THE CHRISTMAS TREE
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
Rev. 2533 & 257
THE CHRISTMAS TREE:

A

BOOK OF INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT

FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:

JAMES BLACKWOOD, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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TO MY READERS.

In the houses of both rich and poor all over the great German fatherland, they have, at this time of year, a Christmas Tree. Its branches spread wide over the table on Christmas Eve, and its lights shine and twinkle right merrily; and among its green leaves hang toys and presents for every one of the family. And as the clock strikes nine, they all—mothers and fathers, masters and servants, children and grandsires—crowd round and search for their allotted presents. It is a pleasant and a merry game. In our Christmas Tree, too, there are toys and trinkets for both young and old. Come and choose for yourselves. And as the Christmas Tree is annually renewed as the winter comes round—always bearing something fresh and gay, and different from the presents
of last year—so we, too, in Our Christmas Tree hope to provide a treat from year to year, at which many shall make merry. And the Christmas Tree that we light up has this great advantage over its better known and more illustrious namesake—that the value of its gifts will not be forgotten or lost, or pass away with the season!

Christmas, 1855.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Christmas Tree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories about Animals</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Elephant</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hippopotamus</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lion</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Anteater</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Bear Hunt</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antediluvian Animals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forest Stream</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Sea</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Orphan's Task—A Tale</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My Own Little Corner</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Battle of the Alma</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Something about Birds</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Eagle</em></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Vulture</em></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Falcon</em></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Hawk</em></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Cuckoo</em></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Magpie</em></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Nightingale</em></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Kingfisher</em></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>More About the Sea</strong></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Queen's Early Days</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo Hunting in the Far West</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Power of Love</strong></td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Archery</strong></td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Talk about Fishes</strong></td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Whale</em></td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Shark</em></td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Swordfish</em></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Flying Fish</em></td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkey and the Turks</strong></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glass-making</strong></td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Year's Eve</strong></td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My Mother</strong></td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearls</strong></td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MY OWN COUNTRIE</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EARTHQUAKES</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR RAGGED SCHOOL</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM—BY THOMAS HOOD</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SHEPHERD OF THE ALPS</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OF THE REPTILES</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Boa Constrictor</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lizard</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Frog</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARIS</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOBACCO</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIED CITIES OF THE EAST</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR GARDEN</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST. PETERSBURG AND ITS PEOPLE</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIFE IN THE COUNTRY</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICE</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCHITECTURE</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMOKE</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A FEW WORDS AT PARTING</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IT was on a winter's evening, and oh, so cold!—Christmas eve, in fact—that we all met in the little back-parlour at Aunt Harriett's. There were such a number of us. First, there was Cousin Charley, Aunt Harriett's only child—a laughing, romping, noisy, dear fair-faced little fellow of six—in whose honour the party had assembled; then there were cousins Wood—seven of them, four girls and three boys—and Aunt Wood and Uncle Ned, as the children called him; and Grand-papa Wood and Cousin Rosa. Cousin Rosa was a great favourite with us all. She was a tall, handsome-looking lady, with a great number of curls hanging about her neck and shoulders, and very bright dark eyes and a nice merry voice. I don't know how old Cousin Rosa was; but I know that we were very sorry when she got married to Uncle George, for then she came no longer to play and romp with us. Not that Uncle George was disliked by any of us, but that we felt sorry that dear Rosa was obliged to go away with him to a foreign country, and we were not able to go too. But they were both of them with us on this Christmas eve: they were not married then.

And besides these, there were Tom Smart and his pretty
little sister, and cousins of all ages and sizes—quite a crowd in Aunt Harriett's little back-parlour.

I said it was a very cold night; and I know it must have been, for when I went out of the room, which was bright with many candles and a blazing fire, and stood for a minute in the passage, I could see through the window how dark the sky was overhead and how the icicles hung from the shutters, so that I was glad enough to get back again, and join in the romps and games inside.

I am getting an old man now; but I can remember the events of that night as well, perhaps much better than I can many things which happened yesterday.

We were very merry after tea, for Aunt Harriett had cleared out a large room for us to play in; and we had blind-man’s-buff and hunt-the-slipper, puss-in-the-corner, and I know not what games besides. And there was a great deal of laughter and noise, and we were all very much delighted. Not with the cake and wine, for we did not care much about them; but with the fruit and nuts, and the noisy games, we were quite at home. And Cousin Rosa and little Charley were the life of the party—the one so pleased with everything and everybody, and the other so delighted at being able to amuse us little ones. I declare I felt quite jealous of Uncle George, though I was not quite nine years old then, when he led her, all hot and flushed, and prettier than ever, to the top of the room for a dance. But then the music and the dancing soon made me forget everything else; and, when the clock struck nine, we were all very much surprised to find it so late; especially Cousin Rosa and Uncle George.
And then the music stopped suddenly, and Aunt Harriett told us that if we would follow her we should see something pretty. Of course we all crowded down the stairs after her, and of course there was a great deal of laughing and romping on the way, among the elder boys and girls, and much curiosity on the part of the little ones.

But, when we entered the parlour, we were astonished indeed. For there, on the table in the centre of the room, was a great Christmas tree, lit up with a number of wax tapers of various colours, and hung with toys and Christmas presents—a toy or a sweetmeat for every one of us, young and old.

The joyous cries and exclamations of the children, and the happy looks of the elders of the party, quite pleased dear Aunt Harriett; and we were speedily dancing and singing round the table, like youths and maidens round the maypole in the olden time. Presently we were all very busy in seeking, each one for himself, the present or toy which bore his name. There were dolls and embroidery-work, and tiny looking-glasses and bon-bon crackers, and gilt crochet-pins and jewellery, for the little ladies; and watches and tops, and guns and flags, and little steam-coaches, and painted balloons of glass, and sweetmeats in gold papers, and I don’t know what besides, for the merry and eager little boys.

Charley and Cousin Rosa found their presents almost directly; and I shall not soon forget the shout of laughter that arose when it was discovered that the gift for Cousin Rosa was only a paper of sugared kisses; as if, we said, she could not have enough real ones whenever she liked? And then how we all laughed when Miss Morris, the governess, got a
gingerbread husband in a gilt coach—which she said would do very well for her, because when she was tired of him she could eat him up. And so the various toys were discovered—a dog for this one and a doll for that, a horse for Tom Smart and a pair of gilt scissors for Clara Smithers, a steam-engine for Teddy Wood and a great whistle for little Jack Foster, a packet of envelopes in a pretty case for Uncle Ned and a sweetstuff cigar for Uncle George, who was fond of smoking; besides many other pretty toys for both boys and girls.

Now, all this time, I had not been able to find the particular present that bore my name, though I looked for it all about the Christmas tree. There was, however, a great gilt watch with a long chain still hanging upon one of the upper branches. I looked anxiously and longingly at it. I knew that it was not intended for me, but I could not help wishing for it. Nobody seemed to take it, though several of the gentlemen and ladies turned it over and read the label at the back. At last, as if I must have the great gilt watch, no matter who it was intended for, I stood for an instant on a chair, reached out my hand, and plucked it down from the Christmas tree. Nobody noticed the action, and I slunk away into a corner with my prize, eager to examine it. Then I discovered that it was a real watch, and that Grandpapa Wood's name was on the label at the back. I knew that I was doing wrong when I slipped it slyly into my pocket, but I went on singing and dancing round the tree with the other children. At last Uncle George called out: "Why, here is a present yet unclaimed! Here, Ned, it is yours!" and, as he handed me a packet in blue and gold, I felt a burning blush upon my
face, and thought I must cry. And, almost at the very moment, Cousin Rosa said, quite loudly, so that everyone could hear—"Grandpapa, dear grandpapa, where is your present?"

"Mine, my love?" said the old man, looking fondly on the blushing girl, "what is there for me?"

"Why a fine gold watch," said Rosa; "there it is, hanging on the tree." And she led him to the tree, and discovered— that it was gone!

There was great confusion. Everyone was asking where it was. Everyone had seen it on the tree a little while ago—where was it now? I felt like a thief, but I did not say a word. Presently I knew that all the party, and especially the children, were looking strangely at me; and then Uncle George came and put his hand in my pocket and drew forth the dreadful watch.

I did not cry or say a word when Aunt Harriett asked me how I came to take it, but I stood sullenly in the middle of the room, and fixed my eyes on the carpet. I think I heard somebody say that I was a bad boy and a thief, and I felt that it was true. Presently one of the maid-servants came and led me unresistingly away, and took me upstairs, and undressed me, and put me to bed.

I said no prayers that night; I did not cry or repent; but I lay there and listened to the music and the singing, and the merry noise that reached me from below. I was hardened and felt like a thief. How long I lay there I cannot tell, but after a time I thought I heard a step upon the stairs, and then I fancied that someone came into the room. It was
Cousin Rosa. She came up to my bed and put her sweet face against mine. I pretended to be asleep; but when her hot tears fell on my cheek, and she kissed me, and begged me to tell her why I had taken the watch, I could dissemble no longer, but burst into tears, and flung my arms about her neck. "O Rosa! Rosa!" I cried, "do forgive me. Tell them I'm not a thief—that I didn't mean to keep it; do, dear Rosa."

"Shall I tell them, dear, that you are sorry and wish them to forgive you?" asked Cousin Rosa, in her quiet way.

It was a long time before I would confess that I was sorry, but at last I did; and then my cousin kissed me, and said that I should go downstairs again.

"No, Rosa dear," I said through my tears, "I won't go down again. I know that I have done wrong, and I hope you have forgiven me."

"My dear little boy," said Cousin Rosa—and I think I hear again her soft sweet voice, and feel her curls drooping over my face, even as then—"my poor boy, it is from God you must ask pardon." And then she took my little hands within her own, and with me offered up a prayer to our Father in Heaven that He would remove temptation far from us, and deliver us from the evils of the world and our own fallen natures.

* * * * *

The music and the laughter stole up from the room below and floated about my bed, and filled me with quiet pleasure. I no longer wished to join my playmates, but I dropped to sleep at length upon Cousin Rosa's shoulder. None reproached
me next day for having yielded to temptation, for they knew that I had repented.

And ever since then, whenever I have been tempted to envy the possessions of another, whenever I have longed for what was beyond my means, or wished for what God had not designed me to have,—then, my dear children, have I called to mind the sorrow and pain that I felt, and the lesson that I learned from that night's gathering round Aunt Harriett's Christmas Tree.
HERE, Papa!” said little Charley, one morning, “that is the kind of book I want. A book full of pictures of animals and ships, and stories about them too.”

“Well, Charley,” replied his Papa, “if you would like to know anything about animals, I will take you to the Zoological Gardens, where we shall see plenty of them.”

“And then,” said little Mary, “you can tell us all about them when we come home, you know, Papa.”

And so it was agreed that they should go to the Zoological Gardens; and on a certain fine day they went—Papa and Mamma, and Charley and Mary, and two or three other young people besides. And there they saw the elephant, and had a ride on his back; and the lion, and the tiger and
the bear, and the wolf, and the panther, besides a great num-
ber of other animals; and they looked with curious wonder on
the stately ostrich and the gaudy parrot, the fierce vulture
and the tiny love-birds, the solitary eagle on his perch and the
beautiful painted pheasant in his cage; and when they came
home their Papa explained to them the characters of the
various animals they had seen, and told some pretty stories
which he had read concerning them. Some of these stories,
my dear little readers, I will tell to you. You have only to
fancy that, instead of reading a book, you are sitting in a
pleasant room, and listening to a pleasant voice, and then we
shall get on very well together indeed.

Now, before I tell you any stories about animals, it is better
that you should learn one or two things which you will find
useful in future. In all museums and collections you will
find that there are two names given to the objects in natural
history; the first is called the generic name, which is always
in Latin, and the other, the specific or trivial name, which is
in English. Thus the lion is felis leo, the tiger, felis tigris,
and so on, the one word describing the genus and the other
the species. It is well that these terms should be clearly un-
derstood. The genus is founded upon some minor peculiar-
ities of anatomical or bony structure, such as the number,
disposition, and proportion of its teeth, claws, fins, &c., and
usually includes several kinds:—thus the lion, tiger, leopard,
cat, &c., agree in the structure of their feet, claws, and teeth,
and they belong to the genus Felis, or cat; while the dog, fox,
jackal, wolf, &c., have another and different peculiarity of the
feet and teeth, &c., and belong to the genus Canis, or dog.
The genus describes the class, and the species the particular animal in the class—the one depends, as I have said, on certain known peculiarities common to many kinds, and the other on the less important distinctions of form, colour, proportion, &c. Thus we have different species of duck, monkey, &c., which naturalists call varieties. The whole animal kingdom is comprised in four great departments—

I. Vertebrates, or animals with a back-bone; which includes the mammalia, or animals which nurse their young; birds, reptiles, and fishes.

II. Articulates, or animals whose bodies are composed of rings and joints, as the crab, lobster, and various sorts of worms and insects.

III. Mollusks, or soft-bodied animals, such as snails, oysters, and cuttle-fish.

IV. Radiates, such as star-fishes, jelly-fishes, coral insects, and the sea anemone. Besides these there are numerous animals too small to be seen by the naked eye, and which are known as infusoria, from their being mostly found in water infused, or filled, with vegetable matter. Now, if you recollect these particulars, you will have less difficulty in understanding many things that you read about animals. I will now tell you about some of the more important kinds of animals that are in the Zoological Gardens, and we will begin with the Elephant.
THE ELEPHANT

It is the largest quadruped that is now living in the world. The word quadruped means an animal with four feet. It is a native of India and Africa, and other parts of the torrid zone. When fully grown, the Elephant is about fifteen feet in height. Its colour is a dusky brown, though in the island of Ceylon, in India, some are found of a pure milk white,
and are much prized by the inhabitants. The form of the Elephant is, as you see, not remarkable for grace or beauty; but it has lively eyes and a most wonderful instrument in its flexible trunk, which is furnished with a sort of finger at the end, by which it is enabled to pick up the smallest article and grasp the trunk of a great tree with equal ease and facility.

Once a menagerie of wild beasts was exhibited in a country village. The people all flocked into the caravan and began to look about them. There was the Elephant standing in his stall, but he looked so awkward and so stupid that they passed him by and went to look at the other animals. They admired the silky mane and the swinging tail of the lion, the bright eyes and the spotted skins of the tiger and the leopard; the tricks of the monkey and the haughty glance of the eagle. Oh, the Elephant was an ugly fellow; these were the beautiful creatures. See what smooth and glossy skins they had, and what bright eyes and elegant shapes—the Elephant was nothing to them! But after a little while, the people tired of gazing at the mere beauty of the other animals, and came back to where the showman was standing with the Elephant. Well, they looked on, one or two of them, and thought that the animal was not so ugly after all. But presently, when the man told the Elephant to kneel, and he knelt; to ring a bell, and he rang it; the crowd increased and began to get interested. And then, when they had seen the awkward creature go through his performances—allow itself to be fed by a child, pick up a pin with its trunk, move easily and even gracefully about without hurting any one—they were really very much pleased; and at last, when, at the word of command, the
THE ELEPHANT.

Elephant took a little child up with its trunk, and placed it on his back, their praises were loud and hearty; and they one and all declared that the Elephant was not only the most intelligent, but really the most beautiful animal in the show. Thus you see that our ideas of beauty do not depend on mere grace of form or feature, but that intelligence and docility are sure in the end to attract attention and regard.

The food of the Elephant is the bark and leaves of young trees, but in captivity it will eat any kind of vegetables or fruit. It is a harmless, docile creature, and never attacks man or animals unless provoked. When caught, it is easily tamed; and its great strength is used for drawing carriages, and sometimes even cannon in the field of battle. Various stories are told of its sense and faithfulness. A soldier in India, happening to get into disgrace, was pursued by the guard, when he took refuge under the body of an elephant that belonged to the camp, and fell asleep. When he woke he was very much alarmed, but the animal moved off quietly, as if he would have said, "Go in peace."

The tusks of the Elephant appear to be given it as a means of defence. They grow to an immense size, and in the aged animal are often eight feet long. The substance called ivory, of which so many pretty things are formed, is obtained from the tusks of the Elephant and some few other animals. The Elephant is said to live a hundred years.
THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

The Hippopotamus, or river-horse, is a native of Africa, and is a huge, clumsy-looking animal. It delights in water, and lives on the banks of the Nile and other streams. It is next in size to the elephant, but is incapable of being thoroughly tamed. Like the rhinoceros, it is a vegetable eater, and seldom attacks man. The skin of the Hippopotamus is so hard and thick that a bullet will not pierce it. Its teeth,
which are fourty-four in number, are the only parts of its body used in commerce, though its flesh is said to be considered good eating by the natives of Africa. It lives to a great age, and has but a single cub at a time. The Hippopotamus in the Zoological Gardens has been a great object of curiosity, as it was until lately the only specimen of the kind in Europe.

Look at the great awkward fellow! who would think that he could ever be a favourite with the ladies? But he is, you see, for they stand in scores and hundreds and watch him take his bath, and clap their hands when he opens his huge mouth, and shows his ill-shapen teeth and great red tongue. Like an important "coloured gentleman" as he is, he holds a levee every day at his "house and grounds" in Regent’s Park. Just in the height of his popularity, though, a brother Hippo—not quite so large nor quite so black and slimy—was brought to Paris from Africa, and is now drawing his crowds of admirers to the Jardin des Plantes. But then, as Mary says, it is the rarity and not the beauty of the animal that is his attraction, both in London and Paris.
THE LION

S called the king of the forest. It belongs, as I told you, to the feline or cat tribe, and is at once the most savage and most dreaded of all the animals of Asia and Africa. Many stories are told of the courage and generosity of the Lion, but I am afraid that they are most of them mere fables. One story, which is often told, has attained a sort of classic fame. Androcles, a
Roman slave, in consequence of some crime he had committed, fled into the desert, where he wandered about in fear, and almost starving. One day, as he was thinking of giving himself up to justice, he met a Lion in his path. "Now," thought he, "my hour is come. I will not fly." But he noticed that the Lion, instead of coming roaring on, walked slowly, as if in pain, and looked towards him fearfully. He waited till the animal came up, and then he discovered that it was lame. The Lion looked piteously up into the man's face, and came close up to him. Then Androcles saw that the animal required his assistance; for, putting out its paw, it seemed to ask his sympathy. The man took the Lion's foot upon his knee, and saw that a great thorn was sticking in the soft part of it. Then, without a moment's hesitation, he bent his head over the limb of the animal and drew out the thorn with his teeth. The story goes that the Lion testified his gratitude in various ways, and especially by providing food for the soldier; after which they went their several ways. At last Androcles was discovered by his pursuers, and carried captive to the city, where he was condemned to be exposed to wild beasts in the Colosseum. The dreadful day arrived, and thousands of people were assembled to witness the sight. The man was brought into the centre of the circus, and the word was given to release the Lion from its den. The gates were thrown open and out stalked a lordly Lion, that morning brought into the city. The man looked up for an instant at that sea of eager faces, gave one thought to his dear little ones at home, and then awaited his dreadful fate. But the Lion, instead of rushing on his
victim, came slowly forward and stooped down, crouching at his feet. The people were confounded, and silent with astonishment, but Androcles saw that the wild animal was the one he had assisted in the desert. Soon the story was told, and was passed from mouth to mouth of all that mighty crowd; and the emperor, hearing it, is said to have exclaimed, "As the Lion is generous, so will I be too. Let the soldier be pardoned and the animal set free." And the words of the emperor were applauded, and both man and beast were released.

Now I do not ask you to believe this, because I think it unlikely that the Lion is capable of such gratitude; but still I think that, like other animals, it may, under certain circumstances, be partially tamed. Fear, however, rather than love, is, I think, the motive of the Lion's obedience to man. Mr. Van Amburgh tamed both lions and tigers, but even he was always obliged to carry a whip. Our domestic cat belongs to the same genus as the lion and tiger, and we know that even its attachment is rather to the house than to its inmates.

All animals of this kind are flesh eaters, and are distinguished by the hidden claw,—that is, a claw that they have the power of withdrawing as it were into the foot,—the padded heel, by which they are enabled to jump from great heights without injuring themselves; the rough tongue, which enables them to tear their food from the bones of their prey; strong limbs, glossy skins, great cruelty, immense powers of enduring heat, hunger, and fatigue; and sly, treacherous dispositions. The principal animals of this class are the lion, the tiger, the panther, the leopard, the ounce, and the cat.
HAS just been added to the collection in the Zoological Gardens. It is a native of South America, and is a very curious animal. With a long body, thick legs and feet, and a flexible snout, out of which it darts a narrow tongue, and so catches its prey—the ants—it is altogether the strangest creature in the gardens. It brushes its great tail along the ground, or raises it over its body so as to cover itself, as with an umbrella, from the sun or rain. Its tongue is said to be upwards of two feet in length, and is very flexible. Though
its food in its native country is supposed to be exclusively of one kind—ants,—it appears to eat bread, worms, and insects, with an equal and impartial appetite, in confinement. This animal is known as the Ant-eater, or Ant-bear, and is one of a large family, of which the sloth is the type. His manner of obtaining his food is said to be this: as soon as he discovers an ant-hill, he opens it with his strong claws, and immediately thrusts in his long slimy tongue, which he soon withdraws covered on both sides with ants. He repeats this process till he has either exhausted the nest or allayed his appetite, when he walks quietly to some shady spot and drops off to sleep.

His tail is very bushy and is covered with long hair, which the animal is enabled to arrange into a flat sort of covering for its body. Its flesh is said to be eaten by the natives of Mexico, but to the palate of Europeans it is rank and disagreeable.

