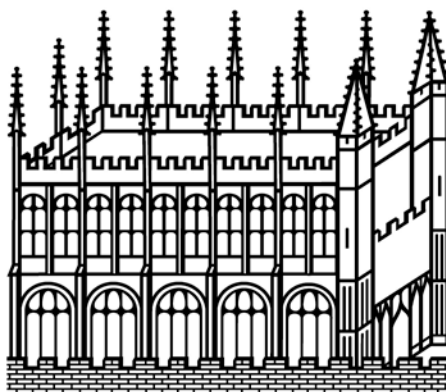




Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries
and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

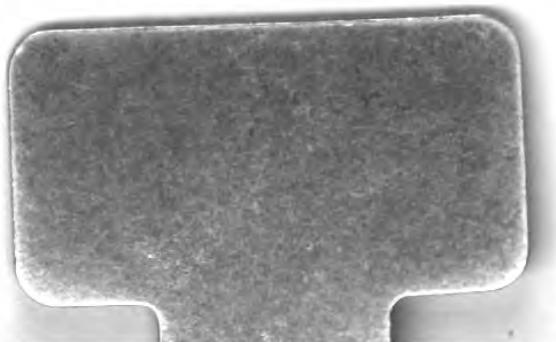
For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-
ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

POETRY
for
CHILDREN
SELECTED BY
E. A. PALLES
—
Part I.



POETRY FOR CHILDREN.

FIRST BOOK.

SELECTED AND ARRANGED, WITH NOTES,

BY EDMUND ARTHUR HELPS.



LONDON :

GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

1882.

2505 e. 5^a



CHISWICK PRESS :—C. WHITTINGHAM AND CO., TOOKS COURT,
CHANCERY LANE.

PREFACE.

THIS, the first of a series of three books of poetry compiled for use in the elementary schools, is intended for children between the ages of seven and nine. Though specially designed for children of the elementary schools, it will, I think, be found in the main suitable to children of all classes.

I have found great difficulty in collecting poetry of merit for this book. Few writers of note have descended to the intellectual level of children of such an age as I have specified, and I have been debarred, either by a question of copyright or otherwise, from including the work of some of these. I regret that I have not been able to preserve greater uniformity as regards the standard of merit: my excuse is, that I have, in some cases, been obliged to sacrifice style to matter, whilst in others I have reluctantly been compelled to reject poetry of considerable merit, because it contained thoughts, images, or expressions beyond the comprehension of such children as those I have had in view. I have been guided in my choice by children's appreciation of the difficulties and general sense of a poem.

My aims have been to interest and amuse the reader, and to cultivate the faculties of sympathy and imagination: bearing in mind, however, the pressing need which exists in the elementary schools for facilitating

the acquirement of fluency in reading, and adding to the child's vocabulary, I have subordinated the first-mentioned aims to the last, in the belief that the best way of insuring progress in reading is, to create in the child's mind a desire to read certain books on account of the pleasure to be derived therefrom. It is hoped that this book may be acceptable as a class-book, and that thus more variety may be afforded in reading-lessons.

The poems are arranged in order of difficulty, and with regard to variety of subject: all poems of a purely religious character are placed together at the end of the book. I have taken the liberty of omitting portions of certain poems which would otherwise have been too long, or not suited to the purpose of the collection.

I would here tender my thanks to those who have given me permission to include in this selection certain of their poems (the authorship of which is acknowledged in the book), and to Messrs. G. Routledge and Sons, Thomas Nelson and Sons, Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Messrs. Murby, and Messrs. W. and R. Chambers, for their courtesy in granting me permission to include pieces of which they have the copyright.

E. A. HELPS.

London, September, 1881.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
LITTLE Alice	7
The Sparrows	8
Out in the Country	8
Butterflies are Pretty Things	10
One Thing at a Time	11
The Skylark	11
A Doll	13
Mary's Pet Lamb	14
To a Redbreast	15
The Wind	16
The Rainbow	16
Pretending	17
The Bird's Appeal	18
On the Vowels	19
The Waves on the Sea-shore	19
The Summer Nosegay	20
The Silly Little Fish	21
Willie's Robin	22
The Voice of Spring	24
Birds' Nests	25
The Little Hare	27
The Cuckoo	28
My Mother	29
The Spider and the Fly	31
The Bird's Nest	35
A Young Girl to her Little Brother	36
The Hen and Chickens	38
The Two Little Kittens	39
Don't Kill the Birds	40
The Pond	41
The Little Ant	44
Dutiful Jem	45
The Suspicious Cock and Hen	47
The Little Boy's Good-night	49
The Boat	50
Birds' Nesting	51
The Fly	51
Child's Welcome to Spring	53
The Use of Sight	54
The Winter Nosegay	57
The Hand-Post	58
The Little Lamb	60
Autumn	61

	PAGE
There was an Old Woman	62
The Oak Tree	64
Robin Redbreast	66
Love of Flowers	67
The Farm-yard	69
The Spring Walk	71
The Fox and the Crow	73
The Leafy Spring	75
The Mothers	77
The Little Girl's Address to the River	80
The Dog	81
A Fable	83
The Rain and the Sun	85
The Golden-crested Wren	86
Try Again	88
The Chosen Tree	89
The Wind	93
Violets	95
The Donkey	95
Beauties in Nature	97
The Wasp and the Bee	98
A Swallow	99
The Wren	100
Hope, Faith, and Love	102
The Worm	103
The Wind in a Frolic	104
My Village	107
Every One in his Own Place	109
Evening	111

HYMNS.

The Poor Child's Hymn	115
The Child's Complaint	116
Rule of Life	116
To a Little Girl that has told a Lie	117
Against Pride in Clothes	119
Love One Another	120
Evening Prayer	121
The Beauties of Creation	122
A Little	123
Honesty	124
Our Father who art in Heaven	125
Conscience	125
A Child's Morning Hymn	126

LITTLE ALICE.

DANCING on the hill-tops,
Singing in the valleys,
Laughing with the echoes,
Merry little Alice.

Playing games with lambkins
In the flowering valleys,
Gathering pretty posies,
Helpful little Alice.

