deg. 13 min. west, moored to an iceberg, waiting for a favourable opportunity of crossing to Lancaster Sound. Look to the map for this
THE STORY OF FRANKLIN.

precise spot. Since then a painful mystery has attached to the proceedings of Franklin and his crew, and to many the question yet arises—have they suddenly been buried in the deep, or do they yet live on some frozen shore? We are unable to give any definite reply. The expeditions for their rescue have been singularly barren of results. With one or two exceptions, to which we shall presently refer, not a trace of their remains has been found.

At the close of the autumn of 1847, the admiralty determined to send out three several searching expeditions—one to Lancaster Sound, another down the Mackenzie River, and the third to Behring’s Straits. The object of the first and most important expedition was to follow up the route supposed to have been pursued by Sir John Franklin, and by searching for signal-posts to trace him out, and carry the required relief to his exhausted crews. Of this expedition, consisting of the “Enterprise” and the “Investigator,” Sir James Clark Ross was the commander. The Behring’s Straits expedition was composed of the “Herald,” Captain Kellett, and the “Plover,” Commander Moore. The main object of the searching party under the command of Sir John Richardson, C.B., was to trace the coast between the Mackenzie and the Copper-mine Rivers, and the shores of Victoria and Wollaston Sands, lying opposite to Cape Krusenstern. The latter expedition was altogether useless; nor were the others much more successful. Sir James Ross reached the three islands of Baffin on the 26th of July, and in a month after, Possession Bay, where he landed and found a memorandum left by Sir Edward Parry in 1819. On the 1st of September, the ships arrived off Cape York, where a
conspicuous landmark was erected. Sir James next examined Maxwell Bay, and the north coast of Barrow’s Straits; but as the ice prevented his running for the west, the ships were put into winter quarters at Port Leopold. In the mean time the whole of Prince Regent’s Inlet and the Gulf of Bothnia had been examined, and on the 1st of September, 1849, Sir James reluctantly gave the signal to set sail for England. At the same time that Sir James Ross was engaged in the ice on the west side of Baffin’s Bay, Mr. James Saunders, in the “North Star,” was working his way up the east side, with imminent danger to his ship.

In 1849 the admiralty resolved, on the return of Sir James Ross, that a more vigorous search should be made. Accordingly, again the “Enterprise” and “Investigator” were despatched to Behring’s Straits; the former under the command of Captain Collinson, C.B., and the latter of Commander McClure. At the same time preparations for the search on the side of Lancaster Sound were made on a large scale. The “Resolute” was commissioned by Captain Austen, and the “Assistance,” Captain Erasmus Ommanney, was put under his orders, together with the “Intrepid” and “Pioneer,” steam-vessels in which to carry provisions and apparatus. Captain William Penny, an experienced whale-fisher, was also engaged for the search, and placed in command of the ships “Lady Franklin” and “Sophia.” In addition to these expeditions, fitted out by the admiralty, others, furnished from private sources, showed the interest felt in the subject by the public at large. Captain Sir John Ross, notwithstanding his advanced years, sailed in the “Felix” schooner, and by the munificence of Mr. Henry Grinnell, a New York merchant, the United
States sent forth the "Advance" and the "Rescue" under the command of Lieutenant De Haven, of the United States navy, and Mr. J. P. Griffin. Lady Franklin also despatched the "Prince Albert," under the command of Commander Forsyth, R.N.

And what has been the result of all these costly preparations? We regret to say, almost nothing. On the south side of Beechey Island, and on Cape Riley, traces were discovered, showing that Franklin's ships had wintered in 1845-6 in the inside of the above-named island. Three graves were found of men belonging to the party; and the latest death bears the date of April 3rd, 1846. Seven hundred empty meat-tins were also discovered—a small portion of the 2,400 canisters with which the ships were supplied. It is probable that the expedition remained there till the end of August, 1846. The absence of all memoranda at the winter station is remarkable, and perfectly unaccountable. Had such memoranda existed, Franklin's career might have been traced, and by this time, possibly, he might have been saved.

But the search was not yet over,—the arctic mystery was not yet solved. Further expeditions under the command of Dr. Rae and Dr. Kane, of the United States, were undertaken; and these have in some measure accounted for the long and dreadful silence that broods over the fate of Sir John Franklin and his gallant crew. There is indeed little doubt that the whole of the crew were lost with their commander; and, from the evidence afforded by various relics recovered by Dr. Rae from the natives of those cold and inhospitable coasts, the conviction of the death of Franklin and his whole company cannot reasonably be doubted. There are yet sanguine minds
who believe that certain information of the missing expedition may yet be obtained; another search, therefore, will probably be made,—and, in fact, is now in progress,—and so the last chapter of the lamentable story will be told.
A Curious Circumstance.

As once I was walking o’er mead and lea,
A curious circumstance happened to me.
A huntsman I saw in the forest’s brake;
He rode up and down beside a lake,
And many a deer flew past the spot,
But what did the huntsman? He shot them not.
He blew his horn by the forest green,—
Now tell me, good people, what could that mean?

And as I walked on along the shore,
A curious circumstance happened once more.
In a little bark a fishermaid
Rowed e’er by the side of the forest glade;
In the twilight the fishes around her shot,
But what did the maiden? She caught them not.
She sang a song by the forest green,—
Now tell me, good people, what could that mean?

Retracing my steps at evening’s fall,
The most curious circumstance happened of all.
A riderless horse stood in the brake,
An empty skiff reposed on the lake;
And passing the grove of alders there,
What heard I therein? A whispering pair.
The moon shone brightly, the night was serene,—
Now tell me, good people, what could that mean?
Birds and Flowers for every Month in the Year.

April.

Be your title what it may,
Sweet and lengthening April day,
With you the soul is free,
Ranging wild o'er hill and lea.

The year is rapidly advancing, and our work in the garden increases. Now is the time to place sticks to all those plants needing such support. We must shelter our flowers from the heavy rains, and let them know sunshine. Evergreens may still be removed if the season be not too much advanced; but in this great caution must be observed. Perennial and triennial flower-seeds may still be sown, and every sort of annual plant. Hyacinths, Ranunculuses, and Anemones are putting forth their blossoms, and the Tulips are spreading out their graceful forms and gorgeous colouring in the light. Nature is putting on her robe of flowers, and the earth is covered
with a mantle of sheen—a mantle spangled with wild flowers. In the woods and fields will be found the Cowslip, the Ground Ivy, the Dog's Mercury, the Lady's Smock, the Whitlow Grass, the Harebell, the Male Fool's Orchis, the Wild Strawberry, and the Bird Cherry, all in flower; while the sweet Lily of the Valley hides in the shade, and the modest Blue-bell and the Wood Anemone sparkle in the sunshine. Now the feathered songsters fear the sincerity of the Spring no longer, but

Each with vernal rapture glows,
And tunes his notes to love.

The sweet-voiced Nightingale charms us with his song at night; the Swift skims lightly through the air; the Falcon watches slily for his prey; the Cuckoo sings his melancholy note from the hedges; the Snipe pipes from beside the reedy pool; the Redstart makes its appearance occasionally from some colder climate; the White-throat also pays us a short visit; the shivering note of the Willow Wren is heard, and the Turtle Dove coos in the deep woods. We are all of us acquainted with the frequent reference in the sacred scriptures to the budding of leaves and the singing of birds. Solomon, the wisest of men, refers to the coming of Spring in this beautiful language:

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good
smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Let us go forth into the fields; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vines flourish, and the tender grapes appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: the mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.”

Several kinds of Linnets also enliven us about this time of the year by their flute-like notes. In the northern parts of England there are three varieties common; but if we include the Green Finch—which is more properly a Grosbeak—we have four of these pleasing songsters. The latter is most abundant in Yorkshire. Next to it in numbers is the Lesser Redpole, called by the boys the Chevy-Linnet, easily distinguished, by its small size and sharp, chattering, sprightly call-note, from the others. The Mountain Linnet, or Twite, so called from its peculiar call, is rarely observed in that county, but abounds on the neighbouring moorland hills; it is intermediate between the last and the brown or Song Linnet, much nearer to the latter in size; it is distinguished from both by wanting the brilliant scarlet of the crown and breast which the males of the two other species assume in spring, being like several other birds bedecked in what we may poetically call their bridal plumage, which loses its dazzling brightness in the wane of the year. The Brown Linnet, Grey Linnet, Rose Linnet,—or Lintie in Scotland,—is also called Whin Linnet and Greater Redpole. Its delicious song is well known, but far preferable to hearing it pent up in the very close limits to which the Linnet is generally restricted. Like Beattie in his “Minstrel,” we prefer
its free heart-utterances in its native haunts, as we do “the Lark, the herald of the morn, whose notes do beat the vaulty heaven so high above our heads,” careering in the blue sky; and the heart-melting Nightingale flitting from brake to bough, now in sunshine, now in shade, entrancing all with its free-flowing melodies.

'Tis vernal April; see how the flowers—
As if impatient of their prison clay—
Burst forth, and smile with animation gay,
To the Sun’s invocation. As the hours,
Passed in our adolescence, with the light
Wing’d steps of Angels, so their bright—
E’er now unbosom’d—beauties round us teem;
Or as the visions of sweet childhood’s dream,
That constellate with happy change the night.
More sudden were they not, did they alight
From a twin chalice with these diamond gems;
With dew-eyed lustre perfecting their grace,
By clustering ornamental to their stems:
As if essential to a Flora’s face.

WILLOW WREN.
The Dawn of May.

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See, the merry morning breaks
Through the mists of night,
And the lark with chanting takes
Into heaven his flight:
Flowers from slumber ope their eyes
To the laughing day;
Sunshine fills the flushing skies—
'Tis the dawn of May!
'Tis the dawn of May, my love,
'Tis the dawn of May!
Up! and rove
Through glen and grove;
'Tis the dawn of May.

From the boughs the matin breeze
Pearly dew-rain shakes,
And the streamlet, as it flies,
Babbling music makes;
Singing in the sunny air,
Bees through meadows stray,
The Wintop Audience.

T was at Saardam that Peter the Great of Russia commenced his labours as a mechanic. He put himself under the orders of a master workman, associated with the carpenters, lodged with them, and worked with them, doing his part in the labours of every description. He thus acquired in a short time a practical knowledge of the art of shipbuilding. He worked also in the blacksmith's shop, blew the bellows, and handled the sledge-hammer; he aided in the rope-walks, and gained all necessary information respecting the manufacture of cordage; and passed some of his time in labouring in the sawmills, where he became familiar with the art of sawing timber by machinery. He also gained instruction in the arts of manufacturing paper and working the ductile metals, &c. When Peter commenced his mechanical labours, the shipbuilders were not a little astonished at finding the sovereign of a mighty empire voluntarily enrolling himself in the list of workmen. They were at first inclined to treat him with the ceremony and respect due to his exalted station. This feeling of reverence, however, wore off, and they soon learned to regard him
as one of their own number, and he was known among them by the familiar appellation of Peterbas, or Master Peter.

While at Saardam, the Czar caused a ship of sixty guns to be built for himself, and superintended the work, and subsequently sent her to Archangel, the only seaport he then possessed in the north—for the city of St. Petersburg he caused to be built several years afterwards. He resided a short time at Amsterdam, to gain a knowledge of the art of surgery, and studied with the celebrated anatomist, Ruysch, and also received instruction in medicine from a distinguished physician of Amsterdam.

While residing in Holland, Peter did not neglect the public interests of his own country. While handling the compass and saw at Saardam, he was maturing schemes which had a mighty influence on the destinies of Poland, and from his humble workshop he sent despatches promising to aid Augustus, Elector of Saxony, with thirty thousand men. From the same place he issued orders for the assemblage of a large army in the Ukraine, to take ground against the Turks.

Such was Peter the Great of Russia! I only intended to write a single paragraph, introductory to an incident recorded in the life of this illustrious monarch, and the details of which, I believe, are not generally known to the world, and I find myself insensibly engaged in writing this biography.

In common with almost every traveller who visits Amsterdam, I have seen the village of Saardam, and the humble workshop and lodging-house of the Czar, which are still pointed out with manifestations of pride and exultation by the worthy and hospitable inhabitants. But the village is not now as flourishing as it was in the days of the Czar.
Holland, which at that time was equal to any nation as a maritime power, has woefully degenerated in this respect. England, France, Spain, Russia, as well as the United States, are greatly her superiors, and Saardam has declined in population and the enterprise of the inhabitants, in proportion as Holland has declined as a naval power. But still an interest is attached to the place, which makes it an important object in the eyes of travellers, and there one, without being a "melancholy Jacques," could sit and moralize for hours.