The Ant-eater is a native of South America, but it is rare, even there; and there is reason to believe that in a few years it will become extinct. The specimen now in the Zoological Gardens is supposed to be the only one in Europe—certainly the only one in England. Like the kangaroo, the dodo, and the wingless birds of Australia, it is one of that class of animals which dreads the approach of civilized man. As cities encroach upon the deserts and the woods, the native inhabitants of the soil seem to gradually shrink away and disappear.

I will now, if you please, conclude our gossip about animals with the story of
EARS, you must know, my dear children, are not quite such harmless creatures in their native countries as they appear in their cages and dens in the Zoological Gardens; though, if you look at that white Greenland Bear in his cage, and see how constantly he goes through the weary task of walking to and fro, and
swinging his head backwards and forwards, as if he wished to get out, you can easily imagine how glad the poor creature would be to get back to his native rocks and icebergs. And even the brown Bear in his pit, that you feed with cakes from the end of a long pole, has an angry growl now and then to himself. But to my story.

When I was a younger man than I am now, I spent several years of my life in North America. Not in the cities and inhabited towns though, but in the forests and prairies, getting my food as I could by help of my gun, and calling at the log-huts of the settlers whenever I required anything in the way of flour and vegetables. In this way I passed away my time during the summer, only coming into the towns in the coldest months of winter. Well, one day when I was out in the woods, far away from any inhabited place, I thought I saw the track of a Bear. To discover a Bear and to determine to kill it was in those days a natural sort of feeling with me; so I shouldered my gun, looked to the percussion caps, and went off in pursuit.

I walked through the forest for several miles without coming up to the object of my search, though I both saw traces and heard evidences of his being close before me. At last, after five hours' weary tramping through the tangled brushwood, I came right upon friend Bruin sitting upon the stump of a tree. I lifted up my gun and fired; the Bear was struck in the shoulder, but he merely turned round and looked me in the face. In an instant he had the contents of the other barrel in his side, when, with a slow, heavy step, he made towards me. I stepped back for an instant to reload, when I stumbled and
fell; and before I could well recover my feet, I was in the close embrace of my enemy. My gun was not loaded, but before we closed in that deadly embrace that I knew Bruin to be so fond of, I managed to give him a heavy blow with the butt-end of it. A deadly struggle now ensued, the Bear striving all he could to get me between his paws, and I struggling and writhing to get free. Four times did we fall to the ground, and four times did I manage to regain my feet. At last, with the blood trickling down my face, and trembling in every limb, I began to feel that I must give in. So tightly did the Bear hold me that I was unable to get at my hunter’s knife; but as I had not let go my gun, I contrived to give my antagonist some hard and stunning blows about the head, but at last I felt that my strength was leaving me. In my struggle I was now again upon my feet, with the Bear at my back gnawing and tearing at my neck and shoulders with his teeth and claws. At this moment, just as I was about to give in, I heard the sound of a shot, and in another instant the grisly monster fell at my feet mortally wounded. The excitement over, I dropped down fainting by the side of my late antagonist. I remember nothing more, but when I came to my senses I found myself in bed in a log hut in the forest. I had been rescued by a friendly settler who was coming through the wood, and at whose house I had rested some few days before.

The shock I sustained so shook my nervous system that I was forced to abandon a wanderer’s life. For many weeks I lay in the trapper’s hut ere I recovered. And that was my last Bear Hunt.
ANTEDILUVIAN ANIMALS.

RESEARCHES of geologists have brought to light the remains of many curious animals which, there is reason to believe, were living on the earth before the flood. Among the most remarkable of these is the Mastodon, the skeleton of which is now in the British Museum. This skeleton was formerly exhibited at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly, by Mr. Koch, an American; it was then called the Missouri Leviathan, from the fact of its having been found on the banks of the Missouri, in North America. Its height is now about eighteen feet and its length twenty feet, but at the time it was exhibited it appeared a much larger animal, false bones having been introduced into its legs, vertebrae, and neck. It was reduced to its present dimensions soon after it was purchased for the British Museum. This animal appears to have been a giant elephant, and to have lived on the banks of the stream where its skeleton was found. In the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, some attempts have been made to reconstruct a series of portraits of animals now extinct, but it is very doubtful whether they may be regarded as really like the races of mammals that lived before the flood. The records of nature and the Mosaic account of the creation seem, at first sight, to be opposed to each other, but if they be examined attentively, they will be found to explain each other. Geology and Theology are not, in fact, opposed to each other.
IAN ANIMALS.

Among the many animals which are living on the Missouri Plains, is the Missouri Fox and the sleek Black Fox. This latter animal is easily distinguished from the former by its black color. The Missouri Fox has been found on the plains of Kansas and Nebraska. It is more numerous in the colder, drier parts of the state. The Black Fox, on the other hand, is more common in the warmer, moister regions of the plains.

The Black Fox is a larger animal, having longer legs, a more bushy tail, and a thicker coat. It is usually found in the colder parts of the state, while the Missouri Fox is more common in the warmer regions. The two species are closely related, but they are distinct in many respects.
ORESTS, and woods, and streams are the silent poetry of nature. Out from the dusky town the weary mechanic and the toil-worn labourer go to taste the sweet air of the country. O beautiful country, ever fresh and new, ever welcome, ever gay. No matter the season, the hills, and trees, and rivulets have ever a pleasant look. There, far away from the commerce-stained town, the student of nature can commune with God. Within the town the chafed spirit feels as it were confined within walls which habit has built around it, but no sooner does it taste the sweet breath of the mountains than healthy thoughts arise and good resolutions spring up unbidden. I remember a nook that I used to frequent when I was a boy. It was near to the village where
I was born, and yet far enough from all sounds and sights of every-day working life to be, as it were, a solitary place. On the banks of the forest stream, I have wandered many a time and watched the fishes dart, and dive, and flash in the sunlight, as if they feared no danger from the angler's rod. I have seen the timid deer come down to drink and bathe beneath the shade of the old elm as daringly as if no sportsman, with deadly weapon, ever came that way. I have watched the birds as they hopped, and twittered, and sang among the branches, in seeming gaiety and love of life, as if their world were all of summer. I have seen the insects dance and disport upon the surface of the quiet stream, as if in very joy of their brief summer life. I have heard the bees
hum lazily at close of day, and seen the sun set red and gloriously from between the boles of the old trees; and watched the crescent moon uprise and the quiet night come on, and I the only human being in the place. There was no solitude in that, for my heart communed with God.

Doth the lark upon the air,
Pouring down its lyric prayer,
Heed what joy and ecstasy
Answer Heaven's wild minstrelsy?

Do the sunset's gorgeous dyes,
Flushing o'er the evening skies,
Burn more luminously bright
When we linger at the sight?

Where the spell the muses fling,
Then, and only then, I sing;
What to me if few ears listen,
Or few eyes responsive glisten!

I can talk there with my God,
As I rest upon the sod;
And, sanctified by prayer,
I can feel His spirit there!
THE SEA.

Upon the great Sea, the mariner keeps his lonely watch and thinks of home. In calm and storm, and battle and wreck, he does his duty manfully, and fears no danger; for the sailor is a religious man when at sea, and knows that in all situations he is in the hands of God. "They that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters, see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep," says the Psalmist; and who among us has not stood on the shores of the mighty deep and gazed entranced on the vast expanse stretched out for miles before us, blue and glorious?

With wonder mark the moving wilderness of waves
From pole to pole through boundless space diffused,
Magnificently dreadful! where, at large,
Leviathan, with each inferior name
Of sea-born kinds, ten thousand thousand tribes
Find endless range for pasture and for sport.
Adoring own
The Hand Almighty, who in channelled bed
Immeasurably sunk, and poured abroad,
Fenced with eternal mounds, the fluid sphere;
With every wind to waft large commerce on,
Join pole to pole, consociate severed worlds,
And link in bonds of intercourse and love
Earth’s universal family.

Let us talk about the Sea. As Englishmen we have a great interest in everything connected with it; for our ships are abroad on every sea, carrying the useful things of commerce and the luxuries of life from land to land; protecting and promoting trade, discovering new countries, and doing battle for the rights of the wronged and the oppressed.

That great mass of salt water which surrounds the earth on every side and forms about two-thirds of the surface of the globe, and by means of which, in the present state of navigation, we are enabled to sustain intercourse with the most distant nations, is called the Ocean. Geographically, this huge collection of waters has three grand divisions assigned to it: the Atlantic, which separates Europe from America, and is about three thousand miles broad; the Pacific, which lies between the western shores of the two continents of America and the eastern side of Asia, and is about ten thousand miles in width; and the Indian Ocean, which extends from the eastern shores of Africa, and washes the southern coasts of Asia and the islands of that great continent. The Pacific, so called from the uniform and temperate gales that sweep its surface within the tropics, is divided into the northern and southern
oceans, the dividing line being the Equator.

If we look at the map of the world we shall soon perceive that other seas occupy a great portion of the globe's surface. Thus the waters which flow about the Polar regions are called the Arctic Ocean or Northern Sea; and the corresponding waters to the south are called the Southern or Antarctic Ocean. That great arm of the ocean that separates Sweden and Denmark from Russia and Germany is called the Baltic, and that vast mass of water which lies between the southern shores of Europe and the northern side of Africa is called the Mediterranean. This was the Great Sea of the ancients, and upon its waters it is probable that the first ships sailed — carrying from island to island and from city to city the productions peculiar to each, and giving birth to
the commerce which it is now a great means of promoting. Various large collections of salt water—such as the Euxine or Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, &c.—are nearly or entirely surrounded by land. Those portions of the ocean which penetrate and indent the shores of the earth are called bays and gulfs; and those which divide one portion of land from another are known as straits and channels.

The waters of the sea are invariably salt, while those of rivers, inland lakes, &c., are all more or less fresh and drinkable. Various conjectures have been made as to the reason why the water of the sea is salt—some supposing that mines of salt existed in the depths of the ocean; others, that the salt was carried down to the sea by the rivers, and that the evaporation carried up the water to the clouds, but left the salt behind—but no satisfactory conclusion has been arrived at. It seems certain, though, that the saltiness of the ocean, together with its tides and currents, keeps it pure and wholesome. A very enlightened navigator, Sir John Hawkins, speaks of a calm in which the sea, having continued for a long time without motion, assumed a very formidable aspect. "Were it not," he observes, "for the moving of the sea, by the force of winds, tides, and currents, it would corrupt the whole world. An instance of this I once witnessed. Lying with a fleet about the islands of the Azores for nearly six months, we were becalmed nearly the whole time. All the sea became so full of various sorts of gellies, and forms of serpents, adders, and snakes, as seemed wonderful; some green, some black, some yellow, some white, some of divers colours, and many of them had life; and some there were a yard and a-half, and two yards long; which, had I not seen, I could hardly have
believed. And hereof are witnesses all the companies of the ships which were then present; so that hardly a man could draw a bucket of water clear of some corruption. In which voyage, toward the end thereof, many of every ship fell sick, and began to die apace. But the speedy passage into our country was a remedy to the crazed, and a preservative to those who were not touched."

In certain latitudes the sea becomes congealed, and vast masses of ice, in the shape of islands and mountains, are formed. In the winter season, the mouth of the river St. Lawrence in North America, and the northern parts of the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland, are impassable by ships, and people are able to walk from place to place on the solid ice. But the frozen water, instead of being salt, is found to be quite fresh when melted by heat. The meeting together of great masses of ice in the frozen seas is attended with a great noise and danger, sometimes crushing ships in their cold embrace and destroying all traces of the sinking and despairing crews. In this way there is reason to believe that the brave Sir John Franklin and the hapless crews of the Erebus and Terror were lost in the Polar regions. The water, which at these times dashes against the ice-rocks with astonishing violence, freezes into an infinite variety of curious forms, and presents to the astonished eyes of the voyager the images of ideal towns, streets, churches, steeples, and almost every form which it is possible for the imagination to conceive.

The waters of the sea are much more capable of sustaining the swimmer than those of rivers and lakes, and it is even possible for some to emulate the example of our blessed Lord,
who, we know, walked upon the waves, and sustain themselves in an upright position, so that the head and shoulders are visible above the surface.

Into the sea flow the principal rivers of the world; but of these, and of some other peculiarities of the great and multitudinous ocean, I shall have again occasion to speak.

Tell by what paths, what subterraneous ways,
Back to the fountain’s head the sea conveys
The refluent rivers, and the land repays?
Tell what superior, what controlling cause,
Makes waters, in contempt of nature’s laws,
Climb up, and gain th’ aspiring mountain height,
Swift and forgetful of their native weight?
What happy works, what engines underground,
What instruments of curious art are found,
Which must with everlasting labour play,
Back to their springs the rivers to convey,
And keep their correspondence with the sea?
THE ORPHAN'S TASK.

CHAPTER I.

O cold, dear Mother; it's so cold here! I shall freeze, I know I shall; and, mother, just see how blue the baby's hands are! You won't stay in this dreadful place much longer, will you? And say, mother, why don't father come?"

Yes, that was it—"Why don't father come?" Marion Leslie had asked herself that question a great many times since the sunny morning when her noble husband had clasped her to his heart, two long years before, with words of blessing, and joined his good ship for a six months' voyage. Weary, weary days and nights she had asked herself that, "Why don't he come?" and the wind and rain sobbed through the linden-trees, and gave no answer but a wail. Six months after his departure, Marion had clasped to her breast a babe, on which its father's eyes had never rested; and a faint, sweet smile rippled round her red lips, as she thought how he would take them in his arms, and bless them, the mother and the
child. But weeks faded into months, and yet he came not. There was a rumour, very brief, and very terrible, that his ship was wrecked, and all on board had perished; but Marion never believed it,—how should she?—and still she sat there in the cottage, singing to her babe sometimes, and sometimes weeping, and asking herself, between her sobs, why it was her husband did not come?

But there was a change, at length—her goods were sold to pay her rent. At first Marion looked on listlessly, neither caring nor understanding; but at last the truth broke on her with a sudden shock, and she arose. They were beggars. She understood that; and then it was beautiful to see the triumph of her woman’s love and courage. She went forth with her three fatherless children,—her daughter Blanche, her little Charley, and the baby not yet three months old,—forth from the smiling cottage out into the cold, desolate world.

It was a beautiful home from which she was driven—the home of her bridal, the home of her wifehood, whither her husband had borne her, with the orange-blossoms in her hair, ere the suns of seventeen bright summer years had woven their radiance in her golden curls. There, for fourteen years, they had lived and loved, with only the one sorrow of his necessary absences; for Marion was a sailor’s bride. She had been a spoiled and petted child, and a still more petted wife; and now that misfortune had come upon her, she was too proud to suffer in the pleasant country-town among those who had known and loved them in their brightest days. And this was why, having collected what money she was able to command from the sale of her few valuables, she gathered her
stricken ones around her one morning, and departed,—no one knew, and only a few cared, whither. Other hands lit the hearth-fire at Maple Cottage, and its rosy light beamed upon happy faces; and there came no shadow of those suffering ones who had once lived and loved there, to dim the picture.

Marion Leslie found a refuge, with her children, in one of the humblest of the many cheap lodging-houses in London.

For a long time she could procure no employment, but at length, by dint of persevering inquiry, she obtained regular work from a cheap clothing establishment in the neighbourhood. But they had sunk from one privation to another, until eighteen months after their coming to London (the time at which our brief sketch opens), when their home, if home it could be called, was but a miserable attic, in Paradise Row. Marion had grown very thin, but there was a wild lustre in her blue eyes, a hectic flush on her pale cheek; and you could not have met her, without a start of surprise at finding, robed in patches, and dwelling in misery, the very embodiment of some painter’s conception of wretchedness. She sat there, bending over her rickety table, and stitching wearily, while the baby lay sleeping on a heap of straw at her feet; and the little Charley, clinging to her dress, clasped his stiffened fingers together, and strove not to cry. So early do the children of the poor learn patience.

At last the mother stopped for a moment, and drew her little boy upon her knee. "Charley," she said, "mother’s dear Charley, are you very cold? Well, sister Blanche will come home presently, and then Charley shall be warmed and fed. Mother’s little boy can wait, can’t he?"
"Yes, mother, I can wait. I don't freeze much now; do you, mother?" and the little fellow wound his thin, cold arms round the weary woman's neck, and kissed away the tears that were streaming down her thin cheeks. And then the door-latch was raised softly, and a young girl of fourteen tripped lightly in. Spite of all the disguises of wretchedness, spite of the clumsy shoes, the coarse, patched garments, and the half-frozen fingers, Blanche Leslie was beautiful. Hers was not the mere beauty of feature and complexion, through which looks, oftentimes, deformity of soul; but it was that perfect and harmonious beauty which only a painter can shadow forth. Her long, golden curls floated down over her spiritual face, and her features were pure and classical. A glad smile illuminated her face as she entered the apartment, and, going up to her mother, she exhibited, with eager interest, four shilling pieces.

"Only see, dear mother," she cried, joyfully, "wasn't Mr. Green good? Here are two shillings he owed you for work, and here are two shillings more, that he has made me a present of; and he spoke to me so gently, mother dear, and put his hand upon my head, and drew my curls through his fingers, just as father used to, long ago; and then he said it was a shame for one so delicate as you to have to do such work, and for a child like me, too;—that it must not be, and he could put me in a way of doing something better; and he said I must not let you tire yourself with coming to the shop any more; that I must always come for you. Wasn't he good, mother?"

"God is good, my child," said Marion, solemnly, and for
a moment she drew the girl's fair head to her bosom. "Now go, darling," she said, smiling through her tears, "go and get a bundle of wood and a loaf of bread, for these poor children are almost starved and frozen."

And as Blanche left the room Mrs. Leslie sighed bitterly. "Oh, is not suspicion one of the most blighting curses of poverty?" Marion had striven to teach her daughter faith in the beauty and purity of human nature, but painfully was the conviction forced upon her mind, that hereafter the widow's child must learn a different lesson. Blanche was too poor and too beautiful to be spared the luxury of trust. Grafton Green was a plodding, scheming man of the world, and not the one to give even two shillings from a pure motive of disinterested kindness; and Marion resolved that, no matter how much she was needed at home, or how much she suffered, she must be the only one hereafter to visit the rich man's shop.

Another year passed, and still the wretched family lived on, in the miserable attic in Paradise Row. And yet they were not wholly wretched, nor wholly miserable. There was faith, and prayer, and much love, beneath their humble roof; and the baby, the little Ida Leslie, was growing up fair and sweet enough to have gladdened any heart. She was a perpetual joy to her mother, for only in her face could she see an ever-present semblance of her lost Willie. Blanche and Charley had Marion's own blue eyes, and golden curls; but Ida's heavy tresses were black as night, and her large dark eyes were wild and passionate as an Italian's: they were Willie's own. But there was more sorrow than joy in the lonely roof. The pain in the mother's side was growing more constant and severe;
the hectic flush was deepening on her cheek, and slowly, but surely, she knew her feet were entering the path that leads down to the country of the great departed, "into the silent land."

For many a month Blanche had been the only messenger to the clothing establishment of Grafton Green; and whether it was that the unsoiled innocence of the sweet young girl had subdued, by its silent power, even his wicked and worldly heart, or whether it was that he was waiting for the mother's death, that he might be more secure of success, he had, during all this time, treated Blanche with the greatest respect. But the kindest friend the lone ones had as yet found was a tall, graceful, beautiful woman, living by herself, on the lower floor of the house. Marion did not know her business, or whence came the means to purchase her welcome and delicate offerings of fruit and flowers; but she never dreamed of doubting the stranger's purity, and had learned to love her with a sister's fondness. "There comes Lady," said the little Ida, one day, when the woman entered; and Marion, looking up, with a sweet smile, said, "Will you not let us have some other name to call you by?"

"Clara was the name I bore when I was young and happy," said the stranger, sadly; and from that time the little Ida called her "Lady Clara."

"I am going to die, Lady Clara," said Marion, solemnly, one day, when the little Ida was sleeping on the stranger's lap, and Charley had gone on an errand with his sister Blanche.

"Yes," was the reply, "and I have long been wishing to make a proposal to you. I am an actress. I presume, Mrs.
Leslie, you have looked, as I once did, on actresses with holy horror. I think, however, you already know me well enough to believe that my life has been free from crime. I have, indeed, been unfortunate,” she continued, while her finely-formed upper lip curled with a half-sneer, “and there are those in the world to whom suffering and misfortune are the worst of crimes. My story has not been a singular one. I was born in the lap of wealth. I was an only child, and my mother died when I was very young. My education was superficial; that is, I was required to learn only such things as I pleased; and I confined my studies chiefly to the modern languages and music, of which I was passionately fond. The result of such a self-willed course of training was a run-away marriage with a handsome but dissolute soldier; and yet I loved him. Oh, how I loved him!” and the proud woman clasped her white hands across her brow, and wept for a brief moment of tempestuous agony, and then, with a firm voice, she proceeded. “It was not a twelvemonth before my husband wearied of his plaything, and left me. I thanked God then that I was not a mother; but I have thought since it might have been better if there had been a childish voice to call me back to life. Already my poor father had died, and I took to my heart the knowledge that I had brought his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Soon after his death, a will was produced—though I was always doubtful of its authenticity—endowing his brother’s sons with all his fortune. I do not know that the will could have been set aside; I surely would not have questioned it; for I was far too proud to go back to my former friends as a deserted wife; and I bore my griefs
alone, as best I might. At first I strove to support myself, as you have done, by needlework. You know what a weary, torturing, slow dividing of soul and body that is; and soon I began to loathe existence most intensely. At last I sought an engagement at a third or fourth rate theatre, and my offer was accepted. I am told that, if I had had ambition, I might have risen to be a queen of tragedy; but I had none.