If her father's cottage
Turned into a palace,
And he owned the hill-tops
And the flowering valleys,
She'd be none the happier,
Happy little Alice.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

THE SPARROWS.

SPARROWS in a nest,
One and two and three ;
Under mother's breast,
Warm as warm can be !
Mother keeps you warm,
Father brings you food ;
Troubles you have none,
Happy little brood !
Mind you do not fall
From your nest on high ;
You've no feathers yet,
So you cannot fly.
When your feathers grow,
On a sunny day,
You shall learn to fly :
Chirp, chirp away.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

OUT IN THE COUNTRY.

MINNIE and Mattie
And fat little May,
Out in the country,
Spending a day.

Such a bright day,
 With the sun glowing,¹
And the trees half in leaf,
 And the grass growing.

Pinky white pigling
 Squeals through his snout,
Woolly white lambkin
 Frisks all about.

Cluck ! cluck ! the nursing hen
 Summons² her folk,—
Ducklings all downy soft
 Yellow as yolk.

Cluck ! cluck ! the mother hen
 Summons her chickens
To peck the dainty bits
 Found in her pickings.

Minnie and Mattie
 And May carry posies,
Half of sweet violets,
 Half of primroses.

Give the sun time enough,
 Glowing and glowing,
He'll rouse the roses
 And bring them blowing.

¹ *glowing*, shining with great heat.

² *summons*, calls.

OUT IN THE COUNTRY.

Don't wait for roses
Losing to-day,
O Minnie, Mattie,
And wise little May.

Violets and primroses
Blossom to-day
For Minnie and Mattie
And fat little May.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

BUTTERFLIES ARE PRETTY THINGS.

BUTTERFLIES are pretty things,
Prettier than you or I ;
See the colours on his wings,—
Who would hurt a butterfly ?

Softly, softly, girls and boys ;
He'll come near us by-and-by ;
Here he is, don't make a noise,—
We'll not hurt you, butterfly.

Not to hurt a living thing,
Let all little children try ;
See, again he's on the wing ;
Good-bye ! pretty butterfly !

ONE THING AT A TIME.

WORK while you work,
 Play while you play,
 That is the way
 To be cheerful and gay.

All that you do,
 Do with your might,
 Things done by halves
 Are never done right.

One thing at a time,
 And that done well,
 Is a very good rule,
 As many can tell.

Moments are useless,
 If trifled away;
 So, work while you work,
 And play while you play.

THE SKYLARK.

It is a pleasant thing
 To walk at early day,
 To see the pretty flowers,
 And smell the sweet new hay

The sun is warm and bright,
The sky is clear and blue,
And all the trees and flowers
Are wet with drops of dew.

Hush! don't you hear the bird
That's singing in the sky?
No bird except the lark
Would fly so very high.

It left its little nest
When day was just begun,
And flew so high to bid
Good-morning to the sun.

"Good-morning, shining sun,"
I think the lark would say;
"I'm happy in my heart,
This fine warm summer day.

"I'm very glad you're come,
You make the world so light,
And all the trees and flowers
So beautiful and bright.

"I'll sing a merry song,
And then fly down to rest,
Or search for worms to feed
My young ones in the nest."

The lark has done its song,
And settled on the ground,
But we will not forget
The sweet and happy sound.

And when our hearts are glad,
In long bright summer days,
To God in heaven we'll sing
Our songs and hymns of praise.

M. S. C.

A DOLL.

I ONCE had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world ;
Her cheeks were so red and so white, dears,
And her hair was so charmingly curl'd.

But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I play'd in the heath one day ;
And I cried for her more than a week, dears ;
But I never could find where she lay.

I found my poor little doll, dears,
As I play'd on the heath one day :
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
For her paint is all wash'd away,

And her arm trodden off by the cows, dears,
And her hair not the least bit curl'd :
Yet for old sakes' sake she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world.

MARY'S PET LAMB.

MARY had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.
He went with her to school one day ;
That was against the rule ;
It made the children laugh and play,
To see a lamb at school.
So the teacher turned him out,
But still he lingered¹ near,
And waited patiently about
Till Mary did appear.
And then he ran to her and laid
His head upon her arm,
As if he said, I'm not afraid ;
You'll keep me from all harm.

¹ *lingered*, waited, stopped, stayed.

"What makes the lamb love Mary so?"

The eager children cry:

"Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,"

The teacher did reply.

"And you each gentle animal

In confidence may bind,¹

And make them follow at your will,

If you are only kind."

TO A REDBREAST.

LITTLE bird, with bosom red,

Welcome to my humble shed;

Daily near my table steal,

While I eat my scanty² meal.

Doubt not, little though there be,

But I'll cast a crumb to thee;

Well repaid, if I but spy

Pleasure in thy glancing³ eye;

See thee, when thou hast thy fill,

Plume⁴ thy breast and wipe thy bill.

¹ *in confidence may bind*, may get them to trust in you thoroughly.

² *scanty*, hardly sufficient, small.

³ *glancing*, quickly moving.

⁴ *plume*, to trim or arrange its feathers.

Come, my feathered friend, again !
Well thou know'st the broken pane.
Ask of me thy daily store,
Ever welcome to my door.

THE WIND.

WHO has seen the wind ?
Neither I nor you :
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing thro'.
Who has seen the wind ?
Neither you nor I :
But when the trees bow down their heads
The wind is passing by.
O wind, why do you never rest,
Wandering, whistling too and fro,
Bringing rain out of the west,
From the dim¹ north bringing snow ?

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

THE RAINBOW.

BOATS sail on the rivers,
And ships sail on the seas ;
But clouds that sail across the sky
Are prettier far than these.

¹ *dim*, dark with clouds, not clear.

There are bridges on the rivers,
As pretty as you please ;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
Is prettier far than these.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

PRETENDING.

MY child, when we were children,
Two children little and gay,
We crept into the hen-roost,
And hid behind the hay.
We crowed as doth the cock,
When people passed that road,
Cried, "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"
They thought the cock had crowed.
The chests that lay in the court
We papered and made so clean,
And dwelt together therein—
We thought them fit for a queen.
Oft came our neighbour's old cat,
With us an hour to spend ;
We made her curtseys and bows,
And compliments without end.