But to our story. Peter, as I have already intimated, while working as a carpenter or blacksmith at Saardam, did not endeavour to preserve his incognito. It was soon known to every court in Europe that the Czar of Russia was residing in Holland; and although the different European monarchs were at that time unable to appreciate his character, as manifested by his voluntary labours, and sacrifices of pomp and personal comforts, they respected him as the powerful and energetic head of a mighty empire, and most of the European monarchs sent to him, with much display and ceremony, ambassadors, rendering him their respects, and inviting him to visit their respective courts.

William of England, however, was dilatory in thus evincing his respect for the Czar, much to the dissatisfaction of the Russian monarch, who was particularly desirous of being on the most friendly terms with the English king. At length, after waiting impatiently for several months, he learned, with much gratification, that King William was about to send three ambassadors, selected from among the most distinguished noblemen, and attended by a brilliant cortège, to do honour to Peter of Russia. The Czar, with a spirit of eccentricity
which he not unfrequently exhibited, resolved to teach these envoys a lesson which they would not soon forget, and punish them in a whimsical manner for their tardiness.

When the ambassadors reached Amsterdam, they were astonished to learn that Peter was at Saardam, busily engaged in building a ship which was nearly finished, and that he would be delighted to see them at that place. The English noblemen, who expected to be received at Amsterdam with the pomp and ceremony corresponding to the character of their mission, were not a little embarrassed by this information, but set off, post-haste, for Saardam, to find the carpenter monarch, and sent an avant courier with despatches announcing their intentions. They reached Saardam at the appointed hour, but to their great surprise were informed that the Czar was then on board his ship, where he awaited their arrival, and was impatient to give them an audience. They were also informed that a boat was in waiting at the ship-yard to put them alongside.

The English dignitaries hardly knew what to think of this affair. There were no precedents by which to frame their line of conduct. They were desirous, for many reasons, to have an interview with the Czar, and were great sticklers for etiquette; yet, after a hurried consultation, they determined to flatter the whims of the barbarian monarch, and visit him on board his ship. A couple of burly-looking Dutchmen, in a large and clumsy boat, pulled off the ambassadors and a portion of their suite. They were received at the gangway by a man dressed in the costume of a sailor, who in a rough manner welcomed them on board. Wondering at their singular reception, but supposing it a specimen of Russian man-
ners, they inquired for the Czar, and their consternation was actually ludicrous when the sailor, with a knowing grin, pointed to the maintop, and assured the grave and stately representatives of Albion that Peterbas was aloft, where he expected the pleasure of receiving the ambassadors of his friend and brother the King of England!

The ambassadors were stupefied at this arrangement, and gazed at each other with despairing looks when told that the hall of audience of the Russian monarch was the maintop of a sloop of war! They could not conceal their perplexity, and indeed entertained some suspicions that they were the victims of a hoax; but when they were assured that the Czar was actually in the maintop, and wished and expected them to climb the rigging, and introduce themselves to his presence, their hearts failed, their limbs trembled, and they hardly knew what course to adopt.

"What!" said the proud and venerable Earl of Tewkesbury, "does the Czar of Russia expect me to climb up those rope ladders, and play the part of a harlequin at this period of my life? To ascend the crow's-nest in such a way would not only be highly undignified in a person of my rank, but actually impossible!"

"No," said Sir Nicholas Granger, with a spice of indignation as well as sorrow in his tone, "this is a most unreasonable exaction on the part of the Czar. For my part," continued the knight, taking a survey of his portly proportions and glancing at the shrouds, "I should as soon think of flying as of going aloft to the maintop by means of the rigging. No—if I get there, they must hoist me by pulleys."

Upon further inquiry they satisfied themselves that they
must visit the bear in his den, elevated as it was, or return to England without accomplishing the object of their mission. They hesitated for a few moments, uncertain which horn of the dilemma to seize; but Lord Gower, the youngest of the party, who had once been as far as Constantinople in a ship of war, and who therefore boasted of his nautical experience, suggested that there was nothing so very alarming or dangerous in the Czar’s request; that it was neither a frolic nor a hoax, but a mark of respect to a great maritime government, to receive her envoys in a noble ship; and that if they should refuse his invitation to go aloft, and hold a personal interview, after having proceeded thus far, the Czar would construe into an insult, take umbrage, and a war between the two powers of England and Russia must be the inevitable result.

These arrangements had due weight, and the other ambassadors, with sour looks and an ungracious grunt, at length signified their reluctant assent to the arrangement, and prepared to “go up the rigging,” a feat which is somewhat awkward and difficult even to a young and active landsman, and was truly appalling to those venerable and heavy-moulded noblemen. It was an act of devotion to their country and their king of which we can hardly find a parallel in the pages of history.

They heroically mounted the gunwale, Lord Gower leading the way; and they were also assisted by the rough, nautical-looking personage who received them at the gangway, and who subsequently proved to be the celebrated Le Fort, one of the most faithful and able among the counsellors and friends of the Russian monarch. They got up the ratlins and slowly ascended, panting for breath and pausing in their career
every few moments. They were gazed at with admiration by the crew and officers on the deck of the ship, who could hardly help cheering them in their arduous undertaking, and after a rather unreasonable time, they reached, breathless with fatigue, the cat-harpings. Here, clinging convulsively to the futtock shrouds, they tarried awhile to recover breath and consult upon what was next to be done. To climb the futtock shrouds, and pass over the top rim outside, they with one voice decided was impossible, when Lord Gower, with a triumphant shout, pointed out the lubber’s-hole, of which he had often heard; and—the pen is reluctant to record it—these proud representatives of a great kingdom—of a power which aimed to become the sovereign of the seas—were actually so lost to shame and sense of true dignity as to crawl into the maintop through the lubber’s-hole! This fact has never been recorded in the naval annals of Great Britain.

Peter was quietly seated on an arm-chest as, one following another, the ambassadors entered his presence, actually creeping on their hands and knees! He received them with much grace and dignity, with a grave demeanour, as if nothing extraordinary had taken place, and, by the affability of his manners and the charms of his conversation, he soon made them forget the perplexities which they had so recently experienced, and the dangers through which they had passed.

After passing half an hour very pleasantly in the top, the meeting, at the suggestion of Peter, was adjourned to the cabin; and the descent from the “bad eminence,” which they had attained with so much toil and peril, was accomplished, under the direction of the Czar himself, with much less difficulty than they had anticipated.
Peter subsequently visited England in a plain, unpretending way, and resided for a time at Deptford, and devoted himself to the prosecution of his studies in the mechanical arts. Here he became more thoroughly versed in the theory of shipbuilding, and soon became a great proficient in the art. He also studied in London the art of horology, or of making clocks and watches, which had then attained great perfection in England. Indeed, during his visit to Holland and England, a space of time not exceeding two years, there was hardly any kind of business important to the interests of a kingdom, from the casting of a cannon to the spinning of a thread, of which he did not obtain a practical knowledge, and afterwards attempted, in almost all cases successfully, to introduce into his own country.

The subsequent events in the life of this extraordinary man—his return to Russia—his wars with Charles XII. of Sweden—his marriage with an obscure Livonian girl, who afterwards proved herself in every way worthy to be the partner of his throne—his construction of the city of St. Peters burg and the magnificent port of Cronstadt—the condemnation of his son, Alexis Petrovitz, a blot upon his character that cannot be effaced—his various wars, and victories over the Persian, Turkish, and other powers—and his death, 1725, at the comparatively early age of fifty-three years, will be found all faithfully chronicled in the biographies of this eminent monarch.
LOVE the merry month of May. Of all the months in the year it is the pleasantest. It is equally the bird month and the flower month. Who shall describe the floral treasures of this best of the spring months? Let us look about us, and see what flowers there are in bloom. Here is the yellow Madwort, and the Chryseis, and the Heart's-case, and the Lilac, and the Auricula, and the Tulip, and the Laburnum, and, more than all, the Rose—the beautiful Rose—the queen of the flowers. Still is there work for us to do in the garden, and plenty of it. Perennial and triennial seeds may still be sown, and Dahlias planted, and Pinks. As the Auriculas decline they
should be freely watered; so should the Pansies. The Tulips
must be guarded from the sun, covered by a slight awning.
Annuals may be planted now in beds or pots, and great care
must be taken of the Roses and the Hyacinths. Towards the
end of the month seedlings may be planted. Among the
wild flowers common to this beautiful month, and which may
all be found in blossom by those who take the trouble to walk
out into the fields or wander into the forest, are the follow-
ing:—The common Bugle, the Honeysuckle, the Toothwort,
the Laburnum, the Columbine, the Lilac, the Sanctfómin, the
Horse Chesnut, the Lily of the Valley, the Woodroof, the
Bird’s-nest Orchis, the Milkwort, the Dwarf Cistus, the
Guelder Rose, the Ragged Robin, the Female Fool Orchis,
Foxglove, Polyanthus, the Figwort, the Cornflag, the Wild
Rose, the Eglantine, the Convolvulus, the Wild Raspberry,
the Blackberry, and the Deadly Nightshade.

The insects are all alive and active about the margins of
the pools; the Bees swarm; the Wasp and the Forest Fly
appear; various kinds of moths and butterflies sport about in
the sunshine, and the birds sing blithely from hedgerow and
coppice. With the flies appears the spotted Fly-Catcher, active
and bright; the Sedge Warbler and the Reed Warbler also
go chattering merrily about in search of caterpillars, spiders,
and other insects, which they carry to their nests in the tall
water-grass, or securely fastened to the branches of trees with
the webs of caterpillars, so that no wind or storm can shake
them off. Then the House Martin builds its nest of mud
and sticks under the eaves of our dwellings, and skims busily
about from place to place in search of the proper materials
with which to make a soft bed for its little ones. A curious
instance of the sagacity of birds in adopting the materials most readily obtained for their nests, lately came under my notice. In the museum of Peel Park, Manchester, are a large number of the nests and eggs of birds found in Lancashire. Placed side by side are a "country nest" and a "town nest" of the Thrush. The nest of the country bird was, like all other Thrushes' nests, composed of bits of stick, scraps of wool, and a few cow-hairs, picked up on the highway or in the fields; but the nest of the town bird consisted almost entirely of cotton wool—an evidence that the bird not only knew what was best fitted to afford protection to its young, but also used some kind of reasoning in adopting the cotton fluff it found flying about in the neighbourhood of mills and factories, rather than going to a distance for the materials usually employed by its fellows.

In May the Skylark may be heard in the early morning, twittering, singing, and rejoicing, as it rises from its bed in the young corn and mounts up high, high in the heavens, till, when its song is loudest and its rejoicing most musical, and it is almost lost in the clear blue of the heavens, it drops suddenly down like a stone, and its trills and flourishes and sharp loud whistles are heard no more. The various kinds of Bullfinches fly about among the young corn, and in the neighbourhood of farmhouses, for the seeds and berries on which they feed; nor are they very particular as to their food, as in this month they can easily discover oak, beech, and pear buds, which they greedily devour. They are very tender, affectionate birds, and their languishing call to each other may be readily distinguished among the notes of the other frequenters of the grove.
The Finches belong to a very numerous family, no fewer than six hundred different birds being known to naturalists. Birds of this kind are distinguished by a strong beak more or less cone-shaped, in the size and strength of which a fine gradation may be traced from the Lark to the Hawfinch or Grosbeak, so called from its huge-sized bill. The power of the bill in this and other species is so great as to break the hardest seeds and to crack the stones of various fruits for the nutritive kernel within. To this large family belong also Sparrows of all kinds.

The Chaffinch, well known by its bluish-grey crown and hind neck, its rich chesnut back, and dark wings beautifully barred with white, is also one of its members. It is a most elegant and lively bird, so much so as to give rise to a proverb—"as gay as a chaffinch." The female is less bright in her colours. At one period they are said to separate from the males; hence Linnaeus called the Chaffinch *fringilla caelebs*, or the bachelor, from observing most of the females leaving Sweden before the winter, and the males remaining in a state of single blessedness. White and others state that many females are met with in this country in winter, and generally together, but this point wants more proof. As, however, I have already spoken of this bird as appearing in the month of March, we may as well pass on to the fierce Eagle and the Goatsucker, or Fern Owl. The first is now seldom found north of the Tweed, where it builds its nest high up in the rocks, and kills various vermin and small animals, and sometimes even a lamb or a kid, in order to provide food for its young. The Goatsucker is a fierce and rapacious bird, found commonly in Yorkshire and the north of England. At night
it skims quietly over the fields, ready to pounce down on any unfortunate rat or rabbit that may happen to be abroad. Its length from the beak to the tip of the tail is about ten or eleven inches, and in the colour of its plumage it resembles the Cuckoo. It is a fierce enemy to the smaller kinds of birds, and wherever it is found by the sportsman it is shot without mercy.