"I would not go upon the boards of a first-class theatre, lest I should be recognised by those who had known me in happier days; and even where I am, I only take the least conspicuous parts. I have chosen this ruinous, tumble-down habitation, because it suits both my altered taste and my altered means; but I have managed to surround myself with many comforts, and, thank God, I have preserved, unsoiled, the purity of my heart and life.

"And now, Mrs. Leslie, I have, as I said, a proposal to make to you. I have seen, for a long time, your anxiety about Blanche; nor do I wonder at it. But Blanche is strong-principled and strong-minded beyond her age. Now, if you will trust her to me, I propose to make her an actress. She can soon take a higher rôle of characters than I do, and will be able to support her brother and sister. I know you will think it a hard choice between this and starvation. I know your imagination will even exaggerate the trials and temptations of this career; but think a moment,—can any other path be more, nay, can any other path be as much exposed to temptation, as that of a young and beautiful seamstress, whose scanty pittance hardly keeps her above absolute want, and whose very business exposes her in a thousand ways
to the pursuit of the unprincipled and licentious? Then there
is one more consideration;—as an actress, Blanche need not
despair of finding time enough to become, at least, respectably
educated; while, should she grow up a seamstress, you are
aware such a hope would be the height of absurdity. Blanche
is well enough while you live,—I would not have her situation
changed at present; but I know it is your conviction that you
cannot stay to guard her long; and not, even though she
were starving, would I say to her, 'Blanche, come with me to
the theatre,' unless I could also add, 'Blanche, my advice has
your mother's sanction.' Shall I say it?"

"Leave me for a few moments, good, kind friend," was the
reply, "and then I will answer you;" and, laying the little
Ida gently down, the actress glided from the room. Left to
herself, Marion Leslie knelt and prayed, long and fervently,
—prayed as only an anxious, suffering mother can. She
looked forward, with strained and aching eyes, into the future;
she saw the thorns on which her loved one's tender feet must
tread, and she prayed for strength to decide aright. At last,
as she heard the returning footsteps of her friend, she rose
from her knees, and, with a faint smile, whispered—

"Yes, I have decided. You may give my Blanche her
mother's sanction and blessing on whatever course you approve.
I leave her in your care, and, when I am gone, deal gently
with her for the sake of the dead."

"I accept the trust," said, very solemnly, she whom the
child called "Lady Clara;" and in a moment more, Blanche
entered.

"Come hither, darling," said the mother, fondly, holding
out her thin hand to Blanche; and Charley climbed upon her knee, and Blanche knelt down by her mother’s side.

“Blanche dearest, you have been a good and faithful child to me, and God will bless you now, when I am gone, and forever.”

“You gone, sweet mother!” and a look of mingled grief and terror drifted up to Blanche’s clear blue eyes.

“Yes, darling,”—and Marion took in her hand the length of her fair child’s golden curls,—“yes, darling, the wild flowers of another spring-time will blow above your mother’s nameless grave, and my little ones will be God’s orphan children then! No, no, Blanche, darling, treasure, don’t weep so wildly!—I’m very weak, Blanche; I can’t bear it.” And the brave girl struggled with herself till moans subsided to sobs, and sobs to quiet tears, and then her mother continued: “It would be sinful to mourn so for me, my darling; for I am going home to Jesus. I may stay with you for some time yet, but I must go when He calls me, and then Clara will take care of you.”

The next morning Blanche awoke just as the first sun-rays were brightening the attic windows. The poor children had crept early to bed the night before, for they had no money to buy lights or fuel, and Blanche could not carry home the work they had completed till the morning. It had been a bitter cold night, but Blanche, with the little Charley in her arms, had slept soundly. When the sunlight flashed upon the windows, she started up in alarm, to see how late it was, and, hurrying on her scanty supply of raiment, she glanced at the low couch of straw where her mother lay sleeping. The tears came to her eyes as she whispered, “Poor, dear mamma, she is so ill!”
She sleeps late this morning, and I think I’ll carry this work home before I wake her;” and then, gathering up the work into a bundle, she stepped softly to her mother’s pallet, to give her one gentle kiss before she left her. God of the fatherless! The lips to which she pressed her own were cold and pale as marble. Marion Leslie was dead!

There are those who think death steals into the habitations of the poor almost in the guise of an angel of light; that, because their paths are hedged about with troubles and choked up with thorns, the echo of the familiar footfall is not missed; that, because the rain and storm beat upon their heads, the rain of sorrow fails to fall upon the grave of the departed; but those who read the “short and simple annals of the poor” will trace another record. There were tears, and wailings, and sorrow, in the tumble-down house in Paradise Row, when the body of Marion Leslie was borne forth to the burial. The fair hair banded across her forehead was wet with tears; and it was as if she wrenched out, and carried away with her, other hearts besides her own. And why not? If all things are bright around us, there is less room for the shadow to fall. The difference is between taking his single sun-ray from some lone prisoner in dungeon-walls, or leaving one beam the less to brighten the splendours of the royal palace.
Chapter II.

OW shall I tell of the poor orphan’s grief?

It was a week after the funeral, when one morning Clara reminded the sorrowing Blanche of a bundle of work not yet carried home to the clothing establishment of Grafton Green.

"Yes, yes," said the young girl, abstractedly; "where is it? I must go to work, I know. I’ll take it now?"

"Wait a moment," said the actress, "and I will go with you to carry it;" and she robed herself in a costume that, to the uninitiated eyes of Blanche, seemed the height of elegance. And, in truth, she looked more than ever worthy of her title—"Lady Clara"—when the heavy folds of a rich and costly mantle fell gracefully about her tall and slender figure, and her wrists and throat were muffled in soft and glossy furs.

"Now, Blanche," she said, when she had completed her toilet, "I will go with you; but you must wait till a moment after I have gone in, and not on any account appear to recognise me!"
When Blanche entered the establishment, she was surprised to see the deference accorded by the clerks to her richly-dressed companion. The actress stood at a counter at the further end of the shop, turning over, with an air of fashionable indifference, some finely-stitched collars and cuffs. The young girl entered timidly, and, stepping up to Mr. Green himself, she said, in a low, musical tone, "Here is that last work, sir. Won't you please to excuse my not having brought it home before? for my mother is dead!"

A strange kind of expression flitted over the rich man's features,—Blanche thought it anger, the actress called it triumph. "I should be glad to indulge you, if I could, poor child!" he said, with a strange gentleness; "but I must treat all my girls alike, and the rule is, if any one keeps work out a week, it must be charged to them, and they are to retain it. So, you see, I must charge this now, Blanche,—twenty shillings,—but the charge is a mere matter of form; you are too young and fair to suffer, and I'll give you some easy work to do now, and we'll settle about that another time."

"Blanche," said Lady Clara, coming forward, "I expected this—trust in me, poor child! Mr. Green, you said your charge against this girl was twenty shillings; here is your money, and we'll make you a present of the garment, to atone for your disappointment. Come, Blanche; wish Mr. Grafton Green a very-good-morning; you will take no more work from his establishment!"

Mr. Grafton Green muttered something altogether too near an oath to be written down for ears polite, and the actress took the fair girl's hand in hers, and left the "establishment," with
a patronizing courtesy. When, at length, they were seated with Charley and the little Ida in the apartment of "Lady Clara," in reply to Blanche's tearful, "O Clara, what shall I do? we shall starve!" the lady unfolded her plan, and endorsed it with the dead mother's sanction. "I have paid the rent for your miserable attic, dear Blanche," she concluded, "and settled up accounts with your landlord. I have been laying by money for this very thing, Blanche, and now you shall stay with me, you and the little ones, until you can do better; and I will support you until you can support yourself."

And thus it was, climbing up on to the stage, from weary stepping-stones of toil, and want, and sorrow, one of our first actresses made her début. "You have nothing to do now but study," said Clara, when the preparatory arrangements were completed; and Blanche did study, as none can but those who have a high and holy motive. She had not adopted her profession without a bitter struggle,—not until every other door seemed closed against her, and she had seemed to hear her dead mother's voice, out of the grave, calling on her to arise and toil for the children so sacredly given to her charge.

It was her highest ambition that they for whom she thus sacrificed herself should never know at what a cost the flowers which strewed their path were purchased. While they were yet so young, it was very easy to send them to bed before she made her toilet for the theatre; and, as they grew older, she hoped to be able to take a higher part, and so acquire the means to send them away from her to school. Years passed on, and her wishes were accomplished. At twenty, she found herself filling the first characters in the first theatres, and she
had the satisfaction of calling home her little sister on the Sabbath, and learning, from the love of that innocent child-heart, that earth was not all a wilderness. As for Charley, he was sent far away, and growing hale and hearty, as his sister saw, when the happy trio assembled with Clara, at a quiet, rural, country-house, for the summer vacation.

At twenty, Blanche Leslie was beautiful,—proudly beautiful. Her success as an actress had been almost unexampled for one so young; and she had found time and means to secure a good education. The promise of her childhood was more than fulfilled. Her large, radiant blue eyes revealed the gifted soul within, and her complexion was fair and pure as the finest statuary. Her stature was tall, but with sufficient fulness to be graceful; and altogether she was perhaps the most magnificent tragédienne that had hitherto appeared.

And now there dawned another dream upon her life. One night there came behind the scenes a stranger, whom the manager introduced to her as his friend, Lionel Hunter. It was to Blanche like a revelation. She had never before met such a man. Her acquaintance was limited to the circle of the green-room, and no one had hitherto found lodgment in her heart for more than a passing thought; but this man—this Lionel Hunter!

You might have thought, at the first glance, that he was not a man to strike a lady's fancy; but there was something noble in his face and figure.

"My friend," said the manager, as he presented him, "is the author of our last new play; and he wishes to thank you,
Miss Leslie, for having so well personated one of his best characters."

And then he took Blanche’s little hand in his own; and while it lay there, fluttering like a caged humming-bird, he spoke a few low, musical words of praise and thanks which brought the rich blood flushing to the fair girl’s cheek as it had never flushed before. That night he walked with her to her home; for she and "Lady Clara" had removed from Paradise Row, and had taken a pleasant house in a respectable square. After that, Blanche was no more lonely. Almost daily Mr. Hunter would meet her in her walks, and sometimes accompany her home.

Then, the enthusiastic girl lived on the memory of that meeting, until she should see again her hero, her demi-god. Sometimes there was but a chance interview of a few words, and sometimes she would not see him for a day; but there would be a quick ring at the door, and a bouquet of flowers left for Miss Leslie. And these were always the costliest exotics, or heavy clusters of the fragrant climbing roses with long stems; so that always in Blanche Leslie’s parlour was summer, and the breath of flowers. Perhaps it was not well for the inexperienced girl that Lady Clara’s voice had failed her, and she was spending the winter in the country; but surely never before had life seemed half so bright.

At last Mr. Hunter came often to her rooms. Another of his tragedies was to be produced, and, that she might be perfect in her part, he read it to her many times at home. Surely, never was another voice so musical; and Blanche could not refuse, when the play was over, to listen to yet other plays,
and hear the glorious creations of the master dramatist made vocal. It was the day before Miss Leslie's last engagement previous to the summer vacation, and once more Lionel Hunter sat beside her in her room.

He sat beside her now, and was gazing fondly on her upturned face. "Blanche," he said at length, in a deep, musical whisper,—"Blanche, darling, tell me once more that you love me. O dear one, my life has been a weary thing sometimes; there have been dens and dark places in it; but you have walked beside me for a while, and my path has grown radiant with the glory of your soul. O Blanche, Blanche, best, purest half of myself, I could not live without you now!—tell me once more that you love me!" And the proud man paused, and bent his face to catch the whispers of her answer, till he could feel her breath warm upon his cheek.

There was truth, and passion, and tenderness, in the girl's voice, as she murmured, "O Lionel, you know——"

And his face bent lower still, as once more he said, "And Blanche, my Blanche, will you be all mine?"

"For ever," was the faintly-whispered reply.

"And you will not love me less, Blanche, when I tell you I am not the humble, plodding scribbler you have thought, but a man rich in fame and wealth. Can you be proud of me, Blanche, darling, and not love me less?"

But the tears gathered slowly in the young girl's eyes, and trembled on the heavy lashes, as she replied, "But you, Lionel; if this be so, how can you love me? Will you not blush when men shall say your wife has been an actress?"
"Blanche, dear Blanche," he whispered, "I cannot marry you; that would be certain ruin. Have you so little trust, so little faith in me, that you think I would be more true to you when some old priest had said over a few words of a senseless ceremony? I thought you loved me. Well, no matter, Blanche; I was deceived—I can bear it—get up, and go away. Why don't you go? In Heaven's name, what are you staying here for?"

"Because," she said quite calmly, and with tearless eyes, "I love to stay, Lionel, and because I never will stay again. O Lionel, you have darkened all my life! Why did you come to me, with your bright thoughts and witching words?"

"Why? Because I loved you, because I thought your heart was not that of a stone, but a woman. Stay, now; what are you getting up for? Blanche, sit still!"

"No, I shall get up now, and you will go and leave me for ever."

"I shall do no such thing. I will go and leave you till to-morrow, and then I'll come back, and say—'Blanche, will you be mine?'" and he rose, and walked towards the door; but, turning ere he reached it, he spread out his arms, and said, in those low, rich tones that never could, she thought, have belonged to any voice but his: "Come to me, Blanche, darling; come and lay your head upon my breast. Who else can shelter you so well as I? You have said that I was your world. Be true to me, then,—true to your own soul, clinging even now to mine,—and come to me. Is the world more than I am, Blanche?"
“No, sir, no!” and the young girl shut her eyes, and clasped her white hands across them. “No, sir, but God is, and the voice of my dead mother calling to me from her grave! Go, Mr. Hunter!”

“Do you mean it, Blanche? Do you mean to say I shall go away and never see you any more—that you will no more live for me, nor I for you? That we are to be nothing to each other, ever more?”

“That is what I mean, Mr. Hunter.”

He walked slowly and deliberately back again, and raised her in his arms. “Look at me, Blanche, and tell me, now, do you mean to say, ‘Go, Lionel, go, and never look upon my face again!’”

“Yes, Mr. Hunter; I mean to say just that: Go, and never come again, and in mercy go quickly.”

“You mean to say, ‘Go and come again to-morrow;’—that is my reasonable Blanche. You are feverish and excited now, and would indeed be best alone;” and, so saying, he kissed her gently, released her, and walked to the door. Then, turning once more, he said, “Good-bye till to-morrow, Blanche, little one. Let me see you happy, then!”

It was two o’clock the next afternoon when Lionel Hunter rang at the door of Blanche Leslie’s house. He was shown into her accustomed sitting-room, but she was not there. He threw himself into her easy-chair, and lying on the table beside him he perceived two notes, directed in a light, graceful hand, which he recognised but too well—the one to him, the other to the manager of the theatre. Eagerly he
broke the seal of the one superscribed "Lionel Hunter, Esq.,"
and read thus:—

"When your hand touches this sheet, I shall be far away.
I have loved you very dearly, and in my heart there is no
blame for you now, only sorrow, bitter, bitter sorrow. I will
believe that you love me—that you did not mean to deceive
me! I will even try to think that the fault, the misunder-
standing, was all mine. My soul shall send back only prayers
for you—my heart shall breathe only blessings. If I could
coin my life-blood into a flood of blessing, and pour it on your
head, I would do so gladly, but the lips that my little sister
presses must be pure; the life consecrated by a dying mother's
blessing must be unstained.

"Lionel, I go! I dare not trust myself to look again upon
your face! On earth we meet no more.

"Blanche Leslie."

A deep groan burst from the heart of Lionel Hunter, as he
pressed the note again and again to his fevered lips. "Lost,
lost, lost!" It seemed a dirge with which the whole creation
was groaning. Then, for the first time, he knew how madly
he had loved Blanche Leslie; then he knew it would have
been but a light thing to have laid down fame, and wealth,
and this world's honour, so that her head could have rested
upon his bosom, and he could have called her wife! But
it was too late. Lionel Hunter was not one to yield to cir-
cumstances tamely, or without a struggle. He had found the
eidolon of his life's long dreams; had looked into her eyes,
had held her head upon his heart; and now she was gone—now that he would have called her wife, but could not. At first there seemed a kind of injustice in it. He forgot that she had fled because of her very love, not from him, but from temptation; and the proud man ground his teeth together, and then sat down in the chair—her chair—and moaned helplessly.

CHAPTER III.

EN years had passed. It was a rich, hazy autumn. A kind of misty, Indian-summer glory lay all over the broad landscape, and flooded with its radiance the pleasant parlour of an elegant little cottage, in the suburbs of New Orleans, America. The room was tenanted by two ladies, both graceful, both elegant, but neither young. Thirty summers had woven their meshes of light in Blanche Leslie’s fair tresses, and over them the moon must have risen in a night of sorrow; for among the golden curls were threads of silver. Her features were purer, and more spiritual in their outline, and her thin figure had lost none of its native and peculiar grace.
"Three weeks more, Lady Clara," and, as she spoke, you might have fancied her voice had in it the low, touching music of a Peri shut out of Paradise, and pleading that the gates might be reopened,—"three weeks more, and Ida’s school-days will be past. How can I manage then? How shall I any longer spare her the knowledge that her sister is an actress?"

"You can hardly hope to conceal it longer, Blanche; and why should you wish it? Surely, dear one, in your pure life there is nothing for which to blush. In my anxiety, when you left London so suddenly, I had nearly betrayed your secret. O Blanche! you can never dream the relief it was when I got your letter, telling me your assumed name, and requesting me to join you here. I was really thankful when Charley entered the navy; for, if he had stayed at home, both he and Ida must surely have long since known your secret; though, really, Blanche, I never could see your reasons for concealment."

"O Clara!" and the poor girl shuddered as she spoke, "you would see, if you knew all. Some time I'll tell you why I left London so suddenly. God be thanked, I've been able, so far, to prevent Ida from seeing the inside of a theatre! I can bear to have my life blank and dark, if I can make my mother's children happy.—What! a letter, Anne?" as the servant entered. "That must be from some one at the green-room. I hope they don't want me for a rehearsal."

But why did her cheek grow pale, and her hand tremble, as she glanced at the superscription, and nervously broke the seal? and what was there in its contents to bring the hot,
bitter tears up from their fountain in her strong, proud heart? "Blanche," it said—

"Blanche Leslie,—For something tells me you are Blanche Leslie yet—I have found you at last, after these weary years. Listen, and hear if it be not destiny. When you left me, Blanche, I was a heart-broken, miserable man. You did not know me, or you never would have gone. I did not know myself. I did not know how much I loved you. When I read your note, I awoke to the knowledge of my own soul. Then I knew that, without you, wealth, and fame, and honour, were worse than vanity, hollower than the apples of Sodom. I would have laid down everything I possessed on earth, to have called you, wife! My soul cried out for you 'with groanings that could not be uttered.'

"For a month, Blanche, I was nearly crazy. I did nothing. I shut myself up, and never closed my eyes. I said nothing but 'Blanche! Blanche! Blanche!' Then there came to me a resolve to find you, and I went forth. For all these weary years, I have given myself to the search. Sometimes I wandered into the obscurest alleys and dens of misery, for I would wake from terrible dreams, to fancy you suffering—dying, perhaps. Then I would seek you in the haunts of fashion; for all this time, Blanche, never once did the thought visit me, that you might be another's. I knew you would be true to me. I knew, wherever you were, my name was written upon your heart. I judged your love by the resistless might of my own.

"It is strange, Blanche, but all these years I never once
entered a theatre until last night. I thought you would ex-
pect me to seek you there, and so avoid them; and I loathed
their very atmosphere. I cannot tell why this feeling should
have taken possession of me, but it was so. Last night my
mood changed. Something told me, as I passed the brilliant
lights, to enter. I strolled into a box in the corner, and,
Blanche, I saw you. Saw you! Can you understand how
my whole being was electrified? I was wrapped in a trance
of joy. The weary, weary past seemed like some horrible
nightmare; but, oh! the wakening was so glorious! I could
not see you last night at your own home, and yet I could not
leave you. I followed you and guarded your door the whole
night, like a sentinel, and only this morning I have come
home to write this letter. Blanche! Blanche! was I indeed
so near you without your knowing it? or did your heart
thrill, as in a vision, because I was near, and then your reason
chide you for the fantasy?

"I cannot talk of all that terrible past. It is over now.
Let us forget it. I will be with you presently; and then,
then, I will feel those warm arms about my neck,—I will
draw that fair head to my bosom, and the beauty of my dreams
shall be my wife! O Blanche! how many weary years I
have wept and prayed for this! The seas have not been deep
enough, nor the mountains high enough, to divide you from
my vision. I cannot write longer. I will come to you, and
then, before God and man, you shall be mine, even as I am

"Your

"Lionel Hunter."
Blanche glanced around when she had read it to the close; she was alone. Clara had stolen unperceived from the room. She threw herself upon her knees, and prayed, for a brief moment, as only the suffering can pray; and, when she rose, her face was pale and tearful, indeed, but she had ceased to tremble. Going towards the open window, she drew before her a little inlaid ebony writing-desk, his gift in happier days, and wrote rapidly:

"No, no! Come not near me, Lionel Hunter! Disturb not the holy calm to which it has been the work of years to attain. I have wept much, suffered much, but I am stronger now. Talk no more to me of earthly love, now that my heart has grown old, and the beauty you used to praise has faded. Leave me, leave me! It is my prayer; it is all I ask. Over my night of sorrow the dews have fallen, and the stars have arisen; let me walk in their light!

"Blanche Leslie."

"No, no, little darling, you shall not send me from you. I will call you my wife. You shall be Blanche Hunter. Look up, darling. Let me gaze into your blue eyes, life of my life! and, believe me, I will never leave nor forsake thee!"