THE BIRD'S APPEAL.

OH, stay your hand, my little boy,
 And do not rob my nest ;
 Why should you, for a moment's joy,
 My happy brood molest ?¹

My little ones, my hope and pride,
 Have not yet learned to fly ;
 And if you take them from my side,
 They soon will pine² and die.

Think, gentle boy, what you would feel,
 And your dear mother too,
 If to your bed some thief should steal,
 And hurry off with you ?

Oh, do not, do not climb the tree,
 To spoil our nest so warm,
 For you, indeed, must cruel be
 If you would do us harm.

Return, then, to your happy home—
 May it be happy long ;
 And to your window I will come,
 And thank you with a song.

¹ *molest*, trouble, or disturb.

² *pine*, waste away.

ON THE VOWELS.

WE are airy little creatures,
 All of different voice and features ;
 One of us in glass is set,
 One of us you'll find in jet,
 T'other you may see in tin,
 And the fourth a box within ;
 If the fifth you should pursue,¹
 It can never fly from you.

THE WAVES ON THE SEA-SHORE.

ROLL on, roll on, you restless waves,
 That toss about and roar ;
 Why do you all run back again
 When you have reached the shore ?
 Roll on, roll on, you noisy waves,
 Roll higher up the strand ;²
 How is it that you cannot pass
 That line of yellow sand ?
 Make haste, or else the tide will turn ;
 Make haste, you noisy sea ;
 Roll quite across the bank, and then
 Far on across the lea.³

¹ *pursue*, follow, go after.

² *strand*, the beach, shore.

³ *lea*, fields, meadows.

“We must not dare,” the waves reply ;
 “That line of yellow sand
 Is laid along the shore to bound
 The waters and the land ;
 “And all should keep to time and place,
 And all should keep to rule,
 Both waves upon the sandy shore,
 And little boys at school.” *

THE SUMMER NOSEGAY.

Now the yellow cowslips fade,
 All along the woody walk ;
 And the primrose hangs her head
 Faintly on her tiny stalk ;
 Let us to the garden go,
 Where the flowers of summer grow.
 Come, and make a nosegay there,
 Plucking every flower that blows :
 Briar sweet and lily fair,
 That along the valley grows ;
 With a honeysuckle red,
 Round a shady arbour¹ led.²

¹ *arbour*, summerhouse.

² *led*, trained round.

* From “Aunt Effie’s Nursery Rhymes,” by permission of the proprietors of the copyright, G. Routledge and Sons.

Then a budding rose or two,
Half in mossy leaves enrolled,¹
With a larkspur red and blue,
Streaky pink, and marigold :
These shall make our posy gay,
In the cheerful summer day.

THE SILLY LITTLE FISH.

"DEAR mother," said a silly fish,
" Pray, is not that a fly ?
I'm very hungry, and I wish
You'd let me go and try."

" Sweet innocent," the mother cried,
And started from her nook,
"That horrid fly is put to hide
The sharpness of a hook."

Now, as I've heard, this little trout
Was young and foolish too,
And so he thought he'd venture out
To see if it were true.

And round about the hook he play'd,
With many a longing look,
And—" Dear me," to himself he said,
"*I'm sure that's not a hook.*"

¹ *enrolled*, wrapped, or rolled around.

"I can but give one little pluck ;
Let's see, and so I will."
So on he went, and lo ! it stuck
Quite through his little gill.
And as he faint and fainter grew,
With hollow voice he cried :
"Dear mother, had I minded you,
I need not thus¹ have died."

WILLIE'S ROBIN.

SOFT and quiet, soft and slow,
Down it falls, the feathery snow,
On the lane and on the hedge,
And on Willie's window ledge ;
On the roof above his head,
And his little garden bed,
And the steps where Robin comes
Every day for Willie's crumbs ;
Nay, while Willie lies asleep
In his little crib, 'twill keep
Falling, falling, soft and slow,
All night long, the pretty snow.
And to-morrow, at sunrise,
When my Willie opes his eyes,

¹ *thus*, in this way, or manner.

Field and garden, road and street,
Will be one great snowy sheet ;
Every shrub and hedge and tree,
All as white as white can be :

And down flying from the bower,
Shaking from his twig a shower
Of white snow-flakes, we'll behold
Willie's robin,—oh, so cold !
Shall we let him hungry go
Back again across the snow ?

No, no ! Willie's glad to share
Half his bread with Robin there ;
Would without his breakfast go
Rather than treat Robin so,
Who about our house so long
Hopped, and sang his cheerful song.

So to-morrow, when he comes,
Tapping, tapping for his crumbs,
Robin shall get such a store,
He'll be full-fed all day o'er ;
Chirping, " Thank you," then he'll go
Flying off across the snow.

THE VOICE OF SPRING.

I AM coming, I am coming !—
 Hark ! the little bee is humming ;
 See, the lark is soaring high
 In the blue and sunny sky ;
 And the gnats are on the wing
 Wheeling round in airy ring.¹
 See the yellow catkins cover
 All the slender willows over ;
 And on banks of mossy green ;
 Star-like primroses are seen ;
 And, their clustering leaves² below,
 White and purple violets blow.
 Hark ! the new-born lambs are bleating,
 And the cawing rooks are meeting
 In the elms—a noisy crowd !
 All the birds are singing loud ;
 And the first white butterfly
 In the sunshine dances by.
 Look around thee—look around !
 Flowers in all the fields abound ;³
 Every running stream is bright ;
 All the orchard trees are white,

¹ *airy ring*, going round in a circle in the air.

² *clustering leaves*, a great many growing thickly close together.

³ *abound*, are plentiful.

And each small and waving shoot
Promises sweet flowers and fruit.

Turn thine eyes to earth and heaven !
God for thee the Spring has given,
Taught the birds their melodies,¹
Clothed the earth, and cleared the skies
For thy pleasure or thy food :—
Pour thy soul in gratitude !²

MARY HOWITT.