Up, up, let us greet
The season so sweet;
For winter is gone!
And the flowers are springing,
And the little birds singing,
And bright is the sun!

Where all was dress'd
In a snowy vest,
There grass is growing,
With dew-drops glowing,
And flowers are seen
On beds of green!

SKYLARK.
The Vanity of Earthly Things.

HEN the voices are gone that breathed
music around,
And the faces we look for are not to be found,
Then love is a hermit, and steals all apart,
For cold strikes the world on the strings of the heart.

The world that we dreamt of in home’s pleasant bowers,
Ere we drank at its fountains or gathered its flowers,
That we pictured as bright, and we found as frail too,
As the gossamer’s web with its garlands of dew,—

All the glitter that dazzled, the newness that won,
Fade away from our reason, like clouds from the sun:
As the angel of truth, growing bright through our tears,
Shows the world but a desert when sorrow appears.

Our childhood is fled as a dream of the night;
Our youth fades anon like the flower in sunlight;
And manhood soon ripens as corn for the flail;  
And age drops to dust like the leaves on the gale.

Thus year after year life's enchantments decay;  
The glow of the spirits, so buoyantly gay,  
Is chilled by unkindness, or chastened by woe,  
Till man finds his paradise darkened below.

But man has a spirit the world cannot bind,  
That mounts to the stars and leaves darkness behind;  
Where the voices we loved breathe a holier sound,  
And the faces we looked for again may be found.
"Three travellers of gallant appearance. In their hats they wore feathers and medals, such as in that age were often distributed in war."—Page 104.
ANY years ago there lived near Bologna, in Italy, a widow lady, called Madonna Lucrezia, who, in a revolution of the state, had known the bitterness of poverty, and had even begged her bread; kneeling day after day, like a statue, at the gate of the cathedral —her rosary in her left hand, and her right held out for charity—her long black veil concealing a face that had once adorned a court, and had received the homage of as many sonnets as Petrarch has written on Laura.

But fortune had at last relented; a legacy from a distant relation had come to her relief, and she was now the mistress of a small inn at the foot of the Apennines, where she entertained as well as she could, and where those stopped who were contented with a little.

The house was still standing when in my youth I passed that way, though the sign of the white cross, the cross of the Hospitallers, was no longer to be seen over the door,—
a sign which she had taken, if we may believe the tradition there, in honour of a maternal uncle, a grand master of that order, whose achievements in Palestine she would sometimes relate. A mountain stream ran through the garden; and at no great distance, where the road turned on its way to Bologna, stood a little chapel, in which a lamp was burning before the picture of the Virgin,—a picture of great antiquity, the work of some Greek artist.

Here she was dwelling, respected by all who knew her, when an event took place which threw her into the deepest affliction. It was at noonday in September that three travellers of gallant appearance arrived, and they seated themselves on a bench under her vine-trellis, and were supplied with a flagon of wine by a lovely girl, her only child, the image of her former self. The eldest spoke like a Venetian, and his beard was short and pointed after the fashion of Venice. In his demeanour he affected great courtesy, but his look inspired little confidence; for when he smiled, which he did continually, it was with his lips only, not with his eyes; and they were always turned from yours. His companions were bluff and frank in their manner, and on their tongues were many soldier's phrases. In their hats they wore feathers and medals, such as in that age were often distributed in war; and they were evidently officers in one of those free bands which were always ready to serve in any quarrel, if a service it could be called, where a battle was little more than a mockery, and the slain, as on an opera-stage, were up and fighting to-morrow. Overcome with the heat, they threw aside their cloaks, and, with their gloves tucked in their belts, continued for some time in earnest conversation.
At length they rose to go, and the Venetian thus addressed their hostess:

"Excellent lady, may we leave under your roof, for a day or two, this bag of gold?"

"You may," she replied gaily. "But, remember, we fasten only with a latch. Bars and bolts we have none in our village; and if we had, where would be your security?"

"In your word, lady."

"But what if I died to-night?—where would it be then?" said she, laughingly. "The money would go to the church: for none could claim it."

"Perhaps you will favour us with an acknowledgment?"

"If you write it."

An acknowledgment was written accordingly, and she signed it before Master Bartolo, the village physician, who had just called by chance to learn the news of the day; the gold to be delivered when applied for, but to be delivered (these were the words) not to one, nor to two, but to three,—words wisely introduced by those to whom it belonged, knowing what they knew of each other. The gold they had just released from a miser’s chest in Perugia, and they were now on a scent that promised more.

They and their shadows were no sooner departed than the Venetian returned, saying:

"Give me leave to set my seal on the bag, as the others have done;" and she placed it on a table before him. But in that moment she was called away to receive a cavalier, who had just dismounted from his horse, and when she came back it was gone. The temptation had proved irresistible, and the man and the money had vanished together.
“Wretched woman that I am!” she cried, as, in an agony of grief, she fell on her daughter’s neck; “what will become of us? Are we again to be cast upon the wide world? Unhappy child, would that thou hadst never been born!”

And all day long she lamented; but her tears availed her little. The others were not slow in returning to claim their due, and there were no tidings of the thief: he had fled with his plunder. A process against the widow was instantly begun at Bologna; and what defence could she make?—how could she release herself from the obligation of the bond? Willfully or in negligence, she had parted with it to one, when she should have kept it for all; and inevitable ruin awaited her.

“Go, Gianetta,” said she to her daughter, “take this veil which your mother has worn and wept under so often, and implore the Councillor Calderino to plead for us on the day of trial. He is generous, and will listen to the unfortunate. But if he will not, go from door to door; Monaldi cannot refuse us. Make haste, my child; but remember the chapel as you pass it. Nothing prospers without a prayer.”

Alas! she went but in vain. These were retained against them; those demanded more than they had to give; and all bade them despair. What was to be done? No advocate, and the cause to come on to-morrow!

Now Gianetta had a lover, and he was a student of the law, a young man of great promise, Lorenzo Martelli. He had studied long and diligently under the learned lawyer Giovanni Andreas, who, though little of stature, was great in renown, and by his contemporaries was called the arch-doctor, the rabbi of doctors, the light of the world. Under him he
had studied, sitting on the same bench with Petrarch; and also under his daughter, Novella, who would often lecture to the scholars when her father was otherwise engaged, placing herself behind a small curtain, lest her beauty should divert their thoughts—a precaution, in this instance at least, unnecessary, Lorenzo having lost his heart to another.

To him Gianetta flies in her necessity; but of what assistance can he be? He has just taken his place at the bar, but he has never spoken; and how stand up alone, unpractised and unprepared as he is, against an array that would alarm the most experienced?

"Were I as mighty as I am weak," said he, "my fears for you would make me as nothing. But I will be there, Gianetta; and may the friend of the friendless give me strength in that hour! Even now my heart fails me; but come what will, while I have a loaf to share, you and your mother shall never want. I will beg through the world for you."

The day arrives, and the court assembles. The claim is stated, and the evidence given. And now the defence is called for; and Lorenzo rises and thus addresses the judges:

"Reverend Signors,—Young as I am, may I venture to speak before you? I would speak in behalf of one who has none else to help her; and I will not keep you long. Much has been said; much on the sacred nature of the obligation, and we acknowledge it in its force. Let it be fulfilled, and to the last letter. It is what we solicit—what we require. But to whom is the bag of gold to be delivered? What says the bond? Not to one—not to two—but to the three. Let the three stand forth and claim it."
From that day (for who can doubt the issue?) none were sought, none employed, but the subtle, the eloquent Lorenzo. Wealth followed fame; nor need I say how soon he sat at his marriage-feast, or the name of her who sat beside him.
The Song of the Engine.

WAY, away, over smooth
and rough,
Like a spirit of wrath I fly;
And the stirring sound of
my wild shrill puff
Darts up to the boundless sky;
Through the silent beds of the ancient hills
I rush uncaring, unstayed,
And my clang is heard where the mountain rills,
'Midst the rocks for ages have played.

I have seen the hills, with their tops of green,
In the winds rock to and fro;
I passed that way, and their tops were seen,
Wide strewn in the vales below;
No streams of blood, no sound of war,
No wail of woe I bring;
No clash of swords from fields afar,
No death-shot's horrid ring.
But I come in peace, and I come in pride,
And in pride and power I go,
And bright young eyes, as away I glide,
With the light of gladness glow;
The eagle sails from his throne on high,
Where he shrieked to the swift wind’s moans,
And the Indian wipes his stern dark eye
As I glide o’er his father’s bones.

Through the wide and peaceful solitude
Of the old wood’s darkest glooms,
Where the oak through an age of bloom has stood,
And waved his glossy plumes,
Away in pride and power I’ll sweep
O’er lands untrod before,
Till I see the blue waves like mountains leap
To the wild Pacific’s shore.


Birds and Flowers for every Month in the Year.

JUNE.

The sunshine lies along the street
So dim and cold before;
And in the open window creeps,
And slumbers on the floor.

Under the green leaves, in the hot days of June, the little birds hide, and the woods are silent. But if the birds hush their songs during the heat of the day, there are multitudes of insects to keep the air in motion, and tell us it is Summer. The drowsy hum of the Bees blends with the chirp of the Grasshopper, the flit of the gay Butterfly, the buzz of the Beetles as evening approaches, the croak of the young Frogs, just commencing their annual migration, the whirr of the pretty red Ladybird, and the swift gyrations of a thousand different forms of life, that inhabit the air of the fields or haunt the surface of the still, shady pool.
The garden during this month wears a most brilliant aspect: Roses and Lilies, Pinks, Hyacinths, Hollyhocks, Wall-flowers, Nasturtiums, Carnations, Tulips, Auriculas, Geraniums, Fuchsias, Balsams, Larkspurs, Honeysuckles, and Pansies, in their varied colours, spread out like a rainbow before us. The flowers are outspoken in their welcome to the Summer! We must not neglect to make preparations for the succeeding season, however. Chrysanthemums, Geraniums, and other plants of the same description, may, if the weather is fine, be planted early in the month. Great care must be taken that the soil is adapted to the nature of the plant, and very great caution must be exercised in removing them from pots to beds. Annuals may be planted so as to succeed each other. Dead or decaying flowers must be cut off. The bulbs of Hyacinths and Tulips, as the flowers drop off, must be dried in the shade, and carefully preserved. In the woods, too, Flora is gaily dressed. The Wild Rose is in blossom in the hedges, and the Water-flag flowers by the side of the rivulet; the Spearwort and the Birdsfoot trefoil, the Lady’s Finger and the Bee Orchis, the Black Bryony and the Field Pea, the Hedge Nettle and the Yellow Pimpernel, the Musk Thistle and the Dropwort, the Wild Valerian and the Agrimony, the Mallow and the St. John’s Wort, the Deadly Nightshade and the Spear Thistle, the Wild Thyme and the Nipple-wort, the Musk Mallow and the Jessamine, together with a hundred other less known plants, are all in flower, and fill the air with fragrance.

Early in the morning or towards sunset the birds mentioned as being common to the last month may be heard in the trees and about the garden, and in addition to them we notice several of the birds called Scansores, or climbers—such as the
Woodpecker, the Nuthatch, and the Wryneck. Most of these birds are furnished with powerful wedge-shaped bills, with which, aided by the wonderfully strong muscles of the neck, they strike against the bark of decaying trees in search of the grubs and insects upon which they feed. Their feet are adapted for climbing the trunks or branches of trees, and so well known are their habits of striking against the bark that

"The Woodpecker tapping the hollow beech-tree"

has become a kind of proverb.

In this month the little Wren may be observed hopping and twittering about in a lively manner, and the Sparrowhawk and Butcher-bird, together with the family of Pies to which the latter belongs—such as the Shrike, the Woodchat, the Raven, the Crow, the Jackdaw, the Nutcracker, the Magpie, the Jay, the Roller, the Oriole, and the Cuckoo,—may be seen wandering over the fields in search of insects, worms, small animals, and the remains of animals, seeds, and fruit. Many of these birds may be taught to speak, and most of them possess very handsome plumage and graceful figures. The Sparrowhawk family is distributed all over the world, though each continent has its own peculiar species. They are generally characterized by their long slender bodies, rounded wings, and long square tails. They are among the fiercest and most destructive of all Hawks. They have all short hooked bills, strong sharp claws, and powerful limbs. They frequent the dense thickets and deep recesses of the forest in pursuit of birds and small animals. Occasionally, on sandy and grassy plains, and open, cultivated tracts, may be seen the Bustard. It is a shy and watchful bird, easily alarmed. It
feeds on seeds and vegetables, and is often very destructive to crops of wheat and other grain. It is very seldom seen now in England, though about twenty species of this bird are known in northern Africa and Asia. It belongs to the same family as the Ostrich, Cassowary, and other birds of a large size which principally inhabit hot sandy countries. All the members of this family seem fitted rather for fast walking or running than flying, and are distinguished generally by plumage in which white and black are the principal colours.
Little Children.