And dear me, reader!—but stories of real life always will end with a marriage, however much the writer may strive to prevent it. My heroine behaved just like all other heroines; and it was not till years after, when Ida Leslie also sat among her husband and her children, that she learned the furnace of
affliction through which her sister's feet had passed uninjured, and that she herself owed the joy and prosperity of her lifetime,—not to Mrs. Lionel Hunter, leader of the fashion,—but to Blanche Leslie, the Actress.

And Blanche and Lionel. How were their wanderings, arm in arm by the solitary sea-shore, sanctified by suffering!
MY OWN LITTLE CORNER.

LIKE not the world and its fashion,
I love lonely solitude best,
Those gay whirling pleasures are thralldom,
Retirement alone offers rest.
Enclosed in my own little boudoir,
I am blithe as the bird on the tree.
Oh, give me my own little corner,
And from every dull care I am free.

There I go with the soldier to battle,
And ponder the affairs of the State;
I weep o'er the people's misfortunes,
And assign to the rulers their fate.

I look to the future with pleasure,
And gaily it smileth on me—
Oh, leave me my own little corner,
And from every dull care I am free.
MY OWN LITTLE CORNER.

There too, with the wand of a fairy,
I lavish good gifts on the poor,
I rear noble trophies of glory,
And the worthy to honour allure!
I rule in the councils of princes,
And pure are the laws they decree—
Oh, leave me my own little corner,
And from every dull care I am free.

And there, like a silken-winged seraph,
My fancy floats sportive and gay,
And ever around me is strewing
Bright garlands she wreathes by the way:
Ah yes, from the world and its pleasures,
My heart ever gladly would flee—
Oh, leave me my own little corner,
And from every dull care I am free.

With a patriot’s love for my country,
I offer to Heaven my prayer,
That she may be ever protected,
And the richest of blessings may share:
Then do not, I pray thee, rebuke me,
Though musing alone I may be—
Oh, leave me my own little corner,
And from every dull care I am free.
THE BATTLE OF THE ALMA.

The 20th of September, 1854, was a grand day for European civilization; for on that day the power of Russia received a check from which it will take years to recover. On the 14th the troops of the English and the French, in close and friendly alliance, landed in the Crimea, and began to make immediate preparations for war in defence of the empire of Turkey. For six days the allies were busy in landing soldiers, arms, and ammunition; and on the evening of the 19th it was known that a battle would be fought with the Russians on the morrow. The day had been one of great trial. The soldiers of both armies had made long and toilsome marches over rough roads and rocks, and through pathless glens and tangled woods, and at last lay down to bivouac for the night on the banks of a small and not very clear stream. The Russians were encamped on the heights before them, and the soldiers of the British and French armies were waiting with impatience for the moment of encounter. Thus night closed around them.

At length day dawned, and the field of battle was before them. By six o'clock the attack was commenced by the ad-
Six days the

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vance of the French to the banks of the river Alma, which had to be crossed before the Russians could be attacked. That was a terrible time for the soldiers, while Lord Raglan waited, a little way from the river, for the signal agreed on between him and the French general. At last an aide-de-camp came to Lord Raglan and told him that the French had crossed the Alma, but had not established themselves sufficiently to justify us in an attack. The infantry were, therefore, ordered to lie down, and the army for a short time was quite passive, only that our artillery poured forth an unceasing fire of shell, rockets, and round shot, which ploughed through the Russians, and caused them great loss. They did not waver, however, but replied to our artillery manfully, their shot falling among our men as they lay, and carrying off legs and arms at every round. Lord Raglan at last became weary of this inactivity—his spirit was up; he looked around, and saw men at his side on whom he knew he might stake the honour and fate of Great Britain; and, anticipating the crisis of action, he gave orders for our whole line to advance. Up rose those serried masses, and passing through a fearful shower of round, case shot, and shell, they dashed into the river Alma, and "floundered" through its waters, which were literally torn into foam by the deadly hail. The signal for a general attack once being given, the soldiers rushed headlong forward, and made the passage of the Alma in double-quick time. The French immediately took possession of the large village of Alma, under the fire of the Russian batteries.

Now commenced the great struggle. Our army advanced in double columns, the front of the two divisions covered by
the light infantry and a troop of horse artillery; the second
division, under Sir De Lacy Evans, forming the right; and
the Light Division, under Sir George Brown, the left; the
first being supported by the third division, under Sir Richard
England, and the last by the first division, commanded by His
Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge.

The fourth division, under Lieutenant-General Sir George
Cathcart, and the cavalry under Major-General the Earl of
Lucan, were held in reserve to protect the left flank and rear
against large bodies of the enemy's cavalry.

As soon as we joined our allies, the whole line, extending
across the flat, open country for some five or six miles, ad-
vanced. At the distance of two miles they halted to bring up
our rear, and then the troops steadily advanced in lines like
ocean waves.

It was not long before our army came within range of the
Russian guns, the fire of which was found to be of a most for-
midable and deadly character. The divisions now "deployed"
into line and attacked the front. The order was then given
to "charge," as our troops were here exposed to the deadly
fire of the Russians without being able to do them much
damage in return. It was intended to have made a passage
through the village of Boulionk, but this attempt was defeated
by the Russians, who set fire to the place, and, by means of the
tremendous conflagration that ensued, considerably impeded
our movements.

A new order of proceeding was at once decided on, and two
regiments of the brigade commanded by Colonel Adams, with
part of the gallant Evans' division, proceeded to join their
fellows on the side of the river nearest the Russians. In spite of a tough and severe contest, the soldiers forded the stream at a spot against which the enemy directed a continual and well-directed fire. General Pennefather with his brigade, and the other regiment of Adams’s brigade, turned to the left of the blazing village, under the fire of the Russian artillery.

The river Alma presents a winding course, with high banks; the fords are very difficult, and few in number. The Russians had posted troops in the lowest part of the valley, which was covered with trees, gardens, and houses; and in the village of Bouliouk, a body of sharpshooters, well protected and armed with rifled carbines, received our soldiers with a very hot and galling fire.

In every part of the field the battle now raged with intense fury. The roar of cannon, the platoon firing of musketry, the crack of the rifle, drowned the cheering of the men and the hoarse commands of the officers. The carnage had been very great, and many a brave fellow found a grave in the waters of the Alma, while the wounded were saved with difficulty. The conduct of Lord Raglan was admirable. He was everywhere seen in the post of danger leading and encouraging the soldiery. Now came the turning point of the battle, in which Lord Raglan, by his sagacity and military skill, secured the victory to the allies. He dashed forward, followed by his staff and the enthusiastic red-coats, carrying everything before them.

Meantime the Guards and the Brigade of Highlanders were storming the heights on the left. Their line was almost
as regular as if they were marching in Hyde-park. Suddenly a tornado of round and grape rushed through from the Russians’ terrible battery, and a roar of musketry from behind thinned their front ranks by dozens. It was evident that we were only just able to contend against the Russians, favoured as they were by a great position. At this very time an immense mass of Russian infantry were seen moving down towards the battery. They halted. It was the crisis of the day. Sharp, angular, and solid, they looked as if they were cut out of the solid rock. It was beyond all doubt that if our infantry, harassed and thinned as they were, got into the battery, they would have to again encounter a formidable fire. Lord Raglan saw the difficulties of the situation. He asked if it would be possible to get a couple of guns to bear on the masses of advancing Russians. The reply was “Yes,” and an artillery officer soon brought up two guns and placed them in position. The first shot missed, but the next, and the next, and the next cut through the ranks of the enemy so cleanly, and so keenly, that a clear lane could be seen for a moment through the square. After a few rounds the columns of the square were broken; the soldiers wavered to and fro, broke, and fled over the brow of the hill, leaving behind them six or seven distinct lines of dead, lying as close as possible to each other, marking the passages of Lord Raglan’s fatal messengers. This act relieved our soldiery of a deadly incubus, and allowed them to continue their magnificent and fearful progress up the hill.

The nature of the battle ground, one of the most difficult ever mastered by English and French valour, was such that
the cavalry was unable to act, except in cutting off a few prisoners at the end of the day. But had the cavalry force been sufficiently numerous, the Russians would have never been allowed to re-form, after they had been thrown into confusion.

The battle of the Alma was over at half-past four, when the French formed on the heights and opened their fire. The Russians no longer retreated in good order. They ran away, throwing guns and knapsacks to the ground. The French Marshal tells us in his despatch, that "the bravery of Lord Raglan rivalled that of the heroes of antiquity. In the midst of cannon and musket shot he displayed a calmness that never deserted him."

Thus was fought and gained the first great battle in the Crimea—a battle to be followed by the victories of Balaklava, Inkermann, and Eupatoria.

But the night after the battle, who shall describe it? A graphic writer says:—

"I had remained in the rear of the Guards and Highlanders until they commenced crossing the vineyard, when the Russian shot, which began ploughing through the ranks, told me, in language not to be mistaken, that, as a non-combatant, it was madness my going any further. I accordingly returned to a conspicuous eminence on one side of the valley, from which I could survey the whole scene of carnage and destruction. Directly the heights were gained, I galloped across, and was shocked and sickened at the sight of the battle-field. In the commencement of an action one feels nothing but fierce excitement, which increases as the battle grows hotter. Fear of
wounds, even pity for the wounded, is seldom felt—so intense, so breathless, is the eagerness with which every feature of the great game is watched. But crossing the field afterwards is quite a different affair. The anxiety is over, the battle is won, and the reaction of the spirit has set in.

"There was indeed nothing in the scene of the late strife to soothe excited feelings, or lessen the intense disgust or sickening sensations with which one looks upon the real horrors of war. Long lines of men carrying stretchers were bearing the wounded to the rear. Their ghastly features, blood-stained clothes, and listless expression were even more painful to notice than the long, deep moans of agony which could be heard from different parts of the valley. But the worst was to come. Lower down the ground was strewn with shakoes and camp-kettles, which the men had thrown away as they advanced. When the fight commenced in the early part of the day the ground was quite dotted with Russian cannon-balls, which had ploughed up the ground in all directions. Here lay many of our dead, for the wounded had been early carried off. They were principally Guardsmen and men of the Light Division, who had been struck down by cannon shot, for at this time they were out of range of musketry. Some had their limbs torn off; some their heads; others, who had been hit full in the body by twenty-four pounders, were mere smashed and horrible masses of bloody rags. Mixed with these were artillery and ammunition horses, some torn nearly in half, while others, with their limbs mangled, were snorting and plunging in their agony, or rolling over the corpses of the soldiers near them. Close to the village, where the action was
hottest, and there was no time to bear off the wounded, our men lay pretty thick in one long line, from the ford below the bridge to the vineyard in front of the redoubt. Here all the stragglers were busily engaged in putting blankets over the men, with their great-coats under their heads, adjusting a broken limb, tying some ligature over a fast-bleeding flesh wound, or, above all, distributing water from the muddy stream the army had forded. Further on, in front of the redoubts, was the largest number of our killed and wounded. After that our casualties were few and far between; but within the redoubts, and from thence to the hills, the scene was awful. The Russian dead literally covered the ground. Within the trenches and redoubts the earth, where the corpses allowed you to see it, was slippery with blood. Never did I witness a more ghastly sight. From the place where the enemy had attempted to make their last stand, for the extent of nearly a mile, the ground was covered with their knapsacks, which they had thrown away to accelerate their flight. Fifteen or sixteen hundred of their dead strewn the hills—their wounded had most of them been carried off by the cavalry and artillery.

"At Sebastopol the fatal news was received with profound astonishment and terror. Even from that place desertion commenced. Meanwhile, there were the wounded to be provided for, as well as ammunition and stores to be landed. The preparations for the wounded and sick at Constantinople were on a very extensive scale. The Scutari barracks had been declared fit to accommodate 6,000 men, and at this moment there were 3,500 in the place—English, French, and
Russians. The Russian prisoners shared the attentions paid to our own men." Such are the horrors of war!

In this country, the news of the battle of the Alma excited the greatest enthusiasm. It was the first great battle that had been fought on European ground in our generation. Unfortunately, a false report of the taking of Sebastopol, universally believed, came tacked to it, and drew public attention from this splendid victory. Only for a moment, however. A universal feeling of thankfulness succeeded. Public demonstrations were made over the whole country; bells were rung to show the triumph of our arms over the Russians; towns were illuminated, and then we all waited with feverish anxiety for the particulars of the battle, while thousands upon thousands looked with deep and heartfelt feeling to the hour when the list of killed and wounded should be published. We know now how many homes were made desolate by the gallant deeds of that day!
SOMETHING ABOUT BIRDS.

The birds, the pretty birds, are found in all countries, and are everywhere admired. Even the fiercest among the birds of prey have something noble and graceful in their appearance that compels our respect. The Pretty Poll that sits on Mary's wrist, and feeds from her fingers; the tiny Wren, and the red-throated Robin, that twitter about our gardens, and come up to our windows in the winter-time to be fed; the bold, fierce Eagle that soars up to the sky, and makes its home among the rocks; the beautiful Swan that sails so majestically upon the lake; the great Ostrich that dwells in solitary deserts, and buries its head in the sand for fear of men; the exquisitely painted Humming-bird, that, in its home in the hot Indies, seems always on the wing in search of insect food;
the Sea-gull and Diver, that appear for ever wheeling and skimming upon the restless waves; the Swallow and the Cuckoo that come from other lands and make their homes among us in the budding spring; the gaudy Peacock, with its hundred eyes, and the fairy-like Bird of Paradise that gives its plumage for the adornment of youth and beauty; the sweet Nightingale that makes night musical with song; and the heaven-soaring Lark that woos the morn with melody, even the little brown Sparrow that builds its nest in the wall, and chirps all day upon the housetops and in the streets, would form an interesting and profitable study could we pursue it. Of some of these, however, let us have a little gossip.

Birds and men are called bipeds, because they each walk upon two legs; there, however, the resemblance ends. If we consider for a moment the structure of birds, we cannot but acknowledge the great wisdom of the Creator. Being intended for flight, they are provided with light, hollow bodies and feathered wings, by which they can cleave the blue sky, and pass from place to place—even across the wide ocean and the pathless desert—with ease and safety. Yet not only are they able to live in the air; the earth and the waters are also their home, and for every situation each particular kind of bird is fitted with proper means of living. The Eagle, with its piercing eyes and strong wings; the Swan, with its great, hollow body and its webbed feet; and the little Hummingbird, with its dazzling plumes, “thick without burden, and close as fishes’ scales,” and its sharp beak, each is admirably adapted for the mode of life assigned it, in the air, on the waters, and among the flowers.
In certain general particulars all birds agree: they are all oviparous; that is, that, instead of bringing forth their young alive, as do the mammalia, they all lay eggs, which contain the embryo, and require a certain degree of heat—either from the body of the parent brooding on its nest, or otherwise—for their growth within the shell. Next, they are all covered with feathers, called plumage, and are provided with beaks or bills, by which they are enabled to obtain food from the earth, the air, or the water, and to defend themselves from their enemies.

Take a feather; see what a beautiful instrument it is—at once light of weight and very strong. Every feather, large or small, is composed of three parts—the hollow quill, or barrel; the stiff, yet cork-like shaft; and the soft, fringe-like web, which is more or less abundant according to the nature of the bird and its natural requirements. But some birds are not intended for flight, and are therefore but ill provided with wings. The Ostrich, for instance, has but an apology for wings, and cannot fly; but then it has strong, muscular legs by which it can run almost as fast as the horse. The Duck and the Diver, and all water birds, have a quantity of down, or soft feathers, next their skin, to keep them warm, and over this a cloak of outer feathers closely placed together, and varnished over with an oily fluid to prevent the water reaching their bodies, and are thus protected as with a waterproof coat; while the birds, such as the Owl, that fly by night in search of food, have full, soft plumage that makes no whistling noise or rustling, as they prowl gently and quietly through the air. In fact, every part of the mechanism of the bird seems especially fitted for its office. Their wedge-like forms pass
easily through the air; strong muscles hold their oar-like wings to their light, buoyant bodies, and their feathery tails act like rudders in guiding their flight. Look at the Pigeon: how admirably are its boat-shaped body and small head adapted for long-continued flight! even in their migrations from country to country, they fly close together, in a way to offer the least resistance to the wind, one taking the lead, and the rest following in the form of a wedge—thus

We will now, as I have spoken of the peculiarities of birds in general, look at a few of the best known among them.

The first in the order of birds, as classed by naturalists, are the tigers and hyenas of the feathered tribes—the birds of prey. Among the most formidable of these are the Vulture, the Eagle, the Falcon, the Hawk, and the Owl.

If you look at the pictures you will easily perceive the difference between some of these. The Vultures feed on carrion (dead flesh), and are the scavengers of hot
countries. Their senses of sight and smell are very acute; they live in families, and wherever there is dead animal matter, there they congregate in flocks, and soon carry it away. They follow an army to the field of battle and clear it of its sad remains. The Vulture belongs to the foul-feeding family of birds of prey; it is that bird alluded to by our Saviour when He foretells the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans—"Wheresoever the carcase is, there shall the Eagles be gathered together."

The Eagle, the Falcon, the Hawk, and the Owl, however, hunt and kill the small animals on which they feed. The flight of the Eagle is soaring and majestic. His fatal pounce upon his prey is swift and certain, and his whole attitude expresses power and resolution. There are various kinds of Eagles—such as the Golden Eagle, which frequents the most mountainous parts of Great Britain, the continent of Europe, India, and America; the Sea Eagles, which inhabit the coasts
of the sea and of the larger rivers, and destroy fishes and waterfowl for food; the White-headed or Bald Eagle, which has its home in America, and is emblazoned on the national flag of the United States; the Harpy Eagle of South America, a most rapacious and cruel bird, which is said to sometimes carry off young children when left by themselves in the garden or the field; the Bacha Eagle, of Africa; the Brazilian Eagle, and several others.

Next in importance are the Falcons and Hawks, which, though much smaller than the Eagles, possess the same daring and ferocious character. Formed for rapid flight, they dart upon the smaller birds with great fierceness, striking them to the earth with a single blow. But Falcons are capable of being partially tamed, and were formerly used in the sport called Falconry. The game at which they were flown were herons, cranes, wild ducks, &c. Being let loose from the string which held them and the silken hood which covered their heads, they soared
above their devoted victims, and, making a sudden stoop, or dart, struck them down to the earth. The sport of falconry has been superseded by the use of firearms. Kites, Hawks, Buzzards, Owls, and Harriers, all belong to one family, and are distinguished by boldness and cruelty of disposition. Moles, rats, frogs, insects, and sometimes young rabbits and small birds, form their principal food. They hunt at night, and flit noiselessly over the fallow land, dropping down upon their unlucky prey wherever they can find them. In spite of their sometimes carrying off a young leveret, they may be considered as true farmer’s friends, in keeping down the breed of vermin so injurious to his crops and fields. God has made no creature without a purpose.

Next let us look at some of the smaller and prettier descriptions of Birds.

In the early Spring the voice of the Cuckoo is heard in the fields; and as the farmer goes across the daisy-covered meadow
or along the shady lane, bright with wild flowers in the hedges, he hears the voice of this bird like a welcome to fine weather

Cuckoo:

Blooming along the lea
Young flowers have grown
Green leaves bedeck the tree
Newly put on;
Wild flowers and daisies gay
Bloom in each shady way,
Birds sing on every spray—
Winter has gone!

The Cuckoo is oftener heard than seen. It is a migratory bird, that comes to us from far over sea in the early Spring and leaves us in July. It is in shape something like the Magpie, and is of a greyish colour, with a sharp beak and round, prominent nostrils. The most singular circumstance connected
with it is the well-known fact that it deposits its eggs in the nests of other birds, leaving the care and nurture of its young ones to strangers! One egg only is placed in a nest. But the Cuckoo is not really such a bad mother as it appears, for it always chooses the nest of some insect-feeding bird—such as the Hedge-Sparrow, the Pipet, the Garden-Warbler, or the Water-Wagtail—in which to drop its egg: for it knows, by a sort of instinct, that no seed-eating bird could supply its chick with the kind of food proper for its support. To supply the wants of the little stranger the foster-parent labours hard, and even neglects its own young. As soon as the little Cuckoo is fledged it flies away from its nurse and goes in search of food for itself. But all the other birds of the grove seem to consider the little Cuckoo as an enemy, and never fail to insult it by cries and pursuit.

At its first appearance in our country the Cuckoo is silent, but soon it begins its peculiar and pleasant call, which is an invitation from the male to the female. Then the courtship begins; but no sooner is the egg laid by the mother and left in the nest of some other bird, than the pair take their departure for another country. The Cuckoo is a true traveller, though to what country it goes when it leaves England is not certainly known. There are many kinds of Cuckoo; and in the forests of Brazil there is a bird which is nothing like its gentle namesake, for, instead of a pleasant note, it has a harsh, screaming voice which repels rather than invites attention.

The Magpie belongs to the Crow family, and is an elegant and sweet-singing bird. It is found in many parts of the world, though the English bird is a fair specimen of the whole
tribe. Its party-coloured plumage—bright burnished black and pure white—with its long, flowing tail, lively note, animated look, and restless, prying habit, are well known in every park and wood in the country. It is fond of the society of man, and may be found in clumps of trees and tall bushy hedges; but, although a great favourite, the Magpie is a great poacher, and is very often found destroying the eggs and even the young of pheasants, partridges, and small birds of all kinds, sometimes even attacking the ducklings of the farmyard and chickens of the field. In captivity the Magpie is very amusing, and, in spite of his petty pilfering habits, no one can notice his dark eye, full of sly meaning, his inquisitive but familiar look, or hear his pretty efforts at mimicry, without feeling an interest in him.