BIRDS' NESTS.

THE skylark's nest among the grass
And waving corn is found ;
The robin's on a shady bank,
With oak-leaves strewed around.

The wren builds in an ivied thorn,
Or old and ruined wall ;
The mossy nest so covered in,
You scarce can see at all.

The martins build their nests of clay,
In rows beneath the eaves ;
The silvery lichens,³ moss, and hair,
The chaffinch interweaves.

¹ *melodies*, songs.

² *gratitude*, thankfulness.

³ *lichens*, mosses which grow on rocks and trees.

The cuckoo makes no nest at all,
But through the wood she strays,
Until she finds one snug and warm,
And there her egg she lays.
The sparrow has a nest of hay,
With feathers warmly lined ;
The ringdove's careless nest of sticks
On lofty trees we find.
The blackbird's nest of grass and mud
In bush and bank is found ;
The lapwing's darkly spotted eggs
Are laid upon the ground.
The magpie's nest is made with thorns
In leafless tree or hedge ;
The wild-duck and the water-hen
Build by the water's edge.
Birds build their nests from year to year
According to their kind ;¹
Some very neat and beautiful—
Some simpler ones we find.
The habits of each little bird,
And all its patient skill,
Are surely taught by God Himself,
And ordered by His will.

M. S. C.

¹ *according to their kind*, each kind builds a different sort of nest.

THE LITTLE HARE.

BEYOND the palings of the park
 A Hare had made her form,¹
 Beneath a drooping fern, that made
 A shelter snug and warm.
 She slept until the daylight came,
 And all things were awake,
 And then the Hare, with noiseless steps,
 Crept softly from the brake.²
 She stroked her whiskers with her paws,
 Looked timidly around
 With open eyes, and ears erect³
 That caught the smallest sound.
 The Field-Mouse rustled in the grass,
 The Squirrel in the trees,
 But Puss was not at all afraid
 Of common sounds like these.
 She frisked and gambolled with delight,
 And cropped a leaf or two
 Of clover and of tender grass,
 That glistened⁴ in the dew.

¹ *form*, a place to lie in.

³ *erect*, upright.

² *brake*, brambles.

⁴ *glistened*, shone.

What was it, then, that made her start,
And run away so fast ?
She heard the distant sound of hounds,
She heard the huntsman's blast.¹
Tally-ho !—hoy ! tally-ho !
The hounds are in full cry ;
Ehew ! ehew !—in scarlet coats
The men are sweeping by.
So off she set with a spring and a bound,
Over the meadows and open ground,
Faster than hunter and faster than hound ;
And on—and on—till she lost the sound,
And away went the little Hare.*

THE CUCKOO.

AND so you have come back again ?
And it was you I heard
Proclaiming² it to all the world—
You most conceited³ bird !
You talked of nothing but yourself
When you were here before,
Until your voice became so hoarse
That you could talk no more.

¹ *blast*, noise made by the huntsman blowing the horn.

² *proclaiming*, making it known.

³ *conceited*, thinking a great deal of itself, proud.

And now you fly from bush to bush,
And say, "Cuckoo, cuckoo."
Have you no friends to care about?
No useful work to do?
I hear you're such a lazy bird,
You cannot build a nest;
Perhaps you could, if you would try,—
We ought to do our best.
The little bird that told me this
Suspected¹ something worse,—
That you neglect your little ones,
And put them out to nurse.
Oh, Cuckoo! if this story's true,
I think you're much to blame.
Then talk no more about yourself;
Go, hide yourself, for shame! *

MY MOTHER.

WHO fed me from her gentle breast,
And hushed me in her arms to rest,
And on my cheek sweet kisses prest?
My Mother.

¹ *suspected*, thought, imagined.

* From "Aunt Effie's Nursery Rhymes," by permission of the proprietors of the copyright, G. Routledge and Sons.

When sleep forsook my open eye,
Who was it sung sweet lullaby,
And rock'd me that I should not cry ?
My Mother.

Who sat and watched my infant head,
When sleeping in my cradle bed,
And tears of sweet affection shed ?
My Mother.

When pain and sickness made me cry,
Who gazed upon my heavy eye,
And wept for fear that I should die ?
My Mother.

Who ran to help me when I fell,
And would some pretty story tell,
Or kiss the place to make it well ?
My Mother.

Who taught my infant lips to pray
To love God's holy word and day,
And walk in wisdom's pleasant way ?¹
My Mother.

And can I ever cease to be
Affectionate and kind to thee
Who wast so very kind to me ?
My Mother.

¹ *walk in wisdom's pleasant way*, do as wise people do, follow in their steps.

Oh no! the thought I cannot bear :
And if God please my life to spare,
I hope I shall reward thy care,
My Mother.

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

“WILL you walk into my parlour ?”
Said the Spider to the Fly ;
“’Tis the prettiest little parlour
That ever you did spy.
The way into my parlour
Is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things
To show when you are there.”
“Oh no, no,” said the little Fly ;
“To ask me is in vain,¹
For who goes up your winding stair
Can ne’er come down again.”
“I’m sure you must be weary, dear,
With soaring² up so high ;
Will you rest upon my little bed ?”
Said the Spider to the Fly ;
“There are pretty curtains drawn around,
The sheets are fine and thin,

¹ *in vain*, of no use.

² *soaring*, mounting up high in the air,

And if you like to rest awhile,
I'll snugly tuck you in ! ”
“ Oh no, no,” said the little Fly ;
“ For I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again,
Who sleep upon your bed ! ”

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

“ Sweet creature,” said the Spider,
“ You're witty¹ and you're wise ;²
How handsome are your gauzy wings !
How brilliant³ are your eyes !

¹ *witty*, you say clever, sharp things. ² *wise*, know a great deal.

³ *brilliant*, bright, sparkling.