I think them the poetry of the world—the fresh flowers of our hearth and homes;—little conjurors, with their “natural magic,” evoking by their spells what delights and enriches all ranks, and equalizes the different classes of society. Often as they bring with them anxieties and cares, and live to occasion sorrow and grief, we should get on very badly without them. Only think—if there was never anything anywhere to be seen but great grown-up men and women! How we should long for the sight of a little child! Every infant comes into the world like a delegated prophet, the harbinger and herald of good tidings, whose office it is “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,” and to draw “the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.” A child softens and purifies the heart, warming and melting it by its gentle presence; it enriches the soul by new feelings, and awakens within it what is favourable to virtue. It is a beam of light, a fountain of love, a teacher whose lessons few can resist. Infants recall us from much that engenders and encourages selfishness, that freezes the affections, roughens the manners, indurates the heart. They brighten the home, deepen love, invigorate exertion, infuse courage, and vivify and sustain the charities of life.
The Wonderful Cloth; or, the Birthright Test.

THREE adventurers once presented themselves to the King—I am unable to say of what kingdom; he, however, was a king, and a rich one. They told him they were possessors of a secret for the manufacture of a most wonderful cloth, but that its fabrication required an extravagant outlay and one far beyond their means; but such were its marvellous properties, that they doubted not but his majesty would furnish them with the facilities to establish a manufactory. They assured him that one born of base lineage could neither see nor touch it. That was its great peculiarity.

The King heard their story with astonishment. Kings are sometimes mischievous, and he inwardly chuckled at the pleasure he should derive from the exhibition of this wonderful cloth to the followers of his court. The adventurers were therefore immediately furnished with commodious apartments, and money and silk provided them to commence their operations.

At the expiration of two weeks, one of them informed the King that the stuff was in progress, and that it was the most
beautiful cloth in the world. If his majesty desired to view it, he was solicited to come alone.

The King, to assure himself of the fact, immediately dispatched his Grand Chamberlain, to whom the adventurers, before admitting him into their workshop, expatiated at great length on the indescribable properties of the extraordinary cloth, so that, on his arrival, the poor Chamberlain, who in reality saw nothing, felt compelled to declare he did, and, on his return to the King, greatly praised the magnificence and beauty of the new manufacture.

The work continued to advance, and its progress was constantly reported to his majesty, who, desiring to test his whole court, sent, at each successive intimation of the manufacturers, a different person. Like the poor Chamberlain, each returned to his majesty singing the praises of the cloth.

At length the King, whose curiosity was excited by these unanimous praises, determined to inspect this wonderful cloth himself. Arrived at the factory, he saw the workmen apparently engaged at their looms; but all else was invisible.

"See," said they, "how soft and fine is this texture; how beautiful this design; how bright and glowing are these colours; and how elegant and tasty the disposition of these shades."

And they rose and pretended to unfold a piece to his view. The King, ashamed at not being able to see it, when so many persons had declared they had admired it, was enduring an agony of mortification in the reflection of not being nobly born.

Behold our monarch, then, inwardly abusing his parents, and ready to commence a violent quarrel with his queen. However, courtier-like, he quickly recovers from his first
surprise; he nobly sustains his dignity, and to each observa-
tion of our adventurers he responds with compliments and
praises.

In time, so well did these gentry work, that there was not
a single person at court but spoke of the wonderful cloth, and
all considered that they had established their birthright by
asserting that they had seen and touched it.

One day our adventurers, emboldened by their success,
went so far as to propose making a royal robe for his majesty,
to be worn on an approaching gala-day. The King, who was
tempted to discover whether there were not in his capital
some companions in misfortune, promptly accepted their offer.

After having accurately measured the monarch, our adven-
turers returned home and appeared busily engaged in prepar-
ing the royal dress. On the appointed day they reappeared
at the palace, ostensibly with his majesty’s garments. Shown
to his apartments, they went through the operation of dressing
him, praising, at intervals, the beauty of the stuff and the
excellence of the fit.

His majesty was confounded, but still maintained his dis-
cretion. The operation concluded, he mounted his charger,
and proudly paraded the city streets, in the midst of a superb
cavalcade.

No one was ignorant of the astonishing properties of the
cloth; so every one must see it, and all therefore added to the cry
of “Long live the King!” “What a splendid coat he has got!”

This much enraged the King, who was now fain to believe
himself the basest born personage in his kingdom.

Suddenly a little Moor, groom to his majesty, cried out,—
“Why, the King is naked!”
This cry was echoed by his comrades. Insensibly the people began to join in the clamour. The King finished by declaring his belief in its correctness; and finally, the grandees coincided in opinion with his majesty.

The officers of justice were dispatched to the domicile of the three adventurers; but they were not to be found. Neither was gold, silver, or silk visible about their forsaken premises; and the monarch, in his great joy to find himself equally well born with the members of his court, would not permit the pursuit of the runaways.

A moral may be drawn from this little story. It is thus many errors are established in the world, and that many prejudices exist only by the fear we entertain of rendering ourselves singular by opposing them.
Till noon burns with its blistering breath
Around, and day dies still as death;
Noon swoons beneath the heat it made,
And flowers e'en within the shade.

CORCHING-hot July does not exempt us from the labours of the flower-garden. Annuals, Carnations, and Picotees require thinning to make them flourish. Auri- culas must be protected from the heavy rains that fall about this season of the year. We must train the branches of the Dahlias, so that their luxuriance may not impede their growth. Chrysanthemum cuttings may be planted, as may also the cuttings of Geraniums. Seedlings may be planted in rich soil; so may Carnations, Pinks, Pansies, Polyanthuses, Picotees, perennials, &c.

The sun has now great power; the trees and flowers seem
to enjoy a new life, and the wheat crops begin to ripen. Summer is now in the prime of its life; but it has reached a perfection that will soon fade and die away. July is charming indeed; she enjoys a perfection peculiarly her own—the virgin graces of April and the irresistible charms of May have become fully developed. The birds of the air, even, appear inspired with a desire to add beauty to what is already beautiful, as their heaven-tuned songs echo through the dry air of eventide; the flowers, too, seem more than earthly as they turn their beautiful faces to the clear blue sky, which smiles, as it were, with admiration of the luxuriance of the scene. All Nature is pregnant with poetry and perfection—

The golden-belted bees hum in the air;
The tall silk grasses bend and wave along;
The trees make cool the glowing sunbeam’s glare;
The dreamy river chimes its under-song.

In the woods the Pheasant’s-eye and the Bulrush, the Chrysanthemum and the Marigold, the Little Field-madder and the Calamint, the Wood Betony and the Catmint, the Cow-wheat and the Crosswort, the Tufted Vetch and the White Lily, the Hemlock and the Scarlet Martagon, the Golden Rod and the Tree Primrose, the Yellow Centaury and the Eye-bright, the Creeping Water Parsnip and the Enchanter’s Nightshade, the Wild Clover and the Buckwheat, the Lancashire Asphodel and the Water Plantain, the Wild Marjoram and the Teasel, the Wood Sage and the Sunflower, the Camomile and the White Hellebore, all blossom; while various fruits ripen on the trees, flying ants fill the air, Swallows and Martins congregate, the Hops ripen, and the poultry in the farm-yard moult; Cranberries are fit to gather, and Potatoes
flower; the harvest of wheat begins, and wild cherries ripen in the woods. Bees kill the drones, and the Swift is last seen about our gardens and our fields; barley is cut, and the Swallow-tailed Butterfly makes its appearance. Insects and houseflies now swarm in the air, and, except in the mornings and evenings, the birds are not heard among the thick green leaves in wood, garden, field, or forest. In the cool of the evening the Bat—half mouse, half bird—is seen to flit through the gloom, and the notes of the Greenfinch, the Ox-eye, and the Cole-tit are heard among the bushes, while the Ring-Ousel pays us his annual visit. The Golden-crested Wren is seen also in the early morning. It frequents the largest trees, where earlier in the year it has built itself a nest suspended from a branch by a kind of cordage made of the materials of which the nest is chiefly composed. It is of an oblong form, having an aperture on one side, and is formed principally of moss, lined with the softest down, mixed with slender filaments. From inherent agility, the whole Wren tribe are almost constantly in motion, fluttering from branch to branch, creeping on all sides of trees, clinging to them in every situation, and often hanging like the Titmouse. From its wide diffusion over the globe, it seems to bear every change of temperature from the greatest degree of heat to that of the severest cold. Although not migratory, but, on the contrary, a permanent resident, Mr. Pennant during his travels discovered that it crosses annually from the Orkneys to the Shetland Isles, where it breeds and returns before winter—sea-girt abodes separated by a distance of sixty miles, and unquestionably a long flight for so small a bird.
Here are some boys and some girls who think it very hard to be obliged to obey their parents and teachers. They think they know everything, and cannot understand why they should not have their own way.

Of this class was my little friend Solomon—a plump, rosy-cheeked fellow, about eight years old at the time of which I am going to speak. He was full of life and enterprise; full of spirits; full of self-confidence and self-conceit. To confess the truth, in spite of his name, he was not the wisest boy in the world, as we shall see.

"Do let me go into the wood and pick some blackberries," said he one day to his mother.

"No, no," she replied, "you are always getting into trouble; you are very careless. I am afraid to let you go."

"But I won't get into trouble, and I won't be careless this time," said he.
"I'm afraid you'll get lost."

"Oh, mother, how silly you are! I know the wood all by heart."

"But perhaps you'll tumble into the ditch and get smothered in the mud."

"Dear me!—just as if I don't know enough to keep out of a ditch!"

"That's the way you always talk, Sol: I know you mean well enough, but you are but a child, and children are very thoughtless. You, especially, are apt to get interested in chasing a rabbit, or picking honeysuckles, or gathering wild berries, or climbing after young birds, and then you forget to take care of yourself. You have given your father and me a great deal of anxiety by your misadventures, and I cannot consent to let you go into the wood. You may go and play in the meadow, but I insist that you do not go out of it."

"Oh, mother, do let me go this time—only this time. I'll be very careful. You don't know what a lot of blackberries there are just in the edge of the wood. They are as big as the end of my thumb, and as black as anything, and all ripe. Do let me go."

"Are you sure you'll be careful?"

"Oh yes, mother."

"And you'll go only into the edge of the wood?"

"Only just into the edge."

"And you'll come back soon?"

"Yes; all right."

"Well, now mind what I say. Come back in half an hour, and go only along the edge of the wood."
“Yes, yes: only half an hour—just into the edge—I’ll come right back—I’ll be very careful. Goodbye, mother!”

And away went Solomon, no doubt intending to do as he had promised. It was a fine morning in September, and, full of pleasant thoughts, he went forth upon his expedition. The way to the wood led across the meadow, a broad pasture-ground, where the four cows, the old mare with her colt, and some two dozen sheep, were grazing. Next came a field of oats; their rich, feathery tassels were out and fluttering in the gentle breath of the morning. Then came a wood of tall trees, without underbrush, seeming like a vast temple, the trunks forming the pillars and the leaves the roof.

Solomon went on his way, his young bosom bounding with delight. Oh! who can tell the bliss of those early days of boyhood—those summer mornings—those rambles over pasture and corn-field, overhill and valley, over field and forest? Who can describe that kind of trance with which a boy begins to feel the adventurous spirit of the hunter, as he enters a wood, and hears the Red Squirrel laughing in a tree-top, or listens to a Partridge drumming in a distant copse, or sees a Gray Squirrel, with his long tail, bounding from branch to branch at the very top of the forest? How does he listen to the far-off chorus of the Crows—to the cries of that jolly rogue, the Red-headed Woodpecker—to the mocking gabble of the Blue-Jay—to the echoing whistle of the Quail—to the mewing of the Wagtail, the sly chirping of the Wren, and the bold, dashing melody of the Brown Thrush! No knight of old, in the legends of romance, ever trod more enchanted ground than did young Solomon as he pursued his way, and especially
as he walked along the openings of a fine old forest, in the morning to which our story refers.