Just before pairing, flocks of Magpies assemble in some retired field and appear to consult together. If disturbed, they quickly disperse with a loud clattering noise, but soon come together again. Then, I presume, they make love and perform their marriage service, for after that they live in pairs
and bring up their families respectably in nests placed as high up in the tallest trees as they can safely be. And the nest of the Magpie is not like the wild pigeon’s, a few sticks crossed, but a good, substantial dwelling made of sticks and twigs tightly interwoven with weed and grass. The mother lays six or eight eggs, which are pretty little things of a greenish white spotted with brown. It is a dangerous thing for Tom or Harry to climb a tree for a Magpie’s nest.

The sweetest songster of the grove is a plain, sober-coloured bird, but its melody is heard in many countries besides our own. In France, Italy, Germany, Palestine, and Egypt, its song is prized by all lovers of solitude and the beautiful in nature. Like the Cuckoo, the wakeful bird that sings at night is a traveller, and only visits our shores for a few months in the summer. In the beginning of the “merry month of May” it may be heard in the grove and from the thickset hedge between the fields in the evening, and towards the middle of August it departs. But, however fond of solitude and darkness this little bird may be, it nearly always makes its home near inhabited houses, as if anxious to charm the ears of men with its melodious voice.
The Nightingale's fame has been sung by poets of nearly every country and time, and the bird itself has always been a favourite. In confinement it pines away and dies, and its sweet song of liberty becomes a mere prisoner’s wail for sympathy and freedom.

Sweet Nightingale! oh, quit thy haunt
    The distant groves among,
And round my friendly cottage haunt
    Thy richly plaintive song.
Come, gentle warbler, hither fly,
    And shun the noon-day heat;
My shrubs a cooling shade supply,
    My trees a safe retreat.

Hither the vocal Thrush repairs,
    Secure the Linnet sings,
The Goldfinch dreads no slimy snares
    To clog her painted wings.
No schoolboy rude to mischief prone
    Here shows his ruddy face,
Or twangs his bow or hurls a stone
    In this sequestered place.

The Nightingale is rather choice in the locality he chooses for his residence in England. In the midland counties he is very scarce, and in Devonshire and Cornwall he is almost unknown. But wherever he makes his stay he charms us with his sweetly plaintive song. The male bird is the first to arrive in this country, but he is soon after joined by his mate. They then begin to make love and sing joyfully together, and soon after build their artfully-contrived nest of leaves and
wool in the midst of some thick bush or hedge. The female then lays four or five greenish-brown little eggs, and as soon as the young ones can fly they take their departure for the winter. The Nightingale is an insect-feeder, and is of great use in destroying a vast number of grubs and troublesome flies. In the same family of birds are found some of our sweetest songsters, such as the Blackcap, the Whitethroat, and the Garden-Warbler, and many foreign species.

The last bird in my list is the Kingfisher. These birds prey upon fish, which they take by darting arrow-like into the water, and seizing transversely with their sharp and strong beaks. Hence for the most part is their plumage burnished with a metallic surface, and resplendent with the most brilliant colours. Lonely tenants of the banks of secluded streams and rivers, they spend the day in flying up and down the stream, or at rest on some overhanging branch, intently watching for their prey.

The species are very numerous, and are spread throughout every part of the world; they agree so closely in general
habits that the description of our native species, the Common Kingfisher, will suffice for all. In size it is somewhat less than the Blackbird, with a long sharp bill and a bright eye. It builds its nest on the banks of streams. On all our streams, and especially those which flow through fertile meads, and abound in fish, may this richly coloured but voracious bird be met with, glancing backwards and forwards like a meteor, dazzling by the brilliancy of its hues as they flash in the sun. Often may it be seen poising itself at a moderate degree of elevation over the water, and then darting with astonishing rapidity and suddenness upon some unwary trout or minnow, deep beneath the surface, but which is seldom missed by its assailant; so impetuous is the plunge, and so aided is the bird, in passing through the water, by its acutely wedge-shaped contour of body, and by its burnished plumage. Its ordinary way, however, of watching for its victims is for it to sit with dogged patience on a branch or tree, or rocky projection overhanging the stream, whence in silence and alone it watches every occurrence in the watery element below. Should its prey appear within reach, down it descends instantaneously like a shot, the crystal water scarcely bubbling with the plunge; the next moment it rises up bearing its prey in its beak, and returns to its resting-place again. The bird now commences the destruction of its captive; without losing its hold, it passes the fish between its mandibles till it has it grasped fairly by the tail, and then ends its struggles by beating its head against the branch on which it sits; it next reverses its position and swallows it. The burnished feathers of this class of birds throw off the water and prevent their bodies from becoming
SOMETHING ABOUT BIRDS.

wet when they make their plunge. There are many foreign varieties of this elegant bird.

I could tell you much more about the pretty birds—about the numerous tribes of gaily-coloured Honey-eaters of Australia, the painted Parroquets of the West Indies, the Love-birds of China and the Indian Archipelago, the gorgeous Ibis of the Nile, and the numerous tribes which people the forests of the tropics; but these, beautiful though they are, possess no song. Instead of making the woods vocal with melody, their cries and shrieks startle the echoes with discordant noises. Unlike the song-birds of our own dear country, they appear incapable of association with mankind. Some few, however, of the smaller kinds of foreign birds—such as the little red-beaked Love-birds and others—look pretty in our aviaries, and associate with our Canaries and Grosbeaks as easily as if no difference of relationship existed between them—thereby setting us a good example of behaviour.

The study of birds is called Ornithology, and is highly interesting. Whoever examines the works of the Great Creator will find in the feathered tribes an endless source of interest and amusement.

Let then this league between us made
Our mutual interests guard;
Ours be the gift of fruit and shade,
Your songs be our reward.

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MORE ABOUT THE SEA.

Among the phenomena which have long puzzled the curious is that of the luminous appearance often observed on the sea. Sometimes the sea for miles is covered with a sort of phosphorescent light, which is supposed to be caused by the decayed bodies or the fry of thousands of small fishes.

M. Dangelet, a French astronomer, in sailing into the bay of Antongil, in the island of Madagascar, observed a prodigious quantity of fry, which covered the surface of the sea for the extent of more than a mile, and which he, at first, on account of its colour, mistook for a bank of sand. This immense accumulation of spawn or fry exhaled a disagreeable odour; and it had been remarked that the sea had, for some days before, been covered with bright streaks of various colours, which gave to it an appearance
of coast. A calm, sleepy manner prevailed. 

Not a breeze was felt, and the scene beneath was as still as it could be. 

He sat at length under a tall palm tree, and he observed all that passed as he sat. 

In the distance, a small boat was seen, 

to his touch like a sort of echo, 

sails covered with entire lack of 

able modulus. 

During the same period the waves, 

bristled with rich ruby light, 

often observed in small 

as the waves rose into 

and the surface of 

and the tide ebbed 

the day of creation. 

Standing on the shore, 

the deep mysteries 

ripple against the 

thoughts arise of the power 

Ah! what pleasant 

As I gazed upon the sea, 

All the old romance 

All my dreams come 

Sails of silk, and ropes 

Such as given to 

And the singing of the 

And the answer to
of great splendour. The same accurate observer, perceiving
the sea remarkably luminous in the road of the Cape of Good
Hope, during a perfect calm, remarked that the oars of the
canoes produced a whitish and pearly kind of lustre. When
he took in his hand the water, which contained phosphorus,
he discerned in it, for some minutes, globules of light as large
as the heads of pins. On pressing these globules, they appeared
to his touch like a soft and thin pulp; and some days after the
sea was covered with entire banks of small fishes, in innumer-
able multitudes.

During the sunsets, which make the sea on our coasts
brilliant with rich ruby light, these luminous appearances are
often observed in small patches upon its surface; but as soon
as the waves rise into motion, these bright spots disappear,
and the surface of the ocean assumes its usual appearance,
and the tide ebbs and flows, as it has never ceased to do from
the day of creation.

Standing on the shores of the mighty sea, and listening to
the deep mysterious murmur of its ceaseless waves, as they
ripple against the sand and shells of the rugged coast, what
thoughts arise of the power and greatness of my God:

Ah! what pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the sea!
All the old romantic legends,
All my dreams come back to me.

Sails of silk and ropes of sendal,
Such as gleam in ancient lore;
And the singing of the sailors,
And the answer from the shore,
MORE ABOUT THE SEA.

Till my soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Send a thrilling pulse through me!

But not always do the waves lie in calm brightness and rippling beauty: sometimes they rise tumultuously, and heave and swell, till, with the wind roaring and the lightning flashing, the heart of the mother sinks within her as she thinks of her dear boy at sea!

Cold blows the blast, and down comes the storm in its fury, and the vessel struggles with the mighty waves—now rising high up in the air, now sinking deep into the dark abyss—again shuddering and shivering like a panting war-horse beneath the weight of the elements’ fierce anger. And fast through the dark midnight she drifts—a wreck upon the heaving billows! Masts and yards, and sails and shrouds, are cast overboard, one by one—anything to save the lives of the devoted crew. And the life-boat is lowered, and a brave but silent company prepare to leave the ship which has been their home for months. One lingers in the tossing vessel while a spark of hope remains, and is the last to leave it: it is the captain of that brave bark. And some, frenzied with despair, cast themselves upon the wild waves with only a plank or spar for their support, while others lash themselves to the wreck, trusting rather to the chances of discovery by some passing ship than to give themselves to the treacherous waves in an open boat. Oh, what a fearful thing is a storm at sea! and when we think how many brave fellows are every day exposed to these dangers; how fearlessly they go about their proper
business in the vessel, never shrinking or refusing to obey the orders of their superiors; how simple and true-hearted they remain to each other; and how very poorly they are paid for all this exposure of life and limb in their country's service, we ought to bless God who has given such brave defenders to our beloved country, and enabled us to say of the flag of Old England, that it has

——"braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze!"
EXCEPT for a few days, Queen Victoria has not resided at Anne’s favourite palace at Kensington since her accession to the throne. In her early days, the then little Princess, clad so simply that it is wonderful the people did not avail themselves of the example, and dress their little darlings less tawdrily, might be seen, of a bright morning, in the enclosure in front of the palace with her mother at her side. On one of these occasions I remember seeing a footman, after due instruction, bringing out to the lively daughter of the Duke of Kent, a doll most splendidly attired—all gold without, and sawdust within. The brilliant effigy, however, had no other effect upon the little Princess but to put her in a passion. She stamped her little foot and shook her lustrous curls, and it was evident that the liveried Mercury had unwittingly disobeyed her bidding. He disappeared for a minute or two, but soon returned, bearing with him a very torso of a doll. A marine-store dealer would not have hung up such an
image over his door. But the deformed effigy really seemed to be the loadstone of the youthful affections of the Princess. She seized it with frantic delight, skipped with it over the grass, gambolled with it, laughed over it, and finally, in the very exuberance of her joy, thrust it so suddenly up to the face of a short old lady, who was contemplating the scene, that the stranger started back and knew not well what to make of it. Thenceupon the Duchess of Kent came up, and something like an apology appeared to be offered by the Princess; but this was done with such a shower of saucy “curtsies”—so droll, so rapid, so “audacious,” and so full of hearty, innocent, uncontrollable fun, that Duchess, Princess, old lady, and the few spectators of the scene, broke into as much laughter as good breeding would permit; and some of them, no doubt, “exclaimed mentally,” as well-bred people do in novels, that Victoria was a right Royal English girl, who had really a heart and a will of her own, and may God bless both!
BUFFALO HUNTING IN THE FAR WEST.

ERY few of my young readers there are, I presume, who have not seen the Buffaloes in the Zoological Gardens, or at least have not seen pictures of those animals. The Buffalo is, in fact, only a species of wild bull. It is an inhabitant of India and other parts of Asia, though several kinds of wild bulls are found in different parts of Europe, and a herd or two even now exist in our own country. In India the Buffalo is used to draw carriages and work at the plough. It is an ugly, rough-haired animal, with wild-looking eyes, shaggy mane, long thick tail, and a great hump upon its shoulders. Its flesh is eaten by the natives, but the hump only is esteemed good eating by Europeans.

The Buffaloes of North America are distantly related to the Asiatic animals, and should more properly be called Bisons. Large herds of them exist in the uncultivated wastes of the Far West, called prairies, where a few Indian tribes yet roam,
undisturbed by the interference, and uninjured by the dreadful "Fire-water," of the white man.

Mr. Catlin, the American traveller, gives us several interesting pictures of the Indian tribes inhabiting that vast tract of prairie land known as the valley of the Mississippi. Here, scattered over thousands of miles of country, as yet but thinly populated by the colonists of America and the emigrants of Europe, the Indians live in peaceful contentment, depending on the produce of the chase and thin little patches of cultivated ground for a poor subsistence. Amid these solitary wildernesses of nature the Buffaloes congregate in vast countless herds, the wild sheep crop the scanty herbage, the fleet-bounding antelopes sport and graze, and the grisly bear makes his home, and frowns on the approach of the wily Indian with his poisoned arrows. Far removed from the haunts of civilized man, the North American Indians wander freely to and fro, and hold their solemn "palavers" beneath the shade of the giant trees of the forest.

An exciting thing must be a Buffalo hunt in the Far West. These grim-visaged monsters, with their long, shaggy black manes, their bloodshot eyes, and their sharp horns, graze in immense herds, and often, when in good condition, weigh as much as two thousand pounds each.

When a Buffalo hunt is determined on, the Indians assemble, some on horseback and some on foot, armed with guns and bows and arrows, and go quietly forth into the prairie till a herd of these huge animals is discovered. Each person then strips himself of all useless parts of his dress, while their horses, trained to this kind of chase, show themselves
eager for the wild encounter. At a given signal, a rush is made into the centre of the vast groups of wild Buffaloes, and amid the dust and trampling of hoofs, their riders deal death on all sides from their bows and guns, and scores of victims fall snorting and panting to the earth. Nothing can be conceived more horrible or frightful than the look of the dying Buffalo, when, wounded and swelling with rage, he lies foaming on the ground, while the Indian hunter goes fearlessly forward and completes his work of destruction with his huge hunting-knife. With bloodshot eyes and raging, blood-stained nostrils he lies upon the ground, his mane streaming wildly and his great mouth open ready to encounter his dauntless foe. But the contest does not last long; with a sudden spring the Indian reaches his antagonist, and in another instant plunges his knife into the bull’s side, and the fierce contest is over.

Meanwhile, guns flash and arrows fly through the air, and the alarmed herd, wounded and raging with foam, go thundering over the plain with bristling manes and open mouths, eager to escape the unequal contest. Sometimes as many as a hundred victims are left bleeding on the ground after such a fight as this.

Of course there is great danger in these fierce Buffalo hunts, and many a wounded and trampled Indian lies upon the sward, breathing hard and still undismayed from the excitement of the chase. But sometimes these sons of the forest adopt a less hazardous means of destroying their gaunt victims. Disguised in wolf-skins, a couple of Indians creep close up to the herd, who look suspiciously at their strange visitants. Selecting
BUFFALO HUNTING IN THE FAR WEST.
a favourable moment, the Indian raises his bow and presently brings down his game, pierced to the heart with a cruel arrow: and so scores of victims are sometimes slain in the wide prairies.

The Indians kill vast numbers of these animals in the summer time, when, overcome by the heat of the weather, they lie basking in the sun by the side of the little streams or graze in the long grass. Their skins are sold to the American dealers, who find a ready market for them in the snow-covered and ice-bound towns and homesteads of Canada.

In the winter time, when the snow is deep on the ground, the Indians follow the Buffalo tracks till they come to their hiding places. There, with wide slides on their feet to prevent them sinking in the snow, they attack the poor animals with their bows and arrows. The wounded Buffaloes, unable to escape, flounder about in the snow till they die, when the Indians strip them of their skins and take part of their flesh as food. The Buffalo-robies worn in the United States are made from the skins of animals taken in the winter time, when the fur is thickest and warmest.

But the number of both Buffaloes and Indians is fast decreasing. The fire-water of the whites and the advance of emigrants into the wilderness, have the effect of driving the native inhabitants of the soil further and further back into the primeval forests, till at last they will become totally extinct and unknown.
THE POWER OF LOVE.

KISS me, my pretty baby,
    My little fair-haired boy,
Whose smile so bright and beaming
    Is the sunshine to our joy.

How graceful every motion
    Of thy pretty hands at play,
With the flowers upon the carpet
    And thy toys all thrown away.

How we love to build the castles
    You delight to overthrow,
The towers and mimic palaces
    You level at a blow.

Oh, were you heir-apparent,
    Expectant to a crown,
No more devoted homage
    Could unto you be shown.
Thou art a little tyrant,  
We see it very plain;  
And yet there's not a rebel  
In all thy wide domain.

Whatever be the mischief  
Thy little hands may do,  
Tell mother "it was baby,"  
And she laughs at mischief too.

Are we ever rudely playing  
When you wish to go to sleep,  
We hush the gentle whisper,  
And breathless silence keep.

'Tis not by wand of fairy,  
Or beauty's magic spell:  
Pray what can be the sceptre,  
With which he rules so well?

Oh 'tis one which those far wiser,  
I often wish would hold,  
For it will turn to softness  
The heart of sternest mould.

In the smile so sweetly playing  
Upon his dimpled cheek—  
In the eye so brightly beaming,  
Is the love he cannot speak.
'Tis said the wild beasts listened
   To Orpheus' magic lyre,
And that music charmed their senses
   And subdued their savage fire—

But 'tis Love that bears the sceptre
   That rules the hearts of men—
Calms the sternest, boldest spirits—
   Makes them children once again.
ARCHERY.

ARCHERY was once, before the introduction of fire-arms, a famous sport in this and other countries. Our ancestors used the bow and arrow both in war and peace. In their encounters with their Norman invaders, Archery came largely into use, and in their more peaceful amusements, their skill in hitting a mark was very remarkable. It appears that the bow was known to the Danes and Anglo-Saxons, for we are told that Edmund, king of the East-Angles, was killed in a foray by a Danish arrow; and that this weapon was common among the Normans is seen by the death of William Rufus, the son of the Conqueror, by a chance hit from the arrow of Walter Tyrrel, while engaged in his favourite sport of hunting; and Richard of the Lion Heart received his death wound before the walls of Chaluz, in France, in 1199.
Pictures in old books show us how, with lance-bow and cross-bow, our ancestors amused themselves; and so dexterous were they, that they were able to bring down a bird on the wing or a hare in the wood. In war too, the bow and arrow was a very formidable weapon, and we are told that, in 1346, there were three thousand bowmen at the famous battle of Cressy. Indeed, there is little doubt but that the men of that time obtained, by great practice, complete mastery over the bow and arrow. Shooting at a butt or target was a very celebrated sport, and the histories of the past are full of stories of the famous deeds performed by the strong men who preceded the bold Robin Hood and his merrie men in the forest of Sherwood.

In the reign of Good Queen Bess the sport of Archery
was much practised; and Chaucer, in his description of the Squire’s Yeoman, tells us—

"He was clad in a coat and hood of green;
A sheaf of peacock-arrows bright and keen,
Under his belt he bare full thriftily.
Well could he dress his tackle yeomanly.
His arrows drooped not with feathers low,
And in hand he bore a mighty bow."

Among the requisites of a good Archer, we are told, were a good sight steadily directed to the mark; a proper judgment to determine the distance of the ground; and he ought also to know how to take advantage of a side wind, and to be acquainted with the compass his arrows would require in their flight. The Archer should also be a strong man, of good courage, prudence, and temper—qualities necessary for the perfect accomplishment of almost any art. The Cornishmen are spoken of as good marksmen, "well-skilled in near and far shooting." On a May-day morning in the old time, the Archers used to assemble in great numbers to shoot at a mark; and prizes were used to be given to the best marksman. Charles the First is said to have been skilful with the bow, and to him was dedicated the book called the "Bowman’s Glory;" and of King Henry the Seventh, it is said in an old poem—

"See where he shooteth at the butt,
And with him are lords three;
He weareth a gown of velvet black,
And is coated above the knee."

With the introduction of fire-arms, however, the glory of the Archer departed.
LET us talk now about Fishes. They all belong, as I told you, to the first of the four great classes of animals, the vertebrated; that is, animals possessing a backbone. There are two kinds of fishes—those which bring forth their young alive and those which produce them by spawn, which is hatched by the heat of the water. The cetaceous and cartilaginous kinds—that is, those which nurse their young, like the whale, and those whose bones resemble cartilage or gristle, like the skate and thornback—are but small in number compared with the vast host of fishes that inhabit the great deep.

The shape of all fishes partakes more or less of that boat-like character—sharp at each end and gradually becoming larger in the centre—which seems necessary to enable them to move through the water; and when we build a ship that is intended to sail very fast, we try to imitate the shape of a fish. The fins of the fishes not only enable them to poise or steady themselves in the water, but they act as oars in urging them forward, while their tails act as rudders and guide them
in their course. The tail of a fish also serves, with the fins, to propel it through the waves; and this peculiarity has been imitated by man in the construction of the screw of the steamboat, which, by its undulatory movement, sends the waves behind, and so urges the vessel onward. Fishes of all kinds live upon each other—the larger kinds devouring the smaller, and the smaller eating the spawn that floats on the surface of the water.

The age which fishes attain has never been properly discovered, though it is said, that by an examination of the scales of some kinds through a microscope, certain minute rings are observed, which are added year by year, as the rings of woody fibre are added to the tree. Buffon, the great naturalist, says that he examined the scales of a carp, which, according to this method of reckoning, could not have been less than a hundred years old. But the voracity of all fishes tends to keep down their numbers. They are all furnished with teeth or some other contrivance which answers the same purpose. They seem almost insensible to pain, and to possess no sense in so exquisite a degree as other creatures. Their eyes are flat, and they can probably only distinguish light and objects sufficiently well to avoid each other, and to seize their bait or prey. They have probably little or no sense of hearing, and seem, indeed, to pass their lives in a very uniform sort of way; though, to watch some of them dart and flash in the sunlight, we cannot but conclude that God has given them the faculty of enjoying themselves very much.