I have a little looking-glass
Upon my parlour shelf,
If you step in one moment, dear,
You shall behold yourself.”
“I thank you, gentle sir,” she said,
“For what you’re pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now,
I’ll call some other day.”
The Spider turned him round about,
And went into his den,
For well he knew the silly Fly
Would soon come back again ;
So he wove a subtle¹ web
In a little corner sly,
And set his table ready
To dine upon the Fly.
Then he came out to his door again,
And merrily did sing :
“Come hither, hither, pretty Fly,
With the pearl and silver wing.²
Your robes³ are green and purple—
There’s a crest upon your head ;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright,
But mine are dull as lead !”

¹ *subtle*, cunning, artful.

² *pearl and silver wing*, wing shining as if made of silver and pearls.

³ *robes*, dress.

Alas! alas! how very soon
This silly little fly,
Hearing his wily,¹ flattering² words,
Came slowly flitting by.
With buzzing wings she hung aloft,
Then near and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes,
And her green and purple hue³—
Thinking only of her crested head—
Poor foolish thing! At last,
Up jumped the cunning spider,
And fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair,
Into his dismal⁴ den,
Within his little parlour,
But she ne'er came out again!
And now, dear little children,
Who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words,
I pray you ne'er give heed;⁵
Unto an evil counsellor,⁶
Close heart and ear and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale
Of the Spider and the Fly.

MARY HOWITT.

¹ *wily*, cunning, artful.

³ *hue*, colour.

⁵ *heed*, attention.

² *flattering*, praising untruly.

⁴ *dismal*, dreadful.

⁶ *counsellor*, one who gives advice.

THE BIRD'S NEST.

A LITTLE bird built a warm nest in a tree,
And laid some blue eggs in it—one, two,
three,
And then very proud and delighted was she.

Then after a while, how long I can't tell,
The little ones crept, one by one, from the
shell;
And their mother was pleased, and she loved
them all well.

She spread her soft wings on them all the day
long,
To warm and to guard them, her love was so
strong;
And her mate sat beside her and sang her a
song.

One day the young birds were all crying for
food,
So off flew their mother away from her brood:
When up came some boys who were wicked
and rude.

Then they pulled the warm nest down away
from the tree ;
And the little ones cried, but they could not
get free ;
So at last they all died away,—one, two, and
three.

But when back to the nest the poor mother
did fly,
Oh, then she set up a most pitiful cry !
So she mourned a long while, and then lay
down to die !

*A YOUNG GIRL TO HER LITTLE
BROTHER.*

My pretty baby-brother
Is six months old to-day ;
And, though he cannot speak,
He knows whate'er I say.
Whenever I come near,
He crows for very joy ;
And dearly do I love him ;
The darling baby-boy.

My brother's cheek is blooming,
And his bright laughing eyes

Are like the pure spring violets,
Or the summer cloudless¹ skies.
His mouth is like a rosebud,
So delicate and red ;
And his hair is soft as silk,
And curls all round his head.

When he laughs, upon his face
So many dimples play,
They seem like little sunbeams
Which o'er his features stray.²
I am sure we all must love him,
He is so full of glee :
Just like a ray of sunshine
My brother is to me.

When in his pretty cradle
He lies in quiet sleep,
'Tis joy to be beside him,
A faithful watch to keep ;
And when his sleep is over,
I love to see him lie,
And lift the silken fringes³
That veil his sweet blue eye.

¹ *cloudless*, without clouds.

² *stray*, wander, move about.

³ *fringes*, eyelashes, which are like a fringe to the eye-lid.

38 *A YOUNG GIRL TO HER BROTHER.*

Oh ! my dear, dear baby-brother,
Our darling and our pet ;
The very sweetest plaything
I ever have had yet.
The pretty little creature,
He grows so every day,
That, when the summer comes,
In the garden he will play.
How pretty he will look,
Among the grass and flowers !
No blossom is so fair¹
As this precious one² of ours.
Every night before I sleep,
When I kneel to say my prayer,
I ask my heavenly Father
Of my brother to take care.

AUNT MARY.

THE HEN AND CHICKENS.

SEE the chickens round the gate,
For their morning portion³ wait ;
Fill the basket from the store,
Open wide the cottage door ;

¹ *fair*, here this means beautiful.

² *precious one*, one we think a great deal of (precious means of great worth).

³ *portion*, share.

Throw out crumbs, and scatter seed,
Let the hungry chickens feed.
Call them ;—now how fast they run,
Gladly, quickly every one ;
Eager, busy, hen and chick,
Every little morsel pick.
See the hen with tender brood,
To her young how kind and good ;
With what care their steps she leads,
Them, and not herself, she feeds ;
Picking here, and picking there,
Where the nicest morsels are.
As she calls, they flock around.
And at night they rest in peace,
All the tiny little things,
Nestling close beneath her wings ;
There she keeps them safe and warm,
Free from fear and free from harm.

D. A. T.

THE TWO LITTLE KITTENS.

Two little kittens, one stormy night,
Began to quarrel and then to fight ;
One had a mouse, the other had none,
And that was the way the strife¹ had begun.

¹ *strife*, quarrel.

“ *I’ll* have the mouse,” said the bigger cat.
 “ *You’ll* have the mouse ! we’ll see about that.”
 “ I *will* have that mouse,” said the elder one ;
 “ You *shan’t* have that mouse,” said the little
 one.

I told you before ’twas a stormy night
 When these two kittens began to fight ;
 The old woman seized her sweeping-broom,
 And swept the two kittens out of the room.
 The ground was covered with frost and snow,
 And the two little kittens had nowhere to go ;
 So they laid them down on a mat at the door,
 While the old woman finished sweeping the
 floor.

Then they crept in as quiet as mice,
 All wet with snow and as cold as ice ;
 For they thought ’twould be better that stormy
 night
 To lie down and sleep than to quarrel and fight.

DON’T KILL THE BIRDS.

DON’T kill the birds, the little birds,
 That sing about your door,
 Soon as the joyous spring has come,
 And chilling storms are o’er.

The little birds, how sweet they sing !
Oh ! let them joyous live,
And do not seek to take their life,
Which you can never give.
Don't kill the birds, the pretty birds,
That play among the trees :
'Twould make the earth a cheerless place,
To see no more of these.
The little birds how fond they play !
Do not disturb their sport ;
But let them warble forth their songs,
Till winter cuts them short.
Don't kill the birds, the happy birds,
That cheer the field and grove.
Such harmless things to look upon,
They claim our warmest love.