A half-hour—an hour indeed—passed ere he had reached the wood. As he entered this, new objects of interest presented themselves. The hatching season of the birds had passed, and as the uplands were dry and parched by the August heat, the old birds with their young ones had returned to the wood at once to enjoy its shade, to drink of its pools, and to feed upon its abundant supplies of wild berries. Here they were—Robins, Linnets, Thrushes, Wood Pigeons, Woodpeckers, Redwings, Blackbirds, and Finches. Little accustomed to be disturbed in the thickets, they seemed scarcely to notice the intrusion of our adventurer.

Another hour was passed in observing the birds, and in attempts to catch some of the young ones. The blackberries, the object of the boy’s expedition, were entirely forgotten in more absorbing pursuits—young Solomon being in this like many old Solomons, who set out for one thing and finally get seduced into the chase of another. While he was thus engaged a young rabbit suddenly sprang up before him, and, running a short distance, crouched in a bunch of grass. Solomon marked the spot, approached stealthily, and made a grasp, but the little creature escaped, and ran as fast as he could along the openings of the bushy labyrinth. Solomon bounded after him, and several times seemed on the point of clutching him. Still the creature kept out of his way, and finally hid himself in the recesses of the thicket.

At last Solomon began to think of the half-hour, and the edge of the wood, and of the blackberries, and of his mother and his promises. And now he looked up and saw that the
sky was clouded, and that it was growing dark. He cast a look around, and began, as he thought, to make his way towards home. But the sky grew more cloudy, and the thicket seemed wilder and more confused. His heart began to beat with a fear that he had got lost. He paused, and a dread came over him. "After all," said he to himself, "perhaps mother was right. I am, indeed, too thoughtless. I wish I had stayed at home. Dear me! what shall I do? This is a terrible place; I shall have to stay here all night. Who knows but what there are snakes here, and I don't like to walk about among snakes in the dark. I would give the world to be safe at home. Boo-o-o-o-o-o."

And Solomon began to cry. After all, let people say what they will, it is a relief to children to cry. Our adventurer boohooed away, all alone by himself, for some minutes, and then, feeling a little better, he set forward, not knowing where or which way he was going. He rambled about, and finally was so bewildered and excited, that he did not take any heed to his steps. At last he came to the edge of a bank, at the bottom of which was a shallow, muddy brook. Over this bank he tumbled, and fell sprawling into the mire. Here he stuck fast. He struggled hard; but as he pulled out one leg, the other sank the deeper. He finally gave up the effort, and cried bitterly for help. "Help! help! help!" echoed far and wide through the wood.

"Where are you, Sol?" said a hollow voice at no great distance.

"Here, here, stuck in the mud! Is that you, Bill?"

"Where on earth are you?" said Bill; and, as the young man, Sol's brother, peeped over the bank, he exclaimed,
“What a sweet pickle you are in! Oh, it’s just your way. When mother told me you had gone to the wood, I expected to find you in the ditch, and so came straight to it.”

“Well,” said Sol doggedly, “help me out, then you may laugh.”

With a great deal of effort the boy was extricated; his clothes all covered with mud, and one of his shoes lost in the mire. Late in the evening they reached home; but Sol had got a lesson which lasted all his lifetime.

“After all,” said he to himself, “mother does know best;” and that was the lesson he learnt, and which I recommend to all my young readers.
The Mother Tongue.

The mother's name is a heavenly sound
    As far as the blue sky bendeth;
The mother's voice casts gladness round
    Where the iciest realm extendeth—
Sweet in pleasure and sweet in woe,
Sweet in life and in death also,
And sweet in recollection.

Our mother's voice was the cradle song
    That soothed us beyond all other;
And sweetly soundeth the mother tongue
    When the first-born lispeth "Mother!"

Our mother-tongue is that in which
    Our young souls first found expression;
And the lover knows no other speech
    To pour out his full heart's passion.

'Twas spoken by all those kings of old
    Round whom our homage gathers,
And by those warriors true and bold
    Whom we proudly call our fathers.
Our mother-tongue, in the people's mouth,
With words of power it liveth;
'Tis loved in the North and in the South,
Its echo the green wood giveth.

Our mother-tongue, like a flowery wreath,
Both high and low it enfoldeth;
Through it the souls of our fathers breathe,
And the true heart fast it holdeth.

Our hearts speak only our mother-tongue,
They know no foreign translation;
'Tis it alone, whether written or sung,
Which from sleep can rouse a nation.

Our mother-tongue, by the sea-shore wild,
And in deep woods, summer laden,
How sweetly it sounds from man or child,
But sweetest from lips of a maiden!
Sweet in pleasure and sweet in woe,
Sweet in life and in death also,
And sweet in recollection.
Birds and Flowers for every Month in the Year.

AUGUST.

Outlines are melted in the gauze
That Nature veils; the fitful breeze
From the thick pine low murmuring draws,
Then dies in flutterings 'midst the trees.

N August the weather is scarcely less hot
than in the previous month, but it is
beautiful still. In the garden the flowering
plants are not quite so numerous as in
July, but Heaths are at the very height of
their beauty. The Clematis opens its
clusters of four-petalled flowers; and the
Blue-bell, and the Orpine, and the yellow
Lady's-bedstead are seen in uplands. Our
duties in the garden still increase. We
propagate Pansies by cuttings, plant our
biennials, fasten the shoots of Dahlias, cut off the shoots of
budded Roses, cover Auriculas, and sow the seeds of the
Anemones and Ranunculuses. Pinks are now in full blossom,
and the Verbena puts on its gayest aspect. Many of the fancy kinds of Geraniums have done blooming, and may be removed into smaller pots. In the fields we have the Sow Thistle in bloom, as well as the Yellow Succory, the Canterbury Bell, the Foxglove, the Burdock, the Dandelion, the China Aster, the Michaelmas Daisy, Sea Holly, Meadow Saffron, Mugwort, Rue, Ivy, and Wild Honeysuckle. Towards the middle of the month the birds resume their Spring notes; the Whame or Barrel-fly lays its eggs in the coats of the horses in the fields; the Black-eyed Marble Butterfly appears; the thistle-down floats; flies abound in our houses; Grapes and Peaches ripen on the south wall of the orchard, and all kinds of stone-fruits are plentiful, as well as Apples, Pears, and various sorts of foreign Grapes.

In Autumn it is that we particularly notice the hoot of the Wood Owl, as he sits at night on some lonely branch, or wanders slily and quietly across the fields, on the out-looking for some belated rabbit or mouse, or some helpless little Gold-finch dropped accidentally from the nest. Lapwings congregate in thousands, and the Wheatears prepare to leave us for the winter. The domestic Cock crows lustily in the morning and struts proudly about among his wives, who have just now hatched numerous chickens that go picking and raking about the farm-yard. The domestic Goose, as well as some other individuals of the poultry kind, puts on its new clothing after having passed through a long probation of moulting, and all the feathered tribes assume a new kind of life. Soon

The fields that waved with golden grain,
As russet heaths are wild and bare,

and the harvest is everywhere gathered in. Then the Linnets
Owl.  
Game Cock.  
Goose.  
Wheatear.  
Lapwing.  

AUGUST.
congregate, and the Swallows sing, the Stone Curlew clamours, and the Goldfinches, having built their autumn nests, bring forth their young broods. Bulls make their shrill autumnal noise; the Stares come in great crowds; the Robin renew his song of Spring; the Rooks begin to roost at home; the Swift, the largest of the Swallow tribe, takes his departure; and the shooting of Grouse commences.

The garden blooms with vegetable gold, and the harvest queen is chosen from among the fairest children of the village.

In form’d array
The reapers move, nor shrink for heat or toil.
By emulation urged. Others dispersed
Or bind in sheaves, or load or guide the wain
That tinkles as it passes. Far behind,
Old age and infancy, with careful hand,
Pick up each straggling ear.
HEN the world was created, and all creatures assembled to have their lifetime appointed, the ass first advanced, and asked how long he would have to live. "Thirty years," replied Nature; "will that be agreeable to thee?" "Alas!" answered the ass, "it is a long while! Remember what a wearisome existence will be mine; from morning until night I shall have to bear heavy burdens, dragging corn-sacks to the mill, that others may eat bread, while I shall have no encouragement, nor be refreshed by anything but blows and kicks. Give me but a portion of that time, I pray."

Nature was moved with compassion, and presented but eighteen years. The ass went away comforted, and the dog came forward.

"How long dost thou require to live?" asked Nature. "Thirty years were too many for the ass, but wilt thou be contented with them?"

"Is it thy will that I should?" replied the dog. "Think
how much I shall have to run about,—my feet will not last for so long a time; and when I shall have lost my voice for barking, and my teeth for biting, what else shall I be fit for but to lie in a corner and growl?"

Nature thought he was right, and gave him twelve years. The ape then appeared. "Thou wilt, doubtless, willingly live the thirty years," said Nature; "thou will not have to labour as the ass and the dog. Life will be pleasant to thee."

"Ah no!" cried he, "so it may seem to others, but it will not be. I shall play merry tricks, and excite laughter by my grimaces, and then be rewarded with a sour apple. How often sorrow lies behind a jest! I shall not be able to endure for thirty years."

Nature was gracious, and he received but ten. At last came man, healthy and strong, and asked the measure of his days. "Will thirty years content thee?" asked the dispenser of life.

"How short a time!" exclaimed man. "When I shall have built my house, and kindled a fire on my own hearth; when the trees I shall have planted are about to bloom and bear fruit; when life will seem to me most desirable, I shall die! O Nature, grant me a longer period!"

"Thou shalt have the eighteen years of the ass besides."

"That is not enough," replied man.

"Take likewise the twelve of the dog."

"It is not yet sufficient," reiterated man; "give me more!"

"I give thee, then, the ten years of the ape; in vain wilt thou crave more."

Man departed unsatisfied. Thus man lives seventy years. The first thirty are his human years, and pass swiftly by. He
is then healthy and happy—he labours cheerfully, and rejoices in his existence. The eighteen years of the ass come next, and burden upon burden is heaped upon him; he carries the corn that is to feed others; blows and kicks are the wages of his faithful services. The twelve years of the dog follow, and he loses his teeth, and lies in a corner and growls. When these are gone, the ape’s ten years form the conclusion. Then man, weak and silly, becomes the sport of children.
A Sail by Moonlight.

The sail is spread and the breeze blows strong,
    And the slim mast bends to the blast,
And the bubbling waves sing a quiet song
    As it skims o'er the billows fast.

'Tis the liquid swell of the glassy tide,
    Where the moonbeam dances brightly,
That dashes against our light craft's side,
    As she bounds o'er its bosom lightly.

'Tis the pebbly roar of the ocean's flow,
    As it creeps up the stony coast,
Where shrubs of dark seaweed in beauty grow,
    The fair ocean garden's boast.

How softly clear does the fair moon shine
    From her throne of dark-blue beauty,
And beams with smiles on the heaving brine,
    As she wends in her path of duty!

Alone, alone, 'neath that starry sky—
    Alone on that vast deep ocean,
Where treacherous billows are flowing by
    With the sea's continual motion.
How many beneath have found a grave,
In those cold dark fathoms buried?
Perhaps have sunk with none to save,
To an unknown burial hurried.

Though gloomy beneath, 'tis bright above,
And the aspect is sweet and cheering;
In the moon's soft beams there whispers love,
As she's seen 'mid the small stars steering.

A sail on the sea by the moon's soft light,
Away from the cold world's gazing;
Alone 'neath the arch whose wondrous height
To mortals is so amazing,—

Alone with thy Maker who arch'd the heaven,
Who gave thee created life;
Who can guide thy life's bark to a better haven,
In spite of the ocean's strife.
Birds and Flowers for every Month in the Year.

SEPTEMBER.

The meridian sun,
Most sweetly smiling with tempered beams,
Sheds gently down a mild and grateful warmth;
Beneath its yellow lustre groves and woods,
Checken’d by one night’s frost with various hues,
While yet no wind has swept a leaf away,
Shine doubly rich.

OLD mornings and damp evenings come with September. The year is waning fast, but the glory of sunshine, and warmth, and flowers, still lingers about our gardens and fields during the greater part of the day. In our gardens there is yet plenty of work for busy fingers, for September is the month in which we should plant our bulbs for the next season. Now offsets may be taken from the plants and potted. Auriculas must be placed in winter frames; Carnations and
Picotees cut and potted. China and other Roses may be cut; and the cuttings will strike if kept in a green-house or under a glass frame. Before the month is out, all tender greenhouse plants must be housed. Hardy annuals may now be sown; Pansies may be struck from cuttings. Polyanthuses, Canterbury-bells, Sweet-Williams, Columbines, and other seedling flowers, may be planted. In the garden borders, Snowdrops and Daffodils are to be planted; and in order to increase them, perennials may be parted.