With these few words of explanation we will now, my dear children, consider
THE WHALE.

The Whale is the largest kind of fish now living. There are several sorts of Whales, and they all inhabit the cold seas about the poles. As I told you, the Whale brings forth its little one alive, and nurses it till it is strong enough to go alone. Instead of teeth the Whale is furnished with a curious apparatus of horny fringe which hangs from the upper jaw, and serves as a sort of net by which it catches the small fish on which it feeds. Its throat is so narrow that a haddock would choke it, though its mouth is large enough to hold a boat load of people. As it floats on the surface it catches the spawn of other fishes, and spouts the water it receives in its mouth through a hole just over its head. The Whale fisher’s trade is a very dangerous one, as by a single
fling of its tail the animal is able to overturn a large boat; but the whalers are careful, as soon as they have thrown their darts, to get away as quickly as they can. The Whale then dives into the deep, but soon reappears on the surface to breathe, when it again receives the harpoon of the sailors in its broad back. When at last it is rendered helpless by the loss of blood, the Whale fishers tow it to the side of their ship and cut it up. The blubber is then boiled for oil, which is put into barrels and brought home for sale. Only one kind, the Spermaceti Whale, is worth catching for its oil.

The fringe that I told you of in the mouth of the Whale, is known in commerce by the name of whalebone, and is that dark elastic substance which is used in ladies’ dresses. The cutting and splitting of whalebone is a regular trade, and many peculiar tools are used in it.

The Whale swimming in the water is a fine sight. With the sun shining on his broad velvety back, and the waves breaking over him like glittering flakes of silver; the water spouting from his forehead like a fountain, and his swift passage through the sea leaving a line of light behind, few more splendid spectacles can be conceived. Does it not seem a pity that the poor things cannot be left in peace in their wide, wide homes?
THE SHARK.

ONE of the most dangerous and sanguinary monsters of the deep is the mighty Shark. He inhabits the seas of nearly all hot countries, and is the terror of the sailors wherever he appears. With his great ugly mouth filled with white ravenous-looking teeth, he follows the ships through the smooth seas, waiting till something is thrown out to him; and it is said that he will swim beside a vessel containing a corpse for days and weeks together.

I remember hearing a story of a poor Indian who was paddling his canoe in one of the bays of India, when a Shark swam close beside him, watching his opportunity of making his deadly dart. The poor Indian paddled away as fast as he could, making a great noise and splashing to frighten the
gaunt monster. But it was in vain; for presently the Shark drove his head against the frail bark, overturned it in an instant, and soon the water was red with the blood of the poor Indian.

The Shark belongs to the cartilaginous kind of fishes, and sometimes measures sixteen feet in length.

On the coasts of South America and various parts of India, Sharks are found in great numbers, so that it is dangerous to bathe except in very shallow water where the monsters cannot follow the swimmers. Notwithstanding the danger, however, many of the natives carry a knife with them into the water when they take a bathe; and, when a Shark appears, boldly attack it. It is said that the Shark avoids the contest when the swimmer boldly approaches it; but I think the statement doubtful. It is certain, however, that while a white man would be instantly attacked and killed by the Sharks, the native blacks swim about with comparative indifference to the presence of these voracious sea-wolves.
THE SWORD FISH

...another of the great sea-monsters that inhabit the warm seas of the tropics. It is occasionally found also in the Mediterranean. It is sometimes fifteen feet long, and weighs more than two hundred pounds. The body is long and round, and is furnished with two great fins, one on the back and the other below; with a wide forked tail. Its skin is smooth and shiny, which enables it to glide through the water with great swiftness. But the most peculiar part of this fish is the long tapering snout from which it derives its name. This snout or sword is strong and bony, and is furnished with...
twenty-seven sharp teeth. It is about five feet long, and is used as a means of defence and offence. Stories are told about deadly battles between the Whale and Sword Fish, but I am not aware that any man ever saw one. Its flesh is eaten by the natives of some countries, and is said to resemble that of the sturgeon. Wherever the Sword Fish appears the smaller tribes of fishes swim away alarmed as quickly as they can.

And here I may as well tell you that the great monsters of both land and sea are comparatively few in number, and inhabit only certain parts of the earth, while the smaller animals and fishes multiply quickly, and are found in thousands in every forest, and sea, and wood, and river. The Whale and the Shark have but one little one at a time, and the young of the Elephant and the Lion are a long while in coming to maturity; but the poor little herring has a family that is countless—as you may see by looking at the roe of one, every egg of which is the germ of a young fish—and the rabbit breeds twelve times a-year, and has twelve at a birth! Surely God's goodness and wisdom is seen in all this.
A STORY is told of a young sailor who came home and informed his mother that, in the Mediterranean Sea, he had seen scores of flying fish soaring up above the water to avoid the attacks of the dolphins; that they were about as large as salmon-trout, and that as long as their wings were wet they could remain in the air. The mother laughed at the story, and said that she was too old to believe that. No, no, indeed, she was not going to be deceived that way. But when the son told her that in the Red Sea, they dragged the bottom with the anchor and brought up one of the wheels of
Pharaoh's carriage, that was lost when the Egyptians followed the children of Israel, the old woman exclaimed—"Ah! that I can believe. How long it must have lain there, to be sure!"

The old lady would not believe that which was really true, for her son's description of the Flying Fish was correct in every particular; but when she heard a silly fable she gave it credence at once.

Thus you see how our reason is sometimes made the victim of our imagination. How many of us are like the old lady!
TURKEY AND THE TURKS.

THE events of the last few years have brought the Turks into prominent notice. You will, therefore, like to know something about this singular people, and the country they inhabit. As you will read of Turkey and the Turks in larger and more important books when you grow older, I shall not attempt to do more than tell you something of their present condition, manners, and habits.

The empire of Turkey, as we know it in modern times, extends over parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. If you take your map and trace the places I mention, you will soon comprehend its extent and situation. In Europe they have dominion over parts of Moldavia, Wallachia, Bulgaria, Servia, Bosnia, Croatia and Dalmatia, Romania, Macedonia, Albania, Thessaly, and a portion of the Morea. In Asia the Turks hold nominal sway over Syria, Armenia, Kurdistan, Natolia, and several adjacent states; while in Africa, the Grand Sultan governs Egypt, part of Nubia and Diarbekir, by means of
viceroys, and has under his protection the states of Tunis and Tripoli, and that portion of Algiers not included in the French colony called Algeria. Thus you see that the Turks have either real or nominal possession of some of the fairest parts of the world, including that interesting tract known as the Holy Land. The protectorate of the Emperor of Russia over the Greek Christians and Syria was made the pretext for the invasion of Turkey, and ultimately led to the war between Russia and the Western Allies—England, France, and Sardinia—who have come to the assistance of the Sultan.

The capital of all Turkey is Constantinople, one of the largest cities of Europe. It is situated between the Black Sea and the Archipelago, on the world-known Strait of Constantinople, the Bosphorus. Before the Turks became possessors of the East, Constantinople was called Byzantium, but its name was changed by Constantine the Great, who made it the seat of the Roman Empire in the east. The number of houses in this city is prodigious; but, in general, they are mean, and all of them constructed of wood, and the roofs covered with hollow tiles. The public edifices alone are built of masonry, in a very solid manner. The inhabitants are half Turks, two-thirds of the other half Greeks and Armenians, and the rest Jews and Franks. There are a great number of ancient monuments still remaining, particularly the superb temple of Saint Sophia, built in the sixth century, which is converted into a mosque, and will contain 100,000 persons conveniently. The mosque of Sultan Solyman may fairly vie with the ancient St. Sophia; and that of Sultan Achmet is, without exception, the finest building the Turks ever raised. There
is a market for slaves of both sexes, and the Jews are the principal merchants who bring them for sale. No foreigner is allowed to reside in the city itself, not even the minister of a friendly nation.Constantinople is surrounded by walls of freestone, and flanked by 478 towers; it has also twenty gates, six on the land side, and seven each toward the harbour and the sea.

The Turks are generally robust, well-shaped, and of a good mien. They are grave, sedate, and passive; but, when agitated by passion, they are furious, raging, and ungovernable; full of dissimulation, suspicious, and vindictive beyond conception; in matters of religion, tenacious, superstitious, and morose. They shave their heads, but wear long beards, except those in the seraglio and military men. The turban worn by the men is white, and never put off but when they sleep; and their clothes are long and full. They sit, eat, and sleep, on the floor, on cushions, mattresses, and carpets. Their principal food is rice; and the frugal repast is followed by fruit and cold water, which are succeeded by hot coffee and pipes with tobacco. With opium they procure what they call a kief, or placid intoxication. Chess and draughts are favourite games with the Turks; and the coffeehouses and baths furnish other sources of amusement. Their active diversions consist in shooting at a mark and tilting with darts, at which they are very expert; and some of high rank are fond of hunting. The wealthy Turks have several wives, but the fair sex are kept under a rigorous confinement. The Turks believe in one God, and that his great prophet is Mohammed. Drinking wine is prohibited by this pro-
phet in the Koran; and instead of it, they generally use sherbet, a liquor made of honey, spices, and the juice of fruits. The morals of the Asiatic Turks are said to be of a higher and nobler character than those of the Europeans. The Turks expend great sums on caravansaries and fountains, for the refreshment of travellers and labourers, and are charitable toward strangers, let their religion be what it will; and no nation suffers adversity with greater patience than they. The Greeks, who compose a large portion of the inhabitants of Turkey in Europe (the ancient Greece), profess the Christian religion; they are in stature about the middle size, strong and well made. They are gay, witty, and crafty; exercise various trades, and apply to maritime affairs. The Emperor of Turkey, or grand seignior, is absolute master of the goods and lives of his subjects, insomuch that they are little better than slaves. The grand vizier is the chief next the emperor; but it is a dangerous place.

The Turks have always very numerous armies on foot, the chief of which were, till within a short time past, the janizaries, but they have been disbanded, and regular troops raised. Their navy, which is laid up at Constantinople, used to consist of about forty large ships; but, in time of war, auxiliary ships are received from Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. In general, the Turks are an indolent race, and disinclined to industry and trade. They content themselves with manufacturing cottons, stuffs, carpets, leather, and soap; and the most valuable of their commodities, such as silk, a variety of drugs, and dyeing stuffs, are generally exported without giving them much additional value by their labour.
plot in the Koor, and in some of it, they generally make shelter of it in times of hunger, when they have no fruits. On two of the Ask a few more and so of the hill were her winter quarters. The Ask is a mountainous area and some of its peaks are covered with snow. The presence of snow made the Ask a shelter for the nomadic tribes when the weather was harsh.

The Ask is also a place where the meat market is held. The meat is brought from the nomadic tribes and sold to the local population. The meat is usually sold fresh, but sometimes it is sold frozen. The market is open from morning to evening, and the meat is sold by weight.

The Ask is also a place where the nomadic tribes come to sell their goods. They bring their goods to the market and sell them to the local population. The goods are usually made of cloth, and the local population buys them for their daily use. The market is open from morning to evening, and the goods are sold by weight.
CUSTOMS OF THE TURKS.

“What a romantic tale of love that drooping girl might then be pouring forth for transcription to some insensible swain!”
GLASS-MAKING.

The Art of Glass-Making is one of the most useful that we possess. Like many other of the great discoveries which have proved of service to man, the manufacture of glass from sand and soda was the result of accident. The story goes, as told by Pliny, the Roman historian, that a company of mariners who had a cargo of nitrum (probably soda or salt) on board, landed on the banks of a river in Palestine, and finding no stones to rest their pots on when they wished to prepare their dinner, took some pieces of the nitrum, and so placing them in a little heap, made a fire on the sand. The nitrum being fused or melted by the heat with the sand, a clear transparent stream of molten glass ran from beneath the pot. Thus was
the union of sand, soda, and chalk found to produce a new substance—Glass.

"It might dispose us to a kinder regard for the labours of one another," writes Dr. Johnson, "if we were to consider from what unpromising beginnings the most useful productions of art have probably arisen. Who, when he first saw the sand or ashes, by a casual intenseness of heat melted into a metallic form, rugged with excrescences and clouded with disparities, would have imagined that in this shapeless mass lay concealed so many conveniences of life as would, in time, constitute a great part of the happiness of mankind?"

The manufacture of glass soon became well known, and the production of drinking vessels and other domestic utensils in glass was carried to great perfection by the Venetians, the Bohemians, and other nations. It appears that the making of glass was known to the ancients, for we find glass ornaments and vases among the ruins of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Egypt; and there is little doubt that the production of articles in glass has been known in China and India for many centuries.

You may ask—What is glass? Well, then, glass is a transparent, solid, homogeneous substance, more or less brittle; and is formed by the fusion of siliceous and alkaline substances. I will explain the meaning of the terms I have used: A "homogeneous" substance is one that is of the same nature throughout; "fusion" is the capability of being melted by heat; "siliceous" is flint-like, from the word "silex," flint; and an "alkaline" means the fixed salt of any natural body. Flint, sand, quartz, rock, crystal, &c., are siliceous substances;
and soda is a fixed salt, or alkaline. These earths being melted together form glass.

Many opaque (dark, cloudy, not transparent) substances are capable of assuming a form more or less vitreous, or glass-like; such are the earths (simple substances found in the earth), some acids and salts, and the metallic oxides or rusts. The principal kinds of glass in use—crown (for windows), plate (for picture frames, &c.), bottle (green rough glass), and flint (for table utensils)—have all one common origin; sand as the silica, and soda or potash as the solvent, or fluid, that dissolves and mixes with the silex.

If you understand these explanations you will have little difficulty in following the processes adopted in all glass-houses in the making of glass. I will now endeavour to explain to you how glass is made:—

First, the sand, cullet (broken glass), &c., are bruised and ground down to a fine powder, and then mixed with the proper proportion of alkali. They are then placed in a pot in the furnace and submitted to a great heat till they are melted into one great red, glowing mass, which the glass-makers call metal. Now, look at the engraving. In the centre is the furnace with the pots full of melted glass. At the left and right hand holes the workmen are taking out a portion of glass at the end of iron rods, called blow-pipes. As soon as a sufficient mass of the melted glass is attached to the blow-pipe, the workman withdraws it from the pot, gives it a swing in the air, and then rolls it on the cast-iron slab, called the marvre, so as to give it a smooth outer surface, at the same time blowing gently through the pipe till he has
made the glass thin enough for his purpose. We will suppose a decanter is the article to be made. The blow-pipe, with

the lump of hollow glass attached, is then taken to the chair, and another workman shapes and fashions the yet red-hot
mass into the form required. By keeping the glass continually turning round and round, the glass-maker prevents it dropping from the blow-pipe. It is so soft and pliable that he is able to cut it with a pair of scissors, and bend and shape it with that sugar-tongs-looking thing he holds in his right hand, and which is called the pucellas. In this part of the work the article is heated several times, and the glass-maker is assisted by a boy who holds the pipe and blows through it when it is necessary in order to enlarge the article. With the pucellas the workman forms the foot of the decanter, with the tongs he opens the mouth, and with the scissors he cuts off the waste glass; then, at the end of a solid rod of iron, called the pontil, the article is held firm till its shape is completed, when, with a little tap, it is broken off from the glass knob at the end of the pontil, and is taken away to the annealing oven to cool. If glass were at once exposed to the cold air after being made, it would crack or contract unequally. It is therefore passed through a series of ovens more or less hot, till at last it is fit to stow away in the warehouse prepared for sale or use. The front of the annealing oven is at the left of the picture.

By this process nearly all the better kinds of glass utensils are made, but many cheap drinking vessels and so on are moulded in iron shapes and afterwards cooled in the annealing oven. The finer and more expensive kinds of glassware are afterwards ground and polished. Pressing the decanter on the edge of a swiftly-revolving wheel, the glass-cutter, with no guide but his eye, cuts those beautiful figures on its surface which render such kinds of glassware so expensive and valuable. The forms of fruit, flowers, animals,
&c., are produced with equal ease and facility by the experienced glass-cutter; and this, too, with no other tool than a revolving iron or stone wheel and a little sand and water.

Little Harry tells me that I have said nothing about the making of window or plate-glass. Well, the general operations are much the same as those I have described, except that the large circles of flat glass, which are afterwards cut into squares by the glazier, are produced by the rapid swinging of the blow-pipe round the head of the glass-blower till the glass at its end is a wide flattened mass, which is then pressed against a smooth metal plate, and afterwards annealed or cooled in the way I have told you of. Plate glass is cast in wide smooth moulds of iron, and afterwards polished. At the Great Exhibition of 1851 there was shown a plate of glass cast in one piece, and silvered at the back, twenty-four feet square—the largest looking-glass in the world!
NEW YEAR'S EVE.

NEW YEAR'S EVE was quickly gathering in its wings. In another hour the old year would be dead, and the new year born into the world. It was near midnight, and an old man stood at his window looking out upon the stars and down upon the snow-covered earth. Just under his window was the churchyard, looking pure and beautiful in its mantle of white just fallen from heaven. Oh how peacefully slept the silent tenants of those awful graves. The old man looked upon them and shuddered, and then looked upwards at the deep blue sky and wept. He knew that his grave too was being prepared,—and was he fitted to take possession? Nearer, nearer, nearer came that grave to
him. He could feel that it was so, though as yet it was concealed from his bodily vision. But it was the snow of age and not the verdure of youth that hid it from his sight. He knew now—oh hateful knowledge!—that he had brought out of the life so quickly passing away—passing even as the old year—no saving balm to cheat the grave—nothing but the errors, sins, and sickness of an enfeebled body, a desolated soul, a breast full of poisons, and an old age full of remorse.

His beautiful youthful days came back to him to-day as spectres, and led him far away back again to the fair morning, when his father first set him out upon the highway of life, which, to the right, leads by the sun-path of virtue, into a wide and quiet land, full of light and harvests, and inhabited by angels; and which to the left leads down into the mole-path of vice, into a black cavern, full of dripping poisons, full of serpents ready to dart upon their prey, and full of dismal, close exhalations. O! the serpents hung around his breast, and the poison-drops to his tongue, and he knew not where he was.

Beside himself, and with unspeakable grief, he cried out to Heaven: "O, give me youth again! O, Father, set me out once more upon the highway, that I may choose the other path!" But his father and his youth were past long ago! He saw ignes fatuī dance over the marshes, and go out upon the grave-yard, and he said, "They are my foolish days!"

He saw a star shoot from heaven, shimmer in its fall, and vanish on the earth. "That is me!" said his bleeding heart,
and the serpent-fang of remorse dug deeper into the wounds. His glowing imagination revealed to him tottering sleep-walkers on the roof; the windmill raised its arms, threatening to crush him; and a mask, which had been left in the empty charnel-house, by degrees assumed his own features.

Suddenly, in the midst of the struggle, the music of the new year broke out of a tower near at hand, like the distant sound of a church-anthem. His mind became calmer. He looked up to the horizon, and out over the white earth; and he thought on the friends of his youth, who, now happier and better than he, were teachers on the earth, fathers of happy children, and blessed of men, and he said, "Oh, I might also have slumbered, with closed eyes, on this first night of the year, if I had willed it! Oh, I might also have been happy as you, dear parents, had I fulfilled your New-Year's wishes and instructions!"

Amidst these feverish reminiscences of his youth, it appeared to him as if the mask, with his features, stood up in the charnel-house; and, at last, by means of that superstition which on New-Year's Eve sees ghosts and future events, it was changed into a living youth!

He could look at it no more! He veiled his eyes; a thousand hot tears streamed dissolving into the snow, and still he sighed, but very low, beside himself, and grief-stricken— "Come again, only once, O youth; come again!"

And it came again; for he had only dreamed so bitterly, in the New-Year's Eve. He was still a young man; only his wanderings were no dream. But he thanked God that he,
still young, could turn back from the dark track of vice, and set out again upon the sunny path of virtue, which leads into the fair land of harvests.

Turn with him, young reader, if thou standest on his path of error! This fearful dream will some time become thy reality; but, if once thou shalt cry, full of anguish, "Come back to me, beautiful days of youth!" ah, they will come back never again!
MY MOTHER.

OO early called away
For me to know her virtues or her worth;
The hallowed name my lips could scarcely lisp,
When death deprived me of her tender care.
I knew not why we round her dying bed
Were called, nor why she clasped me in her arms,
And moved her lips so fervently in prayer,
Nor when within her pale and wasted hand
She pressed each hand of all that mourning group,
That blessing them her dying words she spoke.
How often have I knelt beside the stone
That marks her burial place, and loved to think
Her spirit hovered o'er me there and blessed
Her orphan child; and then I've turned and wept
In bitterness of heart, and slowly traced
My steps towards home—a home wherein
No mother's influence shone.

They never dreamed
That one so young could pine for sympathy,
Or mourn a mother he had hardly known.
Some other form may kindly hover o'er
The restless couch;—some other hand may fan
The fevered brow, may cool the parching lips,
And bathe the throbbing temples. Words of peace
And comfort may be whispered by some voice
In soothing accents and in gentle tones,
And consolation come from stranger hearts;
Yet none but a fond mother can receive
Each thought and feeling of the inmost soul,
Share every joy and woe, and hear each tale
Of childish sorrow with unwearying ear.
Though she may chide, it is affection's proof;
The fountain of her love flows ever full.
Though to the dregs she drink affliction's cup,
Though cold adversity may shed its blight
On every wreath and garland hope may weave;
Though disappointment crush her energies,
And every other tie that binds her down
To earth be severed, still she lingers here
With angel’s love to cherish her own child.
Yes, and though sin may stamp its mark
Upon the brow her lips so fondly pressed
In infant innocence, and o’er the cheek
So oft caressed in cherub beauty, guilt
May spread its sable hue, and scorn put forth
Her slow unmoving finger, branding him
With shame and infamy, yet still, unchanged
And pure, more brightly beams a Mother’s Love.
PEARLS.