MARY HOWITT.

THE POND.

A PARTY of ducks to a pond would repair,¹
To sport 'mid the green water-weeds that grew
there :
Indeed, the assembly² would frequently meet,
To discuss³ their affairs, in this pleasant retreat.⁴

¹ *repair*, go.

³ *discuss*, talk over.

² *assembly*, those met together.

⁴ *retreat*, a place of safety.

Now, the subjects on which they were wont¹ to
converse,²

I am sorry I cannot exactly rehearse ;³

For though I've oft listen'd in hopes of discerning,⁴

I own 'tis a matter that baffles⁵ my learning.

One day a young chicken that lived thereabout,
Stood watching to see the ducks pop in and out,
Now turning tail upward, now diving below ;
She thought, of all things, she should like to
do so.

So the poor silly chick was determined to try ;
She thought 'twas as easy to swim as to fly :
Though her mother had told her she must not
go near,

She foolishly thought there was nothing to fear.

"My feet, wings, and feathers, for aught I can
see,

As good as the ducks' are for swimming," said
she ;

"Though *my* beak is pointed, and *their* beaks
are round,

Is that any reason that I should be drown'd ?

¹ *wont*, used, in the habit.

² *converse*, to talk.

³ *rehearse*, repeat.

⁴ *discerning*, making out, understanding.

⁵ *baffles*, beats, is too difficult for.

“Why should I not swim, then, as well as a duck?

I think I shall venture, and e'en¹ try my luck!
For,” said she (’spite of all that her mother had taught her),

“I’m really remarkably fond of the water.”

So in this poor ignorant² animal flew,
But soon found her dear mother’s cautions were true:

She splashed, and she dashed, and she turned herself round,

And heartily wished herself safe on the ground.

But now ’twas too late to begin to repent,
The harder she struggled the deeper she went;
And when every effort she vainly had tried,
She slowly sank down to the bottom and died!

The ducks, I perceived, began loudly to quack
When they saw the poor fowl floating dead on its back;

And by their grave gestures³ and looks in discoursing,⁴

Obedience to parents were plainly enforcing.⁵

¹ *e'en*, put for even.

² *ignorant*, knowing nothing.

³ *gestures*, movements of the body.

⁴ *discoursing*, talking over it.

⁵ *enforcing*, impressing upon their young ones the rule.

THE LITTLE ANT.

A LITTLE black ant found a large grain of
 wheat,
 Too heavy to lift or to roll,
 So he begg'd of a neighbour he happen'd to
 meet
 To help it down into his hole.

"I've got my own work to see after," said he,
 "You must shift for yourself, if you please."
 So he crawl'd off, as selfish and cross as could be,
 And lay down to sleep at his ease.

Just then a black brother was passing the road,
 And seeing his neighbour in want,
 Came up and assisted him in with his load,
 For he was a good-natured ant.

Let all who this story may happen to hear,
 Endeavour¹ to profit² by it ;
 For often it happens that children appear,³
 As cross as the ant every bit.

¹ *endeavour*, try.

² *profit*, to learn good from it ; gain something by it.

³ *appear*, here this word means *seem*.

And the good-natured ant who assisted his
brother,
May teach those who choose to be taught,
That if little insects are kind to each other,
All children most certainly ought.

DUTIFUL FEM.

THERE was a poor widow, who lived in a cot,
She scarcely a blanket to warm her had got ;
Her windows were broken, her walls were all
bare,
And the cold winter-wind often whistled in
there.

Poor Susan was old, and too feeble to spin,
Her forehead was wrinkled, her hands they
were thin ;
And bread she'd have wanted, as many have
done,
If she had not been blessed with a good little son.
But he loved her well, like a dutiful lad,
And thought her the very best friend that he
had ;
And now to neglect or forsake her, he knew
Was the most wicked thing he could possibly do.

For he was quite healthy, and active, and stout,
While his poor mother hardly could hobble
about,

And he thought it his duty, and greatest de-
light,

To work for her living from morning to night.

So he started each morning as gay as a lark,
And worked all day long in the fields till 'twas
dark,

Then came home again to his dear mother's
cot,

And cheerfully gave her the wages he got.

And oh, how she loved him! how great was
her joy!

To think her dear Jem was a dutiful boy:
Her arm round his neck she would tenderly
cast,

• And kiss his red cheek, while the tears trickled
fast!

Oh then, was not little Jem happier far,
Than naughty, and idle, and wicked boys are?
For as long as he lived 'twas his comfort and
joy

To think, he'd not been an undutiful boy.

THE SUSPICIOUS COCK AND HEN.

A COCK and a hen
 Stepped out of their pen,
 And quickly beginning to chat,
 Said cock to his wife,
 "My dear little life,
 Just look at that ugly old cat,
 "She's prowling about,
 There can be no doubt,
 To steal our sweet chickens away."
 The hen upon that
 Went up to the cat,
 And told her no longer to stay.

Miss Puss had been bent
 On no bad intent,¹
 But merely on catching of mice,
 What silly hen said
 First put in her head
 To seize a poor chick in a trice.²

The cock and his dame,
 In sorrow and shame,

¹ *no bad intent*, meaning no harm.

² *trice*, moment.

Set up a most terrible clacking ;
 The pigs began squeaking,
 The peacock was shrieking,
 The ducks in the pond fell a quacking.

The cattle hard by
 Soon joined in the cry,
 The gander must add to the clatter,
 The turkey-cock gobbled,
 The old woman hobbled,
 To see what on earth was the matter.

As soon as she heard
 What 'twas that had stirred
 This terrible racket and riot,
 She said, " Fie, for shame,
 You all are to blame,
 I'll beat you to make you be quiet."

The cat slunk away,
 And gave up her prey,
 The cock and hen flew to their coop ;
 Each beast hung his head,
 The birds quickly fled,
 Their feathers beginning to droop.