In the woods there are still many wild flowers. The wild Honeysuckle flowers for the second time, and the Foxglove is yet in blossom, together with many of the plants mentioned in the last month. The Ivy

"In gloom new life displays;"

the Saffron Butterflies appear, and the Grapes are fully ripe upon the wall. The Woodcock returns, and the Woodlark sings; the Swallow skims swiftly about in circles through the streets; the Hawk flies low over the ground, and the Nightingale is heard for the last time during the year. In foreign lands the Vulture flies abroad for food; and the sportsman is out with dog and gun.

Summer still lingers, though its glories fade,
Still soft and fragrant are the gales that blow;
The yellow foliage now adorns the glade,
And paler skies succeed the summer's glow.

In this month, as well as in the early days of Spring, many birds are caught in the fields by means of traps and nets, and many are the pretty little Linnets that are thus ensnared. We now see the Flycatcher for the last time before he departs for Summer lands; but the Ring Ousel is with us, and the Wood Owl hoots as the night closes in.
My Little Sailor Boy.

I've sent thee o'er the deep, my son,
   And bless'd thee with a smile;
I would not that a tear should steal
   Adown my cheek the while;
Thou wert too full of happiness,
   Thine eyes were lit with joy,
And thy young heart beat glad and proud,
   My little sailor boy.

I sent them back upon my heart,
   Where they have coldly lain,
Congealing, in those lower depths,
   Like drops of wintry rain;
My summer vanished with thy smile,—
   But what thou didst alloy,
Through guardian power thou canst restore,
   My little sailor boy.

Yes, He who gave thee to my arms
   Will waft thee o'er the deep,
* Will guide thee in thy waking hour,
   And guard thee in thy sleep.
Oh! when the storm winds loudest blow,
And gather to destroy,
May His right arm be stretched o'er thee,
My little sailor boy!
An Autumn Holiday.

There is bustle and excitement in Bethnal Green. Groups of clean-faced children are passing to and fro. Nicely-dressed young ladies and spruce young gentlemen, with here and there a quiet, benevolent-looking man whom we know immediately to be a minister of the church, are endeavouring to assemble the glad youngsters in the little gravelled space around the parsonage house. It is a matter of no small difficulty, however, but it is accomplished at last. And here, at
about nine o'clock in the morning of a lovely August day, are
the ministers, teachers, and children of the united schools of
St. Mary and St. John, about to start for a trip into the coun-
try. It is an annual, and much-to-be-commended custom of
the ministers and patrons of the Bethnal Green schools to
take the children belonging to them for one day into the
fields. Last year they went to Hampton-court in covered
vans, a dozen in a row; the year before they dined all together
on the grass in Epping Forest; twelve months before that, they
were taken in a steamboat to Richmond; and this year
they go to Windsor by the North London Railway. Every-
thing favours the design. The weather is delightful, and the
sunshine gladdens even the dull courts of Spitalfields and
Bethnal Green, and makes the pale-faced weavers look up
their fishing-tackle and dream of the fields, just seen in the
distance from their housetops where they keep their pigeons.
When the schools were first opened, such a trip as that about
to be taken would have been thought impossible, because, to
say nothing of the poverty of the children and their parents,
and the consequent want of clothing proper to a holiday of
such importance, the distance to the Great Western Railway
station was too far for a walk and too expensive for a ride;
but now that the Windsor branch of the London and Black-
wall railway is opened, it is but a mile or so across the fields
to the Hackney station. By ten o'clock the whole posse—
kind, cheerful ministers, benevolent patrons, indefatigable
teachers, and children by the hundred—laughing, bright-faced,
healthy-looking children, of all ages, sizes, and costumes, ac-
companied by proud fathers and glad mothers, and aunts and
cousins by the score,—a special train full almost to crowding,—
are rattling on their way to Windsor, in many respects the noblest king’s palace in all Europe.

Other ways of getting to Windsor there are, however. The Great Western for the inhabitants of Western London; and the South-Western for the denizens of Lambeth, Southwark, and the wide crowded districts known as “over the water;” but the new line appears on the whole the most accessible, as it is certainly the cheapest. From Fenchurch-street, Stepney, Blackwall, Hackney, Islington, Camden-town, and Hampstead, trains start for Kew and Windsor every hour; and as the children go by this railway, we will go with them.

Green fields on either side, and sunny knolls, and glimpses of cottage houses and gardens from between the distant trees; bright flowing water, and breezy fields of wheat, and green-clad hill-sides, with every here and there a shady bridge, or dark tunnel, or steep cutting, out of which the swift train comes suddenly into the sunshine, all the brighter by contrast with the gloom; oxen grazing thoughtfully in quiet fields; sheep, fresh from the shearer’s hands, feeding in masses white and ill-defined; horses which come close up to the fence that parts the meadow from the iron road, gaze wistfully for an instant at the snorting monster as it rushes by, and then go scampering off disdainfully; children, with their nurses and mothers, standing on the bridges and watching the whirling team of carriages as they hurry past; stations exactly resembling each other, where the whistle sounds and the train stops a minute to set down or take up passengers; a long, long passage between high gravelly hills; a passing glimpse of rich brown corn-fields with men and women hot at work; a glance at the bright river; a passage, all too short, through
forest trees and wavy leaves; a rush over arches through a quiet country town; a long, loud, piercing shriek as another train comes roaring on, and meets and passes us; a sudden gloom as we enter the station with a scream—and we have arrived at our journey’s end!

Oh the pleasant ride! Out pour the happy children into the station, making the place merry with their prattling tongues and pattering feet. Through the “scoundrel town,” as Dean Swift called Windsor, and onward to the Castle. They do not linger long, however, in the state apartments; for only to the minds of the elders of the party do the tapestries and pictures on the walls present attractions. For the younger portion the flowers in the palace garden, and the trees in the forest beyond, as seen from the wide gravelled esplanade, have higher and more easily appreciated claims. And so out into the park, and through the long elm-shaded walk, their teachers lead them; so they leave behind them the tower where kings have lain prisoners, and the chambers where queens have held court, for the velvet turf around Herne’s Oak, and the Datchet Mead “among the whitsters” [bleachers of linen], where Falstaff was “slighted into the river.”

But for some of the party—the educated leader and teachers, as well as a few of the children’s relatives—the interior of the palace calls up other feelings than those of mere admiration. For them the princely chambers speak the romance of history, all the stranger and more enchanting because the story that they tell is true. For them the tapestried walls and echoing chambers have a human interest. Who has not felt, when standing in the hall of some old mansion, or creeping silently into the darkened chamber that
was once a dungeon, that the building possesses claims, in its historical aspect, far superior to any which modern improvement or splendid decoration can bestow? And thus, in the room in the Round Tower of Windsor Castle, where Henry IV. of Scotland was confined for eighteen years, and from the window of which he gazed upon his future wife, the beautiful Lady Jane Beaufort, as she walked in the palace garden, and in which the royal poet wrote that famous amatory epistle known as the "King's Quair," the visitors linger longer and with greater curiosity than in the Royal Drawing-room, with its gilded furniture, or the Throne Room, with its (almost tawdry) magnificence. Thus, the Waterloo Chamber, with its portraits of kings, statesmen, and warriors; the Guard-room, with the bust of Nelson standing on a piece of the Victory's mainmast for a pedestal, and the banners which Marlborough and Wellington presented yearly on the anniversaries of Blenheim and Waterloo, hanging from the walls; the prison of the chivalrous Earl of Surrey, whose love for the Lady Geraldine is immortalized in verse; the tombs of England's royalty near St. George's Chapel; the rooms in which King John is said to have kept his Christmas, and King Richard feasted before he went to war against the Saracens—have a more enduring interest and a greater charm than painted ceilings and pictured walls of Audience Chambers, State Dining-rooms, Grand Vestibules, Presence Chambers, and Banquetting Halls, be they decorated never so gaily with most approved appliances of modern luxury and refinement.

For a longer or a shorter time, as pertains to the characters of the several visitors, they remain within the palace walls. Some few—a pale, intellectual-looking young man, perhaps,
and a thoughtful youth or lady, here and there—have re-
mained in the state apartments, and gazed entranced on the
portrait triumphs of the great Vandyke, or the character
scenes of Rubens, the "prince of all the Flemings;" but the
great majority have followed in the path of the children, and
make their way into the Long Walk.
Throughout the whole length of this celebrated avenue are
dotted groups of holiday-makers, among whom our party
from Bethnal Green are very conspicuous. The children run,
and jump, and shout, and play, in all the freedom and gaiety
which belong to their happy time of life; while their elders,
enjoying the scene no less than they, stroll happily and
thoughtfully along, or join the merry youngsters in their
romp. Green grass, and waving trees, and the songs of birds,
and the prattle of children—who can resist such incentives to
innocent pleasure on a sunshiny day? Not the ministers or
the patrons—grave business-men though they be—or the
teachers, either male or female, of the schools of the united
parishes of St. Mary and St. John, Bethnal Green. And so,
through the great park and the forest; through woodland
scenery and dark leafy glades; through pleasant walks,
already thick with the red-brown leaves of autumn; through
devious tracts from which the lark starts frightened upwards
to the sky; through pleasant grass-grown ways, they go, till,
scarcely knowing how they got so far, they arrive at that part
of the royal domain called Virginia Water.
For the delectation of inquiring young men, and studious,
but by no means over-grave young ladies, one tells how this
great lake was once a mere swamp, which was recovered,
confined, and planted with islands and trees by Paul Sandby,
the landscape gardener, under the direction of Duke William of Cumberland, who was made ranger of Windsor Park after the battle of Culloden;—how George IV. had the ruins erected—the spoils of the Nile and the Ilissus: Grecian pillars and Egyptian capitals, Roman altars and antique entablatures, thrown together to imitate what, in reality, is a solemn thing, but is here only a picturesque sham;—how the Fishing Temple and the Chinese Island owe their origin to the same magnificent gentleman;—and how William IV. floated a miniature frigate on the bosom of the quiet lake—a strange incongruity in the midst of the peaceful scenery around;—and how our beloved Queen—whom God preserve—while yet a little child, planted the noble elm in the park close at hand, which the children recognize as
BIRDS AND FLOWERS FOR EVERY MONTH IN THE YEAR.

OCTOBER.

And so, when dreams of happiness are fled,
Vanished like summer suns and Nature’s bloom,
O’er the sad heart some lingering joys are shed
To cheer the way that leads us to the tomb.

EFORE many days are past the Autumn
will be over, and the Winter will set in.
Yet October is a glorious month for the
sportsman. The Partridge, the Quail, the
Woodcock, the Grouse, and many other
kinds of game birds that are eaten as food
by the luxurious, are still abroad in the
sheltered copse, and among the stubble of
last month’s corn, and in the fields, where
the newly-turned earth gives a fragrant scent, and the bean-
stalks are burnt in a heap in the middle, and throw their
perfume over the lanes and across the neighbouring village.
In the garden there are few blossoms now to be seen but
the remnants of the past season. Some plants have, indeed, a
sort of second youth—a double blooming. Of such it may be said that they are scarcely ever out of flower. But these are only of the simple, plain sort, such as the Dandelion and the Shepherd’s-purse. In our garden we must take care—winter care—of our Auriculas, giving them in mild weather plenty of air, but very little water. Chrysanthemums may be removed to the house. Pinks, Pansies, Carnations, Picotees, and Camerardas are to be placed in winter quarters and on winter rations; for mornings and evenings tell us, if midday keeps it secret, that Winter is coming. In the woods some few of the wild flowers mentioned as being in flower in August and September are still to be seen, and the web of the Gossamer Spider rises high up in the air, and floats away none knows whither. The Snipe returns from his wanderings, and the Wood Pigeons come in dense flocks from far-off lands. Chaffinches congregate in great numbers, and the Royston Crow is fierce just in proportion as his favourite food gets scarcer. The Night Jar flies low over the land; the House Martin, the last of the Swallows, takes his departure; the Land Tortoise begins to bury itself for the winter, and the Rooks return to their nests in the high trees, whose leaves are now red, and falling fast in little heaps, gathered together by the autumn wind, and rendered damp and rotten by the frequent autumn rains. About this month, too, the Frogs and Toads are particularly lively.
A Dream of Life.