All the most valuable things in the world are obtained at great cost of labour or wealth. The scarcity of gold and silver and precious stones renders them of higher worth than if they could be procured as easily as the other metals or the crystals on the sea-shore. So also learning and religion, which can only be obtained at great cost of time and study, and great sacrifice of self, are valuable in proportion to their scarcity.

Among the many beautiful jewels which are prized as a means of decoration, not the least is the Pearl, which is found within the shell of the lowly oyster, and is probably the effect of some disease to which the animal is subject. In this respect they correspond with the bezoar formed in animals of the goat species, to which orientalists ascribe great curative virtues. The Pearl-fisheries employ many men, both in the
Eastern and Western Seas. The largest Pearl hitherto described was sold for more than a hundred thousand pounds. The theory which explains the formation of this substance by disease, is generally received, and indicates the existence of some cause calculated to injure the Pearl-makers in those waters where they are readily found. Pearls have been procured in great quantities on the South American coasts, and on those of several West Indian islands. The old Pearl-fisheries are scattered over the coasts of the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. At one period Pearls were more commonly found than now on the British coast, and beautiful specimens were sent to the Great Exhibition from the river Ythan in Scotland, and from a stream which intersects Tyrone, in Ireland.

The native Scotch and Irish gems exhibited in that world's bazaar were remarkably beautiful. The localities in which they were produced are far separated. Many rivers roll between the small rivulet in the centre of Ulster and the Aberdeenshire stream, and yet our Pearl-fisheries are now, apparently, confined to those streams from which specimens were sent. The peculiarity which attracts Pearl-bearing fish to these waters is unexplained. They are extremely rare; and although the Pearls shown were of considerable size and value, yet the general product is unimportant.

The Chinese, who assiduously prosecute all avocations in which they engage, propagate Pearls by introducing into one description of shell-fish very minute beads of mother-of-pearl, and in process of time they are encrusted and enlarged by successive layers, closely resembling the real Pearl. The seeds
are sown for twelve months before the husbandman expects to reap his strange harvest.

PEARL DIVING IN THE INDIAN SEAS.

An estimate of the annual value of the Pearl-fisheries cannot be easily formed, for the price of the articles fluctuates.
The seed-pearls are employed in Asia as a stimulant by persons weakened by disease; but their medical value must be effective, I think, in nervous distempers, if it ever be useful at all; for where the imagination exercises great power, a medicine of high cost may be worth its price.

The Pearl-fisheries in the West India islands and the American coasts are perhaps equally valuable. The city of Seville, in Spain, imported in a single year 697 lbs. of pearls from the West; but that year is now long past—two hundred and fifty years have rolled away since its date; and this vast import may have consisted of the accumulated stock on hand, instead of representing the diving industry of one season. The Spanish Crown had one Pearl which was valued at rather over thirty thousand pounds. It weighed 250 carats, and was therefore estimated at the rate of £120 per carat. The carat is equal in weight to four grains troy.

The value of the large Pearl, per carat, like that of a large diamond, is increased according to its size. The quantity and value of the Pearls found every year in the Indian Archipelago and the Chinese Seas are not certainly known; but thousands of persons find employment in these fisheries—some as divers, others as buyers and sellers of Pearls, and many in the various trades and businesses which such a large collection of persons must require. But as the Indian Pearl-diver is a very simple sort of person, employing neither tailor nor hatter, nor bootmaker, nor hair-dresser, nor hosier, nor glover, you would think that few artificers were wanted in his business; but still there is work for others at the Pearl-fisheries besides the divers. The diving for Pearls is a very
simple sort of affair. Two baskets are hung by cords to poles projecting from the sides of the ships. Into one of these the Indian diver gets, and soon descends to the bed of the sea; as soon as he has filled his basket with the oysters, he gives the rope a shake as a signal to those above, and rises to the surface. Another diver then gets into the empty basket, and his weight in descending brings up the basket of Pearl oysters from the bottom of the sea; and in this way the process goes on from morning till night during the season for Pearl-fishing. The oysters are then taken out of the baskets and carried ashore, where they are spread on the earth till they open and the fish putrefy; then a strict search is made for the Pearls, and great caution is exercised by the masters to prevent any of the fishermen secreting a valuable jewel in his mouth or about his person. For several months the coasts of these shores are swarming with a curious, busy population; but as soon as the rainy season sets in, the work is rapidly brought to a close; the fishers take their departure, and the solitude is undisturbed till the fishing season returns next year.

From the shell of the Pearl and other oysters are made the Pearl buttons in use among us; and what is called Mother-o’-pearl is nothing more than the smooth, shiny lining of oyster and other shells. Pearls are very valuable. One at the Great Exhibition, belonging to Mr. Hope, was said to be worth a hundred thousand pounds; but then it was also said to be the largest in the world! Like everything else that is valuable, the Pearl is imitated in a cheaper and less durable material; but the imposition, like pretenders of all kinds, is easily discovered when placed beside the real gem!
MY OWN COUNTRIE.

LET my gallant bark glide swiftly on
Till safely moored upon the strand,
And let the kindly breeze be won
To waft me to my native land.
Oh dear to me,
My own countrie!
With beating heart and bosom throbbing high,
I woo the gale,
Right onward sail,
And on thy sacred shores return to die.
But hark! a welcome sound for me!

"Land! land ahead!" falls on my ear,
And hushed is every gloomy fear.
All hail my country, peace to thee!
Oh, yes, it is my native shore;
The port its fortress proudly rears,
And near the cot where glided o'er
So peacefully my infant years.
Oh dear to me,
My own countrie!

A wanderer long on many a distant shore.
The village green
Again is seen,
And curling wreaths from out the cottage door.
The heart is sad that turns to thee,
For there a mother kindled joy,
And gently hushed her cradled boy—
All hail my country, peace to thee!

Ungrateful youth! I fled from home,
And wafted by the ocean breeze,
Through fragrant isles went forth to roam,
Encircled by the sparkling seas.

'Mong nature's rude unlettered men,
A kingly crown they made me wear,
And through the forest glade and glen,
I bade the deadly foe beware!
Oh dear to me,
My own countrie!

Thy fields e'en then were groaning with the slain,
And victory's wreath
Nor honour's breath
Could stifle for thy woes my bosom’s pain!
Oh what were India’s wealth to me!
    Though poor, I come with eagle wing,
The badge of toil is all I bring,
All hail my country, peace to thee!

And now adieu, thou billowy sea,
    Thou canst no more, with foaming wave,
Restrain the boundings of the free,
    The restless spirit of the brave!
    Oh dear to me,
    My own countrie!
May love as pure inspire each patriot son.
    And now once more
    Upon thy shore,
I come to rest, my race is nearly run,
I kiss the sod so dear to me.
    An exile long, I seemed a foe,
    And suffered all an exile’s woe!
All hail my country, peace to thee!
EARTHQUAKES.

An earthquake, as we understand it, is a rocking and heaving up of the land, accompanied generally with violent storms at sea. The cause of earthquakes has been sought by many persons, but no true reason has been discovered. Some have thought that secret fires raged in the bowels of the earth; others, that huge caverns of water suddenly burst and upheaved; and others, again, that pent-up air found violent vent and caused the destruction so often observed. Modern science has ascribed earthquakes to the action of electricity; but, whatever the cause, it is certain that these violent convulsions of nature are much less common now than in ancient times.

Both in times present and times past, however, the effects of earthquakes have been very similar. Before the actual shock, a rumbling sound has been heard, as if the elements were in contention within the earth; a violent agitation of
the sea follows—the water spouting up and tumbling about in
the strangest manner; then a sudden rocking of the earth;
and lastly, a wide opening in the surface of the ground, and
sometimes a great concussion like the explosion of gunpowder.
Many accounts have been given of ancient Earthquakes.
Pliny, the naturalist, describes one by which thirteen cities in
Asia Minor were swallowed up in a single night; a great
Earthquake happened in the island of Rhodes in the second
century after Christ, and threw down the famous Colossus
and the walls of the city; in 1182, a violent shock of Earth-
quake was felt in Jerusalem; in 1594, the Italian city of
Pozzuoli was destroyed; and in 1755, Lisbon, the capital of
Portugal, was greatly injured by a similar cause. But the
most remarkable case of Earthquake occurred during the
months of February and March of this year (1855), at Broussa,
near Mount Olympus, in Asiatic Turkey—a part of the world
that seems peculiarly subject to the visitations of this dreadful
scourge. On the morning of the 28th of February, a violent
rocking of the buildings in this ancient city was observed, and
many houses were injured. The inhabitants immediately
abandoned the upper storeys of their dwellings, in anticipa-
tion of another and more violent shock. Nor had they long
to wait; for, twelve days afterwards, the whole city was
destroyed. Churches, mosques, and houses of every descrip-
tion were thrown down and destroyed, together with many
remains of fine Roman and Grecian architecture. Fortu-
nately, out of the 17,000 people inhabiting the place, not more
than 100 were injured, as the greater number had taken the
precaution to remove from the city to tents and huts outside.
From the 11th of March, shock followed shock, till not a house or a wall was left standing. The poor inhabitants fled from the doomed city in the greatest confusion, leaving behind them all that they possessed, and flocked into Constantinople and Guemlik, a city about twenty miles distant. At the moment of the principal shock, great masses of wall fell down upon the smaller dwellings below, and in a few hours whole quarters of the town were in total ruin. Amid the remains of the houses, poor women might be seen tending their wounded relatives, while, in other parts of the town, immense masses of rock came rolling down from the mountain side like avalanches, crashing and destroying wherever they fell. Jews, Greeks, Armenians, and Turks, all suffered alike on this dreadful day, and thousands who carried on profitable trades in the city were driven out homeless and houseless; though since then many have gone back, and the city is being rebuilt. Many fine buildings were destroyed; but the greatest loss the place has suffered is the destruction of the Great Mosque, formerly the Convent of the Virgin, which was erected in the time of the Roman Emperor Justinian. The tomb of the Sultan Orchan, the son of Othman, the founder of the Turkish Empire, is also destroyed; and the monarch who made Broussa the capital of his warlike state, and who rested peacefully in his grave for 500 years, now lies under the ruins of his ancient city.
OUR RAGGED SCHOOL.

COUNTRY people who send their children to the village school, and watch them sport and gambol on the green on a summer’s evening, have very little idea of the number of poor ragged little urchins always wandering about the streets of London. Poor, neglected little things, whose parents are too idle or too wretched to take any heed of them, they wander about the streets during the day, and sleep in the doorways, and in the market-places, and under railway arches, at night, till at last they come to be considered as “nobody’s children,” and are cuff ed by the parish beadle, driven about by the policeman, and punished by the magistrate. But worse than this, some drunken parents send them out into the streets to beg or steal, till at last they become confirmed thieves, and pass the principal part of their wretched lives in prisons.
This was the condition of many thousands of children in London a few years ago; but, through the benevolent exertions of a few charitable Christians, many have been rescued from misery and crime, and taught how to obtain honest livings. It is some years since the first Ragged School was opened in London; but now there are more than a hundred. In a few years more, it is to be hoped, every child in all the land will be taught to read and write, and made to feel that there is a God of great loving-kindness and long-suffering, who cares for him as well as for the children of the rich and well-to-do.

I will tell you something about our Ragged School. I live in the midst of a wide, poor neighbourhood; and as I walked through the streets at night, I used to notice how many poor, shoeless children there were about, selling matches and onions, and prowling about the butchers' shops and the hucksters' stalls, looking out for what they could steal. Well, some of my friends had heard of the success of some of the Ragged Schools in other parts, so we determined to set up a Ragged School of our own, and see if we could not bring a few of these wretched children into a better way. We took a room in a little court, and formed ourselves into a committee who should take it in turns to teach of an evening. Our School was open to all without charge, and whenever we saw a ragged boy in the streets we asked him to come. At first, the noisiest among the boys in the neighbourhood used to stand and shout outside the door, and for the first week we had but two scholars. But soon a few more came, and then more and more, till at last we had so many that we were obliged to take
another room, and have another teacher. In a short time our school became quite popular, and poor shoeless children came to us to be taught. Now we have a hundred every night.

And, besides that, we have a Sunday School in which we teach these poor little children that Christ was once a little child like
themselves, whose parents were so poor that, when He was born, He was obliged to be laid in a manger, because there was no room in the inn. We tell them how He died that they might be saved, and how there is a heaven for them, and that Christ is gracious and merciful to all.

And so we have gone on, till it has pleased God to make us instruments in His hands to the saving of many souls. We have taught these ragged children how to read and write, and been the means of rescuing many from the streets, and putting them in a fair way of earning honest livings. You have seen the little shoe-blacks in the city and other places; well, all of these were once poor miserable outcasts whom nobody cared for. And better than this, many of the children have actually taught their parents; and many a drunken father and slipshod mother have learned to bless the day that first took their little ones to our Ragged School. Ought you not in your prayers at night to ask God to show you how you may consider the poor and needy?
'Twas in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
And four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school:
There were some that ran and some that leapt,
Like troutlets in a pool.

Like sportive deer they cours'd about,
And shouted as they ran,—
Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only boyhood can;
But the Usher sat remote from all,
A melancholy man!
His hat was off, his vest apart,
    To catch heaven's blessed breeze;
For a burning thought was in his brow,
    And his bosom ill at ease:
So he lean'd his head on his hands, and read
    The book between his knees!

Leaf after leaf he turn'd it o'er,
    Nor ever glanced aside,
For the peace of his soul he read that book
    In the golden eventide:
Much study had made him very lean,
    And pale, and leaden-ey'd.

At last he shut the ponderous tome,
    With a fast and fervent grasp
He strain'd the dusky covers close,
    And fix'd the brazen hasp:
"Oh, God! could I so close my mind,
    And clasp it with a clasp!"

Then leaping on his feet upright,
    Some moody turns he took,—
Now up the mead, then down the mead,
    And past a shady nook,—
And, lo! he saw a little boy
    That pored upon a book!
"My gentle lad, what is 't you read—
  Romance or fairy fable?
Or is it some historic page,
  Of kings and crowns unstable?"
The young boy gave an upward glance,—
" 'It is 'The Death of Abel.'"

The Usher took six hasty strides,
  As smit with sudden pain,—
Six hasty strides beyond the place,
  Then slowly back again;
And down he sat beside the lad,
  And talk'd with him of Cain.

He told how murderers walk the earth
  Beneath the curse of Cain,—
With crimson clouds before their eyes,
  And flames about their brain:
For blood has left upon their souls
  Its everlasting stain!

"And well," quoth he, "I know, for truth,
  Their pangs must be extreme,—
Woe, woe, unutterable woe,—
  Who spill life's sacred stream!
For why? Methought, last night, I wrought
  A murder, in a dream!
"One that had never done me wrong—
   A feeble man, and old;
I led him to a lonely field,—
   The moon shone clear and cold
Now here, said I, this man shall die,
   And I will have his gold!

"Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,
   And one with a heavy stone,
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,—
   And then the deed was done:
There was nothing lying at my foot
   But lifeless flesh and bone!"
"And now, from forth the frowning sky,
    From the Heaven's topmost height,
I heard a voice—the awful voice
    Of the blood-avenging sprite:—
    'Thou guilty man! take up thy dead
    And hide it from my sight!'

"I took the dreary body up,
    And cast it in a stream,—
A sluggish water, black as ink,
    The depth was so extreme:
My gentle Boy, remember this
    Is nothing but a dream!"
"Down went the corse with a hollow plunge,
   And vanish'd in the pool;
Anon I cleans'd my bloody hands,
   And wash'd my forehead cool,
And sat among the urchins young,
   That evening in the school.

"All night I lay in agony,
   From weary chime to chime,
With one besetting horrid hint,
   That rack'd me all the time;
A mighty yearning, like the first
   Fierce impulse unto crime!

"One stern tyrannic thought, that made
   All other thoughts its slave;
Stronger and stronger every pulse
   Did that temptation crave,—
Still urging me to go and see
   The dead man in his grave!

"Heavily I rose up, as soon
   As light was in the sky,
And sought the black accursed pool
   With a wild misgiving eye;
And I saw the dead in the river bed,
   For the faithless stream was dry."
"With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,
    I took him up and ran;
There was no time to dig a grave
    Before the day began:
In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,
    I hid the murder'd man!

"And all that day I read in school,
    But my thought was other where;
As soon as the mid-day task was done,
    In secret I was there:
And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,
    And still the corse was bare:

"Then down I cast me on my face,
    And first began to weep,
For I knew my secret then was one
    That earth refused to keep:
Or land or sea, though he should be
    Ten thousand fathoms deep.

"O God! that horrid, horrid dream
    Besets me now awake!
Again—again, with dizzy brain,
    The human life I take;
And my red right hand grows raging hot,
    Like Cranmer's at the stake.
"And still no peace for the restless clay,
Will wave or mould allow;
The horrid thing pursues my soul,—
It stands before me now!"
The fearful boy look'd up, and saw
Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night, while gentle sleep
The urchin's eyelids kiss'd,
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,
Through the cold and heavy mist;
And Eugene Aram walked between,
With gyves upon his wrist.
THE SHEPHERD OF THE ALPS.

Great many years ago, it was my fortune to pass some months among the mountains of Switzerland; and so I became acquainted with the simple peasants of the villages in the valleys. They were most of them very poor, but their simple way of life interested me, and I made the acquaintance of many of them. I used to wander out upon the hills and talk to the shepherds as they sat minding their sheep, and I was wonderfully impressed with the quiet faith and piety of some of these poor peasants. Once I recollect coming suddenly upon one of them before he knew I was there. The sun was sinking slowly in the west, and the golden light tinged all the distant hills and made them glorious with beauty. And there, upon the very
verge of a cliff, I saw a poor Shepherd, whom I knew by the name of Antoine, kneeling down with his hands crossed upon his breast, and repeating slowly and solemnly a prayer I had taught him but a few days before. It was the prayer our Lord had taught to His disciples; and "Our Father which art in Heaven" sounded as pleasantly to my ears in the peasant’s language as it did in ours. A few days after I was shocked to hear that, coming home one night with his sheep, Antoine had tumbled over a cliff and seriously injured himself. I went to his cottage in the valley and sat beside his humble bed. And then I found how glorious are the promises of religion to a dying man. The doctor had been to see him, but could give no hope. But the Shepherd did not fear to die, for he told me that he knew He of whom I had told him would mind his sheep when he was gone. It was very sad, and yet very consoling for me to hear this poor man, whom a few days before I had seen in all the pride of health and strength, express his firm reliance on the promises of God. "If I had lived," said he, "perhaps I might have forgotten all you told me; but now I shall go to the Father!" He lingered a few months longer, but ere the snow was in the valleys, they carried him to the churchyard. I think I see again the little black train of mourners winding among the hills, and hear their funeral chant re-echo through the glen. The poor old mother went first, and then followed the maid who was to have been the Shepherd’s wife, next spring; and then his old companions of the village, two and two; and at the coffin’s head, the priest. I watched them till they descended the hill-side, and then I turned mournfully away.
OF THE REPTILES.

There are at least fifteen hundred described species, though there are probably many kinds of which we know but little. In the system of the geologists, the Fishes are placed first upon the earth—the reign of Fishes; then follows the secondary age, the age of Reptiles; then comes the third, the age of Mammals; and last of all comes man, the most perfect of animals. Reptiles belong to what we call vertebrated animals, and are distinguished by great symmetry of form. In the Crystal Palace we see the restored figures of many of the gigantic Reptiles who lived before man in the world, such as those enormous amphibia known as the Ichthyosaurus,
Plesiosaurus, and Iguanodon. None of these are now known as perfect living animals.

The largest living Reptile is the Boa Constrictor; and after that come the great family of Snakes; after them, the Lizards, of which the Crocodile is the representative type; and the Frogs and Toads. The Boa Constrictor is found in the forests of Asia, Africa, and America, and is sometimes seen of enormous size. It is a very large and powerful creature. Its mode of attack is to attach itself to some tree, whence it makes a sudden dart upon its prey, and generally so mortally wounds it that it is unable to escape. The Boa Constrictor then begins a process peculiar to serpents of the larger kind. Winding itself round and round the goat, antelope, or other animal it has attacked, it compresses the muscles of its body so tightly as to break down the ribs and bones of its victim. It then slavers it all over with its slimy tongue till the animal is a mere shapeless mass; and, opening its large jaws, makes a great gulp and swallows it. The serpent’s skin dilates sufficiently to allow the mass to pass
into its body; and for many days the glutton lies quite helpless upon the ground, a deformed and horrible-looking reptile. At last it disgorges the skin, bones, and hoofs of its victim, and does not attack another for several weeks. In the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, there are several serpents of this class. They are all fed upon live animals.

I might tell you much more of the class of animals called snakes or serpents—of the Rattlesnake, which, like the Viper, brings forth its young alive and whose bite is poisonous; of the great Cobra di Capello, or hooded snake, which, in India, the natives deprive of its fangs, and teach to undulate to the sounds of musical instruments; and of many others;—but the subject is not an agreeable one. I will tell you, however, a little more about reptiles.