This story may teach
 That ill-natured speech

Provokes¹ an ill-natured return,
And making a noise,
In birds, beasts, and boys,
It is but a silly concern.²

THE LITTLE BOY'S GOOD-NIGHT.

THE sun is hidden from our sight,
The birds are sleeping sound ;
'Tis time to say to all " Good-night ! "
And give a kiss all round.

Good-night, my father, mother, dear,
Now kiss your little son ;
Good-night ! my friends, both far and near,
Good-night to every one.

Good-night, ye merry, merry birds,
Sleep well till morning light ;
Perhaps, if you could sing in words,
You would have said " Good-night ! "

To all my pretty flowers, good-night—
You blossom, while I sleep !
And all the stars, that shine so bright,
With you their watches keep.

¹ *provokes*, brings, calls forth.

² *concern*, matter.

50 *THE LITTLE BOY'S GOOD-NIGHT.*

The moon is lighting up the skies,
The stars are sparkling there ;
'Tis time to shut our weary eyes,
And say our evening prayer.

THE BOAT.

GLIDE along, our bonny boat !
The lake is gleaming,
With sunlight beaming,
Lightly o'er its bosom float !
Lightly o'er its bosom float !

Now we speed our shining way ;
Now rocking hither,
Now rocking thither ;
O'er the waters blithe and gay !
O'er the waters blithe and gay !

Fast we move before the wind,
Now lightly riding,
So swiftly gliding,
How we leave the shore behind !
How we leave the shore behind !

Onward then our little boat !
The waves are dancing,
In brightness glancing,
While we o'er the waters float,
While we o'er the waters float.

BIRDS' NESTING.

HEAR what the mournful linnets say :
“ We built our nest compact¹ and warm,
But cruel boys came round our way
And took our summer-house by storm.
“ They crushed the eggs so neatly laid ;
So now we sit with drooping wing,
And watch the ruin they have made,
Too late to build, too sad to sing.”

THE FLY.

WHAT a queer little fellow is Mister Fly ;
He goes where he pleases, low or high,
He can walk just as well with his feet to the
sky,
As I can on the floor.

¹ *compact*, the materials firmly and closely fastened together.

At the window he comes with a buzz and a
 roar,
And o'er the smooth glass can easily pass,
 Or through the key-hole of the door.
He eats the sugar and goes away,
Nor ever once asks what there is to pay ;

And sometimes he crosses the tea-pot's steam,
And comes and plunges his head in the cream ;
Then on the edge of the jug he stands,
And cleans his wings with his feet and hands.

This done, through the window he hurries
 away,
And gives a buzz as if to say,
"At present I have not a minute to stay,
But I'll peep in again in the course of the
 day."

Then away he'll fly, where the sunbeams lie,
And neither stop to shake hands, nor bid one
 good-bye.

Such a strange little fellow is Mister Fly,
Who goes where he pleases, low or high.

T. MILLER.

CHILD'S WELCOME TO SPRING.

I'M very glad the spring has come ; the sun
 shines out so bright,
The little birds upon the trees are singing for
 delight ;
The young grass looks so fresh and green, the
 lambkins sport and play ;
And I skip and sport about as merrily as they.

I like to see the daisy and the buttercups
 once more,
The primrose and the cowslip too, and every
 pretty flower ;
I like to see the butterfly flutter her painted
 wing ;
And all things seem just like myself, so pleased
 to see the spring.

The fishes in the little brook are jumping up
 on high ;
The lark is singing sweetly as she mounts into
 the sky ;

The rooks are building up their nests upon the
great tall tree ;
And everything's as busy and as happy as
can be.

There's not a cloud upon the sky—there's
nothing dark or sad ;
I jump and scarce know what to do, I feel so
very glad.

STODART.

THE USE OF SIGHT.

"WHAT, Charles returned !" papa exclaimed;
"How short your walk has been.
But Thomas—Julia—where are they?
Come, tell me what you've seen."

"So tedious,¹ stupid, dull a walk !"
Said Charles, "I'll go no more ;
First stopping here, then lagging there,
O'er this and that to pore."²

Now Tom and Julia both ran in :
"Oh, dear papa !" said they,
"The sweetest walk we both have had ;
O, what a pleasant day !

¹ *tedious*, tiresome.

² *pore*, to look closely into : to peer into it.

“Near Woodland House we crossed the fields,
And by the mill we came.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed papa, “how’s this?
Your brother took the same;

“But very dull he found the walk.

What have you there? let’s see :—
Come, Charles, enjoy this charming treat,
As new to you as me.”

“First look, papa, at this small branch
Which on a tall oak grew,
And by its slimy berries white,
The mistletoe we knew.

“A bird all green ran up a tree,
A woodpecker we call,
Who with his strong bill wounds the bark,
To feed on insects small.

“And many lapwings cried ‘peewit;’
And one among the rest
Pretended lameness, to decoy¹
Us from her lowly nest.

“Young starlings, martins, swallows, all
Such lively flocks, and gay;

¹ *decoy*, to entice or lead us away.

A heron, too, which caught a fish,
And with it flew away.

“This bird we found, a kingfisher,
Though dead, his plumes how bright !
Do have him stuffed, my dear papa,
'Twill be a charming sight.

“When reached the heath, how wide the space,
The air how fresh and sweet !
We plucked these flowers and different heaths,
The fairest we could meet.

“The distant prospect¹ we admired,
The mountains far and blue ;
A mansion here, a cottage there :
And see the sketch we drew.

“A splendid sight we next beheld,
The glorious setting sun,
In clouds of crimson, purple, gold ;
His daily race was done.”

“True taste with knowledge,” said papa,
“By observation’s² gained ;
You’ve both used well the gift of sight,
And thus reward obtained.”³

¹ *prospect*, view, scene.

² *observation*, taking notice ; looking attentively or carefully at things.

³ *obtained*, got.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

Now the winds of winter blow
Fiercely through the chilly air ;
Now the fields are white with snow,
Can we find a posy there ?
No, there cannot, all around,
A single blade of grass be found.