I was dreaming, I was dreaming of a happy land and bright,
Where the sun poured down unclouded a flood of golden light,
And I seemed 'midst flowery valleys with a gay and happy throng,
And a choir of youthful voices ever thrilled the joyous song;
But the sun burst through my lattice with his brightest dawning gleam,
And recall'd my wandering spirit from its fond delusive dream—
From the gay but fleeting vision that my fancy deemed so fair,
To a life not bright, but real—to a world of toil and care.

Ah! thus life's morning opens, and the world around seems fair,
And the heart bounds light and joyous, unchained with thought or care;
And the fancy revels freely over scenes of gay delight.
But, alas! the dream is broken with the dawn of reason's light;
And as the mists of morning like phantoms flit away,
As higher up his azure path the sun ascends his way,
So boyhood's airy visions of coming joys take wing,
Or live but in the memory to tell of manhood's spring.
Then the mid-day sun rejoiceth in the splendour of his rays,
But soon, ah! soon, there riseth a cloud to dim his blaze;
And, changing as he hastens ever downward in his flight,
Now veiled with gloomy shadows, now clad in golden light.
And thus man journeys onward through a span of fleeting years,
His life now bright with sunny joy, now dark with doubts and fears,
His pathway ever changing, now sorrow and now shine,
From the morning of his childhood to the eve of his decline.

Then comes the quiet evening when the sun sets in the west,
And the moon with solemn grandeur unveils her silver crest,
When the lamps of heaven glisten with a bright and sparkling light,
And the gathering shadows deepen with the gloom of coming night.
And thus may sorrows gather round the evening of the just,
When the sun of life is setting, and earth claims her kindred dust;
And thus the weary spirit, when its earthly bonds are riven,
Ascends, all calm and beautiful, to reach the halls of heaven.
POOR BOY was once passing by a large, fine house, when he saw another boy of his own age riding about on a beautiful horse. The boy was handsomely dressed, and the horse pranced gaily along the path, that wound among tall trees and grassy lawns.

The poor boy sighed, and said to himself, "Why could not I have a beautiful horse, and be dressed in fine clothes, and ride about among pleasure-grounds? How happy that gay fellow must be, and how miserable am I! He has nothing to do but enjoy himself, and I have to work for a living, and be dressed in mean clothes, and eat brown bread, and I get hardly enough of that. And then the poor boy went on his way, but all the time he was thinking of the rich boy, and contrasting his condition with his own poverty; and his heart grew sad. After a time he sat down and wept, and then, as the weather was mild, he fell asleep, and had a dream.

He fancied that he was pursuing his way, until at last he came to a forest, and there he heard a voice which seemed to
call him. He followed this, and it led him into a wild and lonely dell. Here the voice grew more distinct, and seemed very near. Pretty soon he saw the mouth of a cave, and he entered. It was dark at first, but he could see light within. Passing along, he came to a lofty temple, whose ceiling was high as the clouds, and shining as if made of silver. While he stood looking around in wonder and delight, a lovely being, dressed in green, with the form of a maiden, yet with wings like a bird, came to his side, and desired to know what he wanted.

The boy was confused at first; but, recovering himself, he said, "I am poor and unhappy. To-day I saw a rich boy, finely dressed, and riding a beautiful horse along lovely pleasure-grounds, and I thought to myself, 'Why is this difference? Why is he so much better off than I am?' And these thoughts have made me wretched, and I wish to die."

"This is very wrong and very foolish," said the maid in green. "You are born in poverty, and the boy you speak of is born to riches; but it is not poverty or riches that make people happy."

"What is it then?" said the poor boy.

"Good sense, good feelings," said the fairy, "are the sources of contentment, and contentment brings happiness. One who is poor may have good sense and good feelings, and therefore be happy; while one who is rich may be deficient in these things, and consequently be miserable."

"All that may be," said the boy; "but I wish I were rich, and had a beautiful horse and fine clothes, and could ride about when I pleased. I'd risk being happy or unhappy if I were rich."
"Well," said the maid, "you shall make the experiment. Come hither." So she took the boy to a splendid edifice that looked like a palace. The door was opened, and within was a collection of the finest horses that could be seen. The maiden directed the boy to choose one. He looked from one to another. At last he came to a horse which had wings. This creature was very beautiful, for his skin was black, sleek, and glossy; his mane and tail were long and flowing, like silk, while his eyes were bright and sparkling, seeming almost like the intelligent eye of a human being. The boy was enchanted as he gazed on this splendid animal. He hardly dared to ask for this one; but the fairy knew his thoughts, and said, "You can take him, if you please."

"Really," said the youth, "may I take this one?"

"Certainly," was the reply. And the maid added, "If you ride so fine a horse, you must have a fine dress. Here is the suit of a knight; it is superb, is it not?" The boy put it on, and, impatient to try his horse, he leaped into the saddle. He was about to depart, when the maid in green beckoned him to her side, and said, "Remember! I warned you that happiness is not the gift of riches, but of good sense and good feelings. These may as well belong to the poor as the rich. But you desired to try riches. You have them. I have given you a horse that will carry you from one place to another with the speed of the wind. I now give you a purse full of gold. Go and try your fortune; but remember, if you do not find happiness, it is not my fault. I have warned you that this springs not from external things, but from the mind and the heart. Farewell!"

The boy and the fairy parted, the former galloping away in
ecstasy. The horse seemed hardly to touch the ground. On he sped with a swift and easy motion; and at last, starting from the top of the lofty hill, he spread his wings, and flew like an eagle over the landscape. Nothing could surpass the joy of the rider as he swept over hill and valley. "This is indeed happiness," said he mentally; "how foolish that girl in green was to talk about being happy without being rich! Pooh! pooh!" And with these thoughts he spurred his horse to a quicker and still quicker pace.

For some hours he continued his flight; but at length he grew weary, and by-and-by he had a sense of hunger. "After all," said he, "I suppose one may get tired, and must eat, even though he may have a flying horse and a purse full of gold." Upon this, he looked about for some place to stop at. Far down in a valley, at some distance, he saw a town, and concluded to stop there. So he pulled in the reins; but the flying horse did not mind the bit. The boy pulled harder and harder; but the horse, so far from checking his gait, only sped on with a more rapid flight. The boy pulled, but the horse still flew. On, on he went, and in a short time the town was left far behind. Hour after hour the horse pursued his swift career, and the rider, at length weary of his efforts, yielded to despair. "What will come of all this?" said he, thinking almost aloud. "Will the beast never stop? Will he go on till I drop from his back through hunger and fatigue? Am I doomed to be crushed to the earth, and made the prey of vultures and wolves? Really this is too horrible. After all, perhaps that green woman was right. I've got a flying horse, but I don't know how to manage him. I've plenty of gold, but this is useless to one who is carried
away by a demon. What on earth shall I do? Upon my word I wish I was safe back to the ground in my brown clothes and bare feet, toddling along as I was this morning. I was happy enough till I saw that rich young fellow prancing about on his fine horse. It must be true what the green girl said—that happiness springs from a contented mind. Alas! I have learned wisdom too late. I see that the powers which riches confer are not only useless, but fatal, to those who have not the training and the wisdom to use them. If I could manage this horse, he would be indeed a treasure; but not having been taught to govern him, he is my master, and I must perish as the penalty of seeking what was not fairly within my reach.”

While the boy thus mused, he became so weary that he could not sit upright. He leaned forward, and, swaying in his saddle, he fell. Down, down he went, and as he struck the earth with a terrible bang—fortunately it was only a dream—he awoke! He rubbed his eyes, and went on his way. And long, long after, he thought of the flying horse, and the folly of being envious of those whose condition in life is different from our own.
The Wreck of the "Hesperus."

It was the schooner Hesperus,
    That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
    To bear him company.
Blue were her eyes, as the fairy flax,
    Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds
    That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
    With his long pipe in his mouth,
And watched how the veering flaw did blow
    The smoke now west, now south.
Then up and spake an old sailor,
    Had sailed the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
    For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night the moon had a golden ring,
    And to-night no moon we see!"
The skipper he blew a whiff from his pipe,
    And a scornful laugh laughed he.
Colder and louder blew the wind,
   A gale from the north-east;
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
   And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
   The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
   Then leaped her cable's length.
"Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
   And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
   That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat,
   Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
   And bound her to the mast.
"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,—
   Oh say what may it be?"
"'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast;"—
   And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,—
   Oh say what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live
   In such an angry sea."
"O father! I see a gleaming light,—
   Oh say what may it be?"
But the father answered never a word,
   For a frozen corpse was he.
Lashed to the helm all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.
Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That saved she might be;
And she thought of Christ who stilled the waves
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Towards the reef of Norman's Woe.
And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf,
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows;
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.
She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side,
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts, went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!
At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
    A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
    Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
    The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
    On the billows fall and rise.
Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
    In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
    On the reef of Norman's Woe!
The Kangaroo-Rat.

In Egypt, the hot parts of Asia, and the interior of Australia, there lives a strange kind of animal which possesses four feet, but uses only two in walking. It is in many respects like the Kangaroo, but its proper name is the Jerboa. It lives in sandy deserts, and is capable of making most astonishing leaps, in which it is assisted by its long tail and hind legs, which are very strong, and furnished with sharp claws. It is a lively, harmless animal, which lives entirely on vegetables, and burrows in the earth like a rabbit. The largest Jerboa does not exceed in size an ordinary rabbit. Its sharp teeth enable it to cut through the grass as with a pair of scissors, and with its fore claws it can dig through the hardest ground. A variety of this animal is found in Siberia and Circassia, where it lies dormant in the winter, and feeds on the stock of herbs it has saved up during the summer months.
Birds and Flowers for every Month in the Year.

NOVEMBER.

Winter, enshrouded in her garb of death,
Stalks, in wild fury, o'er the murky earth;
The river hardens 'neath her freezing breath,
And flowers die while bursting into birth.
And now the solemn silence reigning round
Is broken by the faithful Robin's lay,
As on a snow-capp'd sign-post he is found,
Cheering some lonely traveller on his way.

OAR frost upon the ground
and thin ice upon the lake;
gloom and fog in the air, and
rapidly falling leaves, usher
in the month of November.
But there is even yet work
to do in the garden. What
say the gardeners? That Aur-
iculas, Carnations, Pinks, and Pansies must be kept mode-
rately dry, but have plenty of air; that bulbs of all kinds are
to be planted, or potted, or put in glasses for blossoming in-
doors. Tulips and Hyacinths must be planted in beds, and
Dahlias removed to winter quarters. Rose stocks should likewise be planted, so as to be ready for budding or grafting. This is the month to begin and carry on all garden improvements. For making gravel walks, or planting box, or pruning climbing plants, or otherwise setting our garden in order, no time is so appropriate, no weather so seasonable, as that of the month of November. The Primrose is still in flower in the woods, and the Furze and Gorse still show some few flowers. The Blackcock and Bittern are still to be found in the northern copses; the Heron and Stork frequent the pools, and the green Whistling Plover and the Jackdaw fly about among the woods and fields where the Greenfinches flock. The note of the Bittern is supposed by ignorant and superstitious people to foretell calamity or death in the family, if heard of an evening. “I remember,” writes Goldsmith, “in the place where I was a boy, with what terror this bird’s note affected the whole village. They considered it as the presage of some sad event, and generally found one to succeed it. If any person in the neighbourhood died, they supposed it could not be otherwise, for the Bittern had foretold it; if nobody happened to die, the death of a cow or a sheep gave completion to the prophecy.”

The flesh of the Bittern was formerly in high esteem. In the reign of Henry VIII. it sold for a very high price in England. In the days of falconry the Bittern was frequently hunted by the nobility. On this account the statutes protected the eggs of this bird by very severe penalties. One year’s imprisonment and a forfeit of eightpence for each egg, was the punishment awarded for those who destroyed or took away the eggs of the Bittern.

The habits of birds are a very curious study. They all seem
very fond of play. The habits of the Crane and various birds of that kind are most extraordinary. The Crane stands on one leg, hops about in the most eccentric manner, and throws somersaults. The Americans call it the "mad bird," on account of these singularities. The Crane expands its wings, runs round in circles, leaps, and, throwing little stones and pieces of wood in the air, endeavours to catch them again, or pretends to avoid them, as if afraid.

The Jackdaws, Jays, Magpies, and other birds of the Pie kind, are also very curious birds. They are often taught to speak, and during winter become so tame that they may be safely handled and made to come and go as they are called. The Jackdaw is easily reared among poultry, and is of great use in keeping the farmyard clear of insects and small vermin, of which it is very fond. It makes its nest in old buildings, and lays three or four little green eggs, spotted with brown. Its size is about that of a Pigeon; the back of its head is of light-grey, with the rest of the body black. In the winter it is fond of eating white garlic, and so fond is it of this plant that it smells strongly of it for more than a week after it has made one of its favourite meals.