Naturalists have divided the reptile class into five orders:—First, large reptiles with hollow teeth, most of which are now extinct, and of which the Crocodile is the representative. Those monstrous creatures shown at the Crystal Palace, and supposed to represent animals living on the earth before man inhabited it, belong to this class of reptiles. Their forms have not been altogether guessed at, for by comparing a tooth found in one place with a bone discovered in another, or the impression of a foot in another—which science is called comparative anatomy—wise men have been able to arrive at a pretty accurate knowledge of antediluvian animals. The term ante-diluvian is formed from two Latin words, and means before the Flood. Sometimes, too, the forms of animals, reptiles, and fishes have been discovered impressed upon the hard rock far below the surface of the earth; and occa-
sionally bones and imperfect skeletons have been found in similar situations. In that case they are called fossil animals. They died probably when the rocks were in a soft or clay-like state; and where they fell there have their bones been found, thousands of years afterwards, mute witnesses of their existence upon earth.

THE LIZARD.

The second class of reptiles is that of Lizards, of the general form of which the picture is an example. The Lizards are a large family inhabiting both land and water. They grow to a large size in hot countries, and are generally harmless. Nor are they without their uses in creation. The Ichneumon, which destroys the eggs of the Crocodile, you will admit to be a very useful sort of animal, I think. The little green and brown water Lizards, with yellow and black spots on their bellies, and which are found in the streams and ponds of England, are very amusing when placed in a fresh-water
Aquarium. They require only a few red worms now and then, and will not injure the other inhabitants of the tank.

Next in order are the Snakes, which, being the largest living reptiles, I have placed first in our list; and then come the Turtles and Tortoises, all kinds of which inhabit the hot parts of the world, though they will live for many years in England. Last of all are the Frogs and Toads. These are found in muddy ponds and pools, in all the temperate parts of the globe, and are pretty much alike in shape and diameter. There is a wonderful peculiarity about Frogs that I must tell you of. As soon as they are born they breathe through gills, like fishes; then they change into a lizard-like shape, and have tails, when they are called Tadpoles; and last of all they lose their tails and gills and become perfect Frogs. Both the Lizard and the Frog can swim with ease, and, from their living both on land and in water, are known as amphibious animals. The Lizard can neither leap nor gallop, but it can walk and run very quickly; while the Frog, which cannot either walk or run, has good strong hind legs, and can jump to a great distance. If the Elephant, in proportion to its size, had a power of leaping equal to that possessed by the Frog or the Flea, it could jump right over London in two or three bounds!
PARIS.

RANCE, the ally of England against the Russians, is one of the most celebrated countries in Europe, and Paris is its principal city. It is the gayest, and perhaps the most beautiful city in the world. Its public buildings, palaces, bridges, and noble streets are all adorned with taste and elegance, and in its hotels, theatres, and places of amusement, everything that can satisfy the palate, please the eye, and charm the senses, is studied with the greatest care and anxiety.

But the feature that most strikes a foreigner in Paris is the Great Boulevard, which runs right through the centre of the city,
BOULEVARDS, PARIS.
from the Column of July to the Church of the Magdalen. With its trees on each side, its gay shops and cafés, before the doors of which sit groups of well-dressed people, laughing, talking, smoking, and drinking coffee, its crowds of fashionable loungers composed of natives of all countries, intermingled with the bearded artizans in their blouses and round caps—the Boulevards present the most extraordinary and exciting spectacle that can well be imagined.

During the visit of our beloved Queen to the Emperor of France, the streets of Paris were crowded with visitors. From side to side of the Boulevards were suspended gay-coloured flags; and military processions, with bands of music playing, were constantly passing to and fro. It was indeed a grand sight, and one which will not easily be forgotten by those who witnessed it. There were reviews in a wide, open space, called the Field of Mars; visits to the Palace of Versailles, a splendid building, eight miles from Paris, erected many years ago, and filled with fine pictures by the late king Louis Philippe; a grand ball at the Hotel de Ville, the official residence of the Mayor of Paris; state visits to the Picture Gallery of the Louvre, the imperial palace of the Tuileries—which was erected by Catherine de Medicis—and many other gaieties. Our beloved Queen, with her husband and children, also visited the Universal Exhibition, accompanied by the Emperor and Empress and many great personages of the French and English Courts. The beautiful building, filled with the works of industry, art, science, and taste, and crowded with gay and happy thousands, doubtless excited their admiration; but the fact that all the old jealousies were forgotten, and
that the French and English people mingled together as one nation, rivals only in acts of courtesy and kindness to each other, must have produced a lively feeling of gratification indeed.

I will tell you a few facts, however, about the city itself. Well, then, the oldest part of Paris is on an island in the middle of the river Seine, called the isle of France. The island and the two sides of the river are connected by twenty-two bridges, many of which are new and handsome. Paris has several public libraries, a university, many fine public gardens and fountains. It is about half the size of London, and contains about a million and a-half of inhabitants. In Paris there are very few poor houses or mean streets to be seen, because the people, instead of living as we do, each family in one house, reside in large, high houses, every floor being occupied by a single family. In this way the poor are able to live in a fine large house as cheaply as our poor do in their little cottages in Bethnal Green or Somers Town. Paris is famous for its jewellery, pictures, statues, toys, and cookery; in fact, all the luxuries of life. But I do not think that the people of Paris or France enjoy themselves at home so well as we do in England—and you know "there's no place like home!"
TOBACCO.

COULD Sir Walter Raleigh look out of his grave, he would be very much astonished to find what a number of people in England had followed the example he set them so long ago, and now smoke pipes. I am not going to say anything against the use of Tobacco though, because I smoke myself; nor am I about to advocate its use, because some people think it hurtful, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary by physicians and others; but I will tell you where the plant is grown and how it is prepared.

The Tobacco plant is cultivated in many parts of the world. It is a broad-leaved, bushy tree which grows about as high as a man, and requires but little care in its propagation. In both North and South America, the West and East Indies,
Turkey, and also in many countries of Europe, Tobacco forms a regular farmer's crop, just as wheat or beans does with us. As soon as the plant has attained its full growth, it is stripped of all its larger leaves, the smaller ones being left to improve in size and age. The leaves are then placed in a heap on the floor of a house such as that shown in the picture, and allowed to ferment. After a certain time they are turned over and over, till they have lost somewhat of their original greenness. They are then wetted and pressed together in a heap and remain for some time longer, till they are what is called ripe. Then they are taken and spread out in single rows upon the floor to dry, and in a few weeks are ready for use, either for exportation as leaf Tobacco or for the manufacture of Cigars. In Havana, the capital of the Island of Cuba in the West Indies, the best Cigars are said to be made. The process of making a Cigar is very simple; the leaf is stripped from the stalk and then rolled round in the hand till it has acquired the proper shape; and when it has remained a few days to dry, the Cigar is ready for smoking.
FEW years ago the attention of two gentlemen—M. Botta, a native of France, and Mr. Layard, an Englishman—was directed to the mounds of earth lying on the supposed sites of the ancient cities of Nineveh and Babylon. For a long time these two gentlemen pursued their inquiries without the assistance of their several governments, and day after day brought to light new evidences of the civilization of past ages from the dust and rubbish which for hundreds of years had covered the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon, and of Darius and Xerxes at Susa in the old Assyrian empire.

Very remarkable and curious were the discoveries thus made
—for a style of architecture was revealed to us of which we had hitherto no conception. Gigantic bulls with the faces of men and the wings of birds, giants strangling lions, and other strange and peculiar figures, were dug from out of the ruins of these buried cities. And what was strangest of all, each figure was covered in part with sculptured characters, which told the history of the palaces of which they formed part. These cuneiform or arrow-headed inscriptions were afterwards deciphered by Colonel Rawlinson and Dr. Hinckes. An examination of the sculptures in the British Museum, which have been brought to this country by Mr. Layard, will prove highly interesting; and in the Crystal Palace a representation has been made of an Assyrian temple, with the sculptures, pillars, and writing-covered walls, all complete. The Assyrians seem to have been of the same stock as the Jews, and there is little doubt that the architecture of Jerusalem was much of the same character as that of the specimens recovered from the buried cities of the East.
OUR GARDEN.

OUR GARDEN is at the back of an old-fashioned house in a quiet village not far from London. It is an old-fashioned garden, and we are old-fashioned people, and have old-fashioned notions, and a very old-fashioned gardener. In our garden we have no new flowers — no rhododendrons, nor calceolarias, nor azelias, nor orchids, and only a very few fuchsias; and those that we have are of the original kind — little red bells, with purple clappers, growing to great luxuriance on high, tree-like bushes, and blossoming for months together. But then you should see the roses in our garden! roses of all kinds for every month in the year; and lilies, both white and red; and heartsease, that grow wild under the shade of the great apple-tree that stands in the middle of the grass plot.
And then the geraniums—the little red luxuriant sort, and the pretty variegated kinds with bright green leaves—not the showy pelargoniums that they sell in the Covent Garden;—the fox-glove that loves the shade; and the bright yellow marigold, and the double stocks, and the sweet-smelling pinks, and the star-eyed daisies, and love-lies-bleeding, and the pale convolvulus with its fresh cool look, and the fragrant mignonette in beds and borders, and the Solomon’s seal with its medicinal qualities, and the nasturtium with its bright red and yellow blossoms, and the great holyoak that overlooks them all and blooms with the Michaelmas daisy and the chrysanthemum, when the other flowers close their sweet eyes and go to sleep for the winter. Oh! ours is a beautiful garden indeed.
ST. PETERSBURG AND ITS PEOPLE.

T. PETERSBURG is the northern capital of Russia and Moscow is the central. Perhaps it is more correct to say that St. Petersburg is the metropolis of the whole Russian Empire. It is situated on the river Neva, at the head of the Gulf of Finland, and was founded by Peter the Great in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It boasts of long, straight streets and many handsome public buildings. Russia is a great country for bells, and in St. Petersburg there are many large bells in the towers of St. Peter and the forty other churches of the city. The summer in that part of the world is very short, but the people, nevertheless, contrive to amuse themselves. Indeed, there is no lack of recreations in the ancient and modern capitals
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of the Russian Empire. As the whole wealth of the country is divided amongst the Czar and his nobles, so also are the public amusements, with the exception of boat-racing, skating, and the public promenades at the Saint Petersburg Vauxhall. In this place, which is much the same in appearance and amusements as our Vauxhall in London, the shopkeeping classes join with as much zest as can be expected from men raised but a step above slavery.

St. Petersburg is a city recovered from a swampy soil, and almost built upon piles. Though the houses of the inhabitants spread wider and wider every day, the environs are still close to the original forest and swamp, where seals and otters yet find a congenial home. The Neva still flows through moors and forests, dark, wild, and dreary, before it reaches the imperial city, in which, even now, poor wooden houses and common cottages mingle with the mansions of the great and the marble palaces erected for the court. The house which Peter, its founder, built for himself is still shown. It is a poor cottage of wood and stone, not much larger than an English gentleman’s coach-house! And here the indefatigable workman—who had travelled all over Europe to see how houses, and ships, and bridges were built—lived patiently while his nobles and subjects raised up a great straggling city from a deep and muddy morass.

In the summer season, horse-racing, promenading, opera-visiting, and boat-racing are among the leading recreations of the Russian aristocracy. Summer life, indeed, at St. Petersburg is a very pleasant business, with the great advantage of having a noble river on which many a gala day is
spent, and which adds much to the beauty of the capital. During the short-lived summer of the north the nobles do not fail to enjoy themselves; making one continuous holiday, now on the water, now amidst the charming scenery of the suburbs, and at another time in the marble palaces or summer theatres of the islands on the Neva.

The gay throngs of pleasure-seekers to be seen at "Vauxhall," the brilliant illuminations, the prettily laid-out walks, the agreeable blending of light and shade, the pure soft air, the brilliant sky, the glorious music, all help to make up a very bewitching whole that one does not easily forget.

Unfortunately, the vice of gambling pervades all these amusements, and whether it be in the heat of summer or the intense cold of winter, the excitement of play appears almost necessary to a large portion of both old and young. The present emperor, Alexander, is said to set his face against this aristocratic luxury, but without avail; he might as soon try to put down bribery and corruption in his vast dominions.

Previous to the war with England and France, the trade of St. Petersburg was very extensive; but the blockade of the Baltic by our navy, and the occupation of the Crimea by the allies, must have greatly harassed the Russians—especially as the sole wealth of the nobles consists of the produce of their lands and the number of their serfs.
LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

...and there variants...
LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

The truest pleasures, I think, are those which are to be found in a life in the country. It is the recollection of our youthful hours, which dwells upon our minds, in all the vivid colours of reality, and imparts a pleasure no earthly power of ill can throw a gloom over. Thus I think of my old home in the country; its gardens, its mount, its purling streams, and emerald plains, here and there varied by a thicket of trees, enameled with flowers, the modest daisy, the retiring violet, or the blooming heath-bell. Sometimes I have thought with pleasure upon the hours when I have wandered in those quiet fields, searching for the wild anemones, safely sheltered beneath the spreading branches of the wild rose-brier; when I have culled the emblem of innocence, a lily glittering in the dew-drops of the morning, or, after a day of intense heat, reviving in the cool-
The green leaves whispered low and mild,
It was a sound of joy!
They were my playmates when a child,
And still they looked on me and smiled,
As if I were a boy!
ness of the evening twilight. Those hours long past, those scenes long left, have become endeared to my memory—I know not why, but that they were dear to me in the days of my childhood. We see other scenes, which, in comparison with our beloved homes, are but as deserts, wild, savage, and unadorned; but those scenes have not the charm of home. When I last returned to my old home in the country, I thought of Scott’s lines—

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said—
Whose heart has ne’er within him burn’d,
As home his footsteps he hath turn’d,
From wand’ring on a foreign strand—
‘This is my own, my native land!’"

'Twas my home—'twas there the short season of my school life was passed. When I returned, after a long absence, the old church seemed like an old friend over whom time had drawn his lines, but had left the character of his features still unchanged. My delighted memory found a friend in every leafy bough, in every elm-tree’s hollow trunk, ivy-bound and knotted grown. As one who returns to the bosom of his native glen, after a long pilgrimage through life’s thorny paths, he finds that some are gone, that some remain, but all are changed; those that were then infants are now men, and of those that were then men, some are gone, and all are decaying, surrounded by the ivy twigs of mankind, and their children’s children. I visited my old school-room: the desks were the same, but knives had been busy since I last saw
them. The shelves stood still unpainted. I could point out the spot, on one of them, where I had traced out, in ink, a grotesque face. I remember the task which it gained me from the master, and the silent glances of applause from the boys. Oh! those were happy days!

In the play-ground, the old shed still remained. In many a shower, I have passed my time beneath its sheltering roof, and joined in the games of youth which suited its narrow bounds. I sat on the seat, and heard the bell ring again which has so often broken in upon my sports, and I almost, after so great a lapse of time, involuntarily rose up to answer its summons.
And once more I walked in the old churchyard, and read the names upon the grey head-stones. How many had died since last I stood among the grassy mounds, and how peacefully seemed to sleep all the departed! They had been repairing the old church, those busy-fingered wardens and overseers, and had thought to bring back some of its early beauty by means of paint and whitewash; but it was of no use, for the grey and green patches stood out here and there upon the walls, as if in mockery of their puny efforts. They should be gentle with the dear old church, when they see how tenderly the hand of time has been laid upon it, not robbing it of its venerable looks by jewels and gay apparel, but clothing it decently in a homely garb of grey and russet.

Full of sweet recollections, I walked through the churchyard towards the old vicarage.

And Mary, the curate’s daughter, my little wife, as I used to call her! One night I cut the initials of our names in the bark of an old tree. I looked, and lo! they were still visible, though she has long departed. Sad, but full of softened memories, I wandered on till the moon uprose, and then I stood once more within the shadow of my little sweetheart’s home.
RICE.

EARLY half the inhabitants of Asia make Rice the principal part of their food. What corn is to the natives of Europe and America, Rice is to the people of India, China, and the islands of the Pacific Ocean. The Rice plant requires little cultivation. The seeds are thrown upon the water, where they quickly germinate. When the plant appears above the surface, it is plucked up and transplanted into a dryer soil, where it speedily flourishes. The Rice that we buy in the shops grows in pods like green peas, only much smaller, and, when ripened by the warm sun of the East, forms a delicious, cheap, and highly nutritious food. In India it is boiled and flavoured with curry, a hot kind of pepper, and in that state is served up at all meals, and is much esteemed. When ground and boiled it forms an exquisite dish, as most of you know who are fond of sweet puddings. Lately it has been found that when mixed with flour, it renders bread more light and palatable. In fact, in
whatever way Rice is eaten, it is found suitable for the sustenance and health of man.

**RICE SOWING.**

The method of sowing Rice was no doubt alluded to by our Lord when He said—"Cast your bread upon the waters, and ye shall find it after many days;" for, as I have told you, the seed is cast upon the waters, and soon after it springs up in great luxuriance.
ARCHITECTURE.

In the earliest ages of the world men were content to live in the caves of the earth and the hollows of trees; and, indeed, the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia were found to be totally ignorant of the art of building, even in its rudest form, and without a knowledge of the properties of fire.

From such primitive homes as caves and trees, the next step of Adam's descendants was, probably, the formation of rude huts of rough stones and fallen trees; then came tents, and last of all, houses of hewn timber and squared stone. Architecture, therefore, must have been one of the first arts cultivated by man; for though, in the early ages of society, his wants were few, because his ideas were confined, he must soon have felt the necessity of clothes to keep him warm, fire to cook his food, and a house to shelter him from the storms of heaven. Then, as men came to collect together in certain spots near
rivers and streams, huts and other simple kinds of houses arose, and villages were formed. One set of villagers possessing perhaps a larger quantity of corn than was required by the inhabitants, exchanged the superfluity for the cattle that were in abundance elsewhere; and thus barter and trade had their birth. Villages gradually swelled into towns, and towns into cities—and collections of all three formed states and kingdoms. The desire for social intercourse common to all men
gave rise to public buildings, and thus arose churches, and temples, and tombs, till the practice of building came to be studied as an art and received the name of Architecture, which is derived from two Greek words signifying the chief workman—the architect.

The most ancient form of Architecture with which we are acquainted is that of the Assyrians, of whom I have already told you something; next came that of the Egyptians—heavy, ponderous, and gloomy, like the Pyramids; then followed the
graceful but archless temples of the Greeks; the more highly decorated buildings of the Byzantines, the circular arches of the Romans, the splendid ornamentation of the Saracens, the pointed arches and massive walls of the Normans—of which the Tower of London is an example—the lancet-shaped windows and highly-decorated style of the Early English, as seen in Westminster Abbey—the Gothic or pointed, of which many examples exist—the Elizabethan, grotesque but noble—the Revival, in which Greek and Roman columns vied with each—and last, the Modern Gothic, of which the Houses of Parliament and St. George's Cathedral are such splendid specimens. All these styles may be seen in modern buildings, but it is very doubtful whether we possess anything to compare with the severe yet graceful symmetry observed in the ruins left by the Greeks at Athens.
SMOKE.

A little child went forth one day
To see the winds and waters play;
To hear the birds, with rustling wing,
Fly o'er his head, and joyous sing;
To smell the flowers, and watch the bee
Go forth on trips of industry;
To see the butterfly roam far,
With golden wings, a wandering star.
On, on he went, with bounding feet,
And everywhere did beauty meet,
Till coming to a wood, fresh cut,
He stood before a lonely hut.
Its isolation struck the child,
And tamed at once his spirits wild:
It seemed as if life dwelt not there,
As if it knew not love's blest care;
When all at once, in spiral curl,
A thin light mist did upwards twirl.
Was it an angel’s voice that spoke,
Or was it but the wreathing Smoke?

"Varying, curling, softly rising,
All restraint and rule despising,
Most certain sign of busy life,
I float along in peace and strife.
When smiling plenty crowns a land,
And all have comforts at command,
Then do I rise, supremely blest,
With eager joy and strengthened breast,
And bear a tribute to the sky,
However fragile, doth not die.
Alas! when war strides o’er the field,
When thousand hands dire weapons wield,
Then doth my light and airy form
Appear, where murderous cannons storm
A city’s gates, or sturdy fort,
While hostile bands with rage retort,
Undaunted by the loud report.
But oft I leave these dreadful scenes,
That haunt the mind like ghastly dreams,
And turn with joy to rural shades,
To straw-thatched cots, and woodland glades,
Where I delight to sport and twirl,
And twine myself in spiral curl.
Full often too, in mirthful hours,
I take my flight from lordly towers,
And gambol in the azure sky,
Or listen to the tempest’s sigh."
SMOKE.

E'en 'mid the lightning's vivid glare,
I mount upon the wings of air,
And view the storm-king in his might,
Compassed by gleams of fitful light,
That hovering, struggling, shine around,
While stormy blasts stern summons sound.
Mysterious being then am I,
Daring such dangers to defy,
Speeding so bold to heaven's dome,
And finding there a happy home.

"Sweet child, attend! though born of earth,
And in myself of little worth,
I shape my course, with stedfast heart,
To what appears the better part,
Mounting from earth to realms above,
Regardless of the things I love,
And, being thus unfettered found,
Gain entrance sure to holy ground!"
A FEW WORDS AT PARTING.

In our Christmas Tree I hope you have all found a bon-bon to your taste, for we have arrived at the end of our book. I trust too, that my endeavours to please and instruct you will not be altogether without effect. The love of reading is a precious thing. Possessed of that we may travel all over the world without stirring from our own firesides; become acquainted with the illustrious dead, and talk with the wise and learned without fear or reproach. He who loves reading need never be without companions and friends, who will in turn amuse him when he is weary, sympathize with him when he is sad, and cheer and comfort him when all other companions and friends desert him. I hope to meet you again—again to have pleasant talk together. Therefore, as an old friend who is expected—who is always welcome—I bid you

ADIEU TILL NEXT YEAR!