During the gloomy days of November it is curious to note the care that various animals take to provide themselves with habitations for the winter. The birds add wool and sticks to their nests; the Rabbits burrow deeper into the earth; and even the Water Lizards contrive to make themselves a sort of nest in the banks of the marshy pools they frequent.
December.

The whispering foliage-song no more
Along the air is sweeping;
But hush! 'twill chorus as before—
The spirit-leaves are sleeping:
December's breath awhile shall be
The cradle of their memory.

Though flowers not now their varied hues
In charméd union mingle,
Yet look! the eye more richly views
The flower in beauty single:
And old December's smile shall be
The perfumed tints of blazonry.

Though warblers from the grove are gone,
Here's yet a joyous fellow;
For hark! 'tis Robin's song, no one
Was ever half so mellow:
And old December chirps to be
So welcomed by that minstrelsy.
Though cold and storm-fill'd clouds career,
    And o'er the casements darkle,
They make—turn round, the hearth is here—
    The blaze more brightly sparkle:
December clasps his hands in glee,
Most jovial round the hearth is he.

Then hail, December! let the soul
    The moments dark appearing
Make bright— for it can change the whole
    To beauty rich and cheering:
Old guest to thoughts in harmony,
December ever welcome be!
The Battled Traveller.

ONCE upon a time an honest Yorkshire squire determined to take a journey to Warsaw. Untravelled and unknowing, he prepared himself with no passport. His business concerned himself alone, and what had foreign nations to do with him? Unfortunately for him, the continental states were at war with each other just then.

His route lay through the states of neutral and contending powers. He landed in Holland, passed the usual examination; but, insisting that the affairs which brought him there were of a private nature, he was imprisoned, and questioned, and sifted, and, appearing to be incapable of design, was at length permitted to pursue his journey.

To the officer of the guard who conducted him to the frontiers he made frequent complaints of his treatment, and of the loss he should sustain by the delay; he declared it was uncivil, and unfriendly, and ungenerous. Five hundred Dutchmen might have travelled through Great Britain without a question—they never questioned any strangers in Great Britain, nor stopped them, nor guarded them.
Roused from his native phlegm by these reflections on the policy of his country, the officer slowly drew the pipe from his mouth, and emitting the smoke therefrom,

"Mynheer," says he, "when you first set your foot on the land of the Seven United Provinces you should have declared that you came thither on affairs of commerce;" and, replacing his pipe, relapsed into immovable taciturnity.

Released from this unsociable companion, he soon arrived at a French post, where the sentinel of the advanced guard requested the honour of his permission to ask for his passport; and on his failing to produce any, he was entreated to pardon the liberty he took of conducting him to the commandant, but it was his duty, and he must, however reluctantly, perform it.

Monsieur le Commandant received him with cold and pompous politeness; he made the usual inquiries, and our traveller, determined to avoid the error which had produced such inconvenience to him, replied that commercial concerns drew him to the continent.

"Ma foi!" says the commandant, "c'est un négociant, un bourgeois. Take him away to the citadel, we will examine him to-morrow; at present we must dress for the comédie. Allons."

"Monsieur," said the sentinel, as he reconducted him to the guard-room, "you should not have mentioned commerce to Monsieur le Commandant; no gentleman in France disgraces himself with trade: we despise traffic. You should have informed Monsieur le Commandant that you entered the dominion of the Grand Monarque for the purpose of improving yourself in singing, or in dancing, or in dressing; arms are
the profession of a man of fashion, and glory and accomplishments his pursuits. Vive le Roi!’ He had the honour of passing the night with a French guard, and the next day he was dismissed.

Proceeding on his journey he fell in with a detachment of German chasseurs. They demanded his name, his quality, and his business in that country.

He came, he said, to learn to dance, and to sing, and to dress.

“He is a Frenchman,” said the corporal.

“A spy,” cried the sergeant.

And he was directed to mount behind a dragoon, and was carried to the camp.

The officer whose duty it was to examine prisoners soon discovered that our traveller was not a Frenchman, and that, as he did not understand a syllable of the language, he was totally incapable of being a spy; he therefore discharged him, but not without advising him no more to assume the frippery character of a Frenchman.

“We Germans,” says he, “eat, drink, and smoke; these are our favourite employments, and had you informed the party that you followed no other business you would have saved them, me, and yourself trouble.”

He soon approached the Prussian dominions, where his examination was still more strict; and on his answering that his only designs were to eat, to drink, and to smoke,—

“To eat, and to drink, and to smoke!” exclaimed the officer, with astonishment. “Sir, you must be forwarded to Potsdam; war is the only business of mankind.”

But the acute and penetrating Frederick soon compre-
hended the character of the traveller, and gave him a passport under his own hand.

"It is an ignorant and innocent Englishman," says the veteran. "The English are unacquainted with military duties; when they want a general they borrow him of me."

At the barriers of Saxony he was again interrogated.

"I am a soldier," says the traveller; "behold the passport of the first warrior of the age."

"You are a pupil of the destroyer of millions," replied the sentinel; "we must send you to Dresden. And harkye, sir, conceal your passport, as you would avoid being torn to pieces by those whose husbands, sons, and relations have been wantonly sacrificed at the shrine of Prussian ambition."

A second examination at Dresden cleared him of suspicion. Arrived at the frontiers of Poland, he flattered himself his troubles were at an end; but he reckoned without his host.

"Your business in Poland?" interrogated the officer.

"I really don’t know, sir," replied the traveller.

"Don’t know your own business, sir?" resumed the officer; "I must conduct you to the starost."

"For gracious’ sake," said the wearied traveller, "take pity on me. I have been imprisoned in Holland for being desirous to keep my own affairs to myself; I have been confined all night in a French guard-house for declaring myself a merchant; I have been compelled to ride seven miles behind a German dragoon for professing myself a man of pleasure; I have been carried fifty miles a prisoner in Prussia for acknowledging my attachment to ease and good living; and have
been threatened with assassination in Saxony for avowing myself a warrior; and therefore, if you will have the goodness to let me know how I may render such an account of myself as may not give offence, I shall consider you as my friend and preserver."
Christmas Song.

Keen blows the north wind, the woodlands are bare; 
The snow-shroud envelopes the flowerless lea; 
The Redbreast is wailing the death of the year 
As he covers his wing in the leafless haw-tree.

Of the song of the Thrustle, the Lark, and the Wren, 
And the Summer’s blithe music, there stirs not a sound; 
And the leaves of the trees that o’ershadowed the plain 
Lie withered and frozen upon the cold ground.

The wild voice of Winter is heard in the woods; 
The frost-pearls are hanging on every tree; 
There’s teeth in the air; and the ice-mantled floods 
Meander unseen to the far-distant sea.

The children run in with snow on their feet, 
And make the house ring with an ancient yule-song; 
Carols are chanting in every street, 
And Christmas is thrilling on every tongue.
The bright fire is shining upon the clean hearth;  
The goodwife is spreading her daintiest cheer;  
The house is alive with music and mirth  
That wakes but at Christmas, the pride of the year!

Bring in the green Holly, the Box, and the Yew,  
The Fir, and the Laurel, all sparkling with rime;  
Hang up to the ceiling the Mistletoe-bough,  
And let us be merry another yule-time!
The wintery spirit haunts the year's last hour,
Dwelling amidst these yellowing bowers;
To him, he tells his story, earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks:
Earthward he bends the heavy stalks of the mouldering flowers,
Heavily hangs the broad Sunflower
O'er its grave, the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the Hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the Tiger-Lily.

ERY dull and cold the last month of the year sets in. We have frost and snow in abundance, but while the air is keen, it is also dry and healthful; the sun has greater brilliancy than it had last month, and the moon shines in its clearest brightness; the evergreen
stands daringly before the biting frosts, and sheds its sombre shades in melancholy for departed flowers. The three kingdoms pronounce it December. But in this month there are artificial scenes of gaiety which alleviate the natural unpleasantries of the season; Christmas-time arrives with its merriments and jollities, and so associated are these festivities with firesides and closed doors, that few if any of us would better like them to occur in June or July.

Let Music sound the voice of joy,
Or Mirth repeat the jocund tale;
Let Love his wanton wiles employ,
And o'er the season wine prevail.

The garden is cold and drear. What shall we do this month? Cut down all decayed flowers, the remnants of last summer’s glory; dig up the borders of our garden, taking good care not to touch the bulbs. We must throw light matter about the roots of Roses, Salvias, Hydrangeas, Fuchsias, to preserve them through the winter as well as we can. Out in the fields flowers are still to be seen; Primroses are plentiful, and Periwinkles too; the Snowdrop and the Crocus peep out from the earth; the mosses are green; the Hawthorn crimsoned with fruit; and the leaf-buds on the trees are beginning to expand, to tell of hope, of spring-time, and of summer, even in the midst of winter dreariness. In the woods the Moles throw up their hillocks, and in the fields the young lambs are born. The Furze and Polyanthus, Hellebore and Winter Daisies, Wall-flowers and Snowdrops, are in blossom, however, and all is not gloomy even without doors. The Magpie and the Crossbill are busy; the Peahen stalks about the farmyard; and the Ducks, when the weather is fine, may be seen taking
a bath in the frosty water of the ponds. But Christmas comes, and we dress up the house with holly and mistletoe and bright green leaves, and make merry with joyful noises to bid him welcome. How merrily the bells are ringing! and how loudly and musically the poor children sing the carol under the window, where on the ground the snow is lying thick and heavy! and how new hopes and charities are born in the heart!

Winds whistling shrilly and drear—
Patterning rain on the stones—
Cold, damp, and fog,
Stealing into the bones—
All tell that Christmas is near.
Oh, glorious season of mirth, love, and charities!
Why treat our Christmases only as rarities?
Farewell to the Old Year.

—

The wintry winds are wailing loud,
The earth is veil'd in gloom,
The Old Year lieth in his shroud—
Oh bear him to the tomb!

Yes! take him gently to his rest,
The weary, worn-out year;
The past, with calm, unruffled breast,
Stands waiting for the bier.

And as we turn us from his grave,
A solemn dirge we'll sing,
Remembering all the good he gave,
The joys he once could bring.

The Spring-tide's bloom, glad Summer's flowers,
Still Autumn's calm and rest,
Old Winter's merry social hours,
All, all alike were bless'd.

Oh! which of these thy gifts, Old Year,
Should we most fondly prize?
For e'en thy saddest days appear
But "blessings in disguise."

Farewell! we'll own both sun and shade,
By God in mercy given
To wean our hearts from joys that fade
To those that bloom in heaven.
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**CONTENTS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Ghost of the Black Friar</th>
<th>An Episode in the Life of Mr. Tiggs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Arab Maiden</td>
<td>The Barber of Avignon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal Rogers's Yarn</td>
<td>The Gold-Seeker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit of the Ocean</td>
<td>The Heiress of Rhuddlan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dandy's Dream</td>
<td>The Ball-room Conquest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Churchyard Bride</td>
<td>The Maiden of Radstock Vale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It is our opening day&quot;</td>
<td>The Czar and the Sultan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cobbler of Toledo</td>
<td>Kalafat and Sinope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Last Man (in Town)</td>
<td>The &quot;Latest Intelligence.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Baron of Hohenstein</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXTRACT FROM "THE GHOST OF THE BLACK FRIAR."**

"For Mynheer and his frow they heard a sound
That seem'd to come from out the ground—
A low, deep sound—a kind of moan—
More than a sigh, not quite a groan;
But, spite the wind, and spite the rain,
They heard that sound again—again—
Creeping up and creeping round;
*It was* a most unearthly sound!
It made their hearts beat loud and quick;
It made their breath come short and thick;
It made their blood appear to freeze;
It made them shake in jaws and knees;
It made their hair to stand upright;
It made their cheeks and lips turn white;
It made them sit, and stare, and quake—
I don't know what it didn't make!

"And then at the door there came a knock
That gave them a kind of electric shock,
For both had read, and both well knew,
As a singular fact, and strictly true,
Whenever a ghost, an imp, a bogie,
Or other such unsubstantial bogie,
Is out for the night, and is paying visits
To mortals on earth, so particular is its
Extreme politeness, that ever before
It enters the chamber it knocks at the door—
Not a hurried rap, as a man's might be,
But a solemn, mystic—one! two! three!"

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