Nothing but the holly bright,
Spotted with its berries gay ;
Laurustinus, red and white ;
Or the ivy's crooked spray ;
With a sloe of darksome blue,
Where the ragged blackthorn grew ;

Or the hip of shining red,
Where the wild rose used to blow,
Peeping out its scarlet head
From beneath a cap of snow.
These are all that dare to stay
Through the cutting winter's day.

THE HAND-POST.

THE night was dark, the sun was hid
Behind the mountain grey,
And not a single star appeared
To shoot a silver ray.

Across the heath the owlet flew,
And screamed along the blast,¹
And onward, with a quickened step,
Benighted² Henry past.

At intervals,³ amid the gloom,
A flash of lightning played,
And showed the ruts with water filled,
And the black hedge's shade.

Again in thickest darkness plunged,
He groped his way to find,
And now he thought he spied beyond,
A form of horrid kind.

In ghostly white it upward rose,
Of cloak or mantle bare,
And held its naked arms across,
To catch him by the hair.

¹ *screamed along the blast*, flew with the wind, screaming.

² *benighted*, overtaken by night.

³ *intervals*, certain times, every now and then.

Poor Henry felt his blood run cold
At what before him stood ;
Yet, like a man, did he resolve¹
To do the best he could.

So, calling all his courage up,
He to the goblin went,
And eager, through the dismal gloom,
His piercing eyes he bent.

But when he came well nigh the ghost
That gave him such affright,
He clapped his hands upon his sides,
And loudly laughed outright.

For there a friendly post he found,
The stranger's road to mark ;
A pleasant sprite² was this to see,
For Henry in the dark.

"Well done !" said he, "one lesson wise
I've learned beyond a doubt,—
Whatever frightens me again,
I'll try to find it out.

"And when I hear an idle tale
Of goblin or of ghost,
I'll tell of this, my lonely walk,
And the tall white hand-post."

¹ *resolve*, make up his mind, determine.

² *sprite*, spirit, ghost.

THE LITTLE LAMB.

A little lambkin, white as snow,
 Went feeding with its brothers,
 And raced and frolicked to and fro,
 More wildly than the others.

It ran and sprang o'er stick and stone,
 And no one could prevent it.
 "Stop!" cried the mother, "little one,
 Or surely you'll repent it."

The little lamb went racing still,
 And frolicked all the faster,
 Till, by a neighbouring rocky hill,
 It met with dire¹ disaster.²

A great stone lay there on the grass,
 Our lamb must needs jump o'er it,
 And fell, and broke its leg, alas!
 Now sorrow lay before it.

I've told this little tale, dear child,
 That thou this lesson learnest :
*The sport that's careless, rude, and wild,
 May change to bitter earnest !*

¹ *dire*, dreadful, sad.

² *disaster*, misfortune.

AUTUMN.

GOLDEN Autumn comes again,
 With its storms of wind and rain,
 With its fields of yellow grain.
 Gifts for man and bird and brute,
 In its wealth of juicy fruit,
 In its store of precious root.
 Trees bend down with plum and pear,
 Rosy apples scent the air,
 Nuts are ripening ev'rywhere.
 Thro' the lanes, where "bindweed" weaves
 Graceful wreaths of curling leaves,
 Home the reapers bear the sheaves,
 Singing loud their harvest song,
 In their hearty rustic tongue—
 Singing gaily, old and young.
 Singing loud beside the wain,¹
 With its load of bursting grain,
 Dropping all along the lane.
 Mice and ant and squirrel fill
 Now their garner² at their will,
 Only drones³ need hunger still.

¹ *wain*, name for a wagon.

² *garner*s, stores.

³ *drones*, drones are bees who do not work, so lazy creatures are often called drones.

Flocks of sparrows downward fly
From their hawthorn perch on high,
Pecking each one greedily.

Though the summer flowers are dead,
Still the poppy rears its head,
Glowing gaily all in red.

Still the daisy, large and white,
Shining like a star at night,
In the hedge-row twinkles bright.

Still the fox-glove's crimson bell,
And the fern-leaves in the dell,
Autumn's parting beauty tell.

Purple sunsets, crimson leaves,
Fruit and flowers and golden sheaves,
Autumn gives us, ere she leaves.

MRS. HAWTREY.



THERE was an old woman, as I've heard tell,
She went to market her eggs for to sell;
She went to market all on a market day;
And she fell asleep on the king's highway.

There came by a pedlar whose name was
Stout,
He cut her petticoats all round about ;
He cut her petticoats up to the knees,
Which made the old woman to shiver and
freeze.

When this little woman first did wake,
She began to shiver and she began to shake.
She began to wonder and she began to cry,
'Lauk-a-mercy on me, this is none of I :

'But if it be I, as I do hope it be,
I've a little dog at home, and he'll know
me ;
If it be I, he'll wag his little tail,
And if it be not I, he'll loudly bark and
wail !'

Home went the little woman all in the dark,
Up got the little dog, and he began to bark ;
He began to bark, so she began to cry,
'Lauk-a-mercy on me, this is none of I !'

THE OAK TREE.

LONG ago in changeful autumn,
When the leaves were turning brown,
From the tall oak's topmost branches
Fell a little acorn down.

And it tumbled by the pathway,
And a chance foot trod it deep
In the ground, where all the winter,
In its shell it lay asleep.

With the white snow lying over,
And the frost to hold it fast,
Till there came the mild spring weather,
When it burst its shell at last.

First shot up a sapling tender,
Scarcely seen above the ground ;
Then a mimic¹ little oak tree
Spread its tiny arms around.

Many years the night-dews nursed it,
Summers hot, and winters long,
The sweet sun looked bright upon it,
While it grew up tall and strong.

¹ *mimic little oak tree*, to mimic means to imitate : this plant was like an oak tree, just as a baby is like a grown-up person.

Now it standeth like a giant,
Casting shadows broad and high ;
With huge trunk and leafy branches,
Spreading up into the sky.

There the squirrels love to frolic,
There the wild birds rest at night ;
There the cattle come for shelter
In the noon-time hot and bright.

Child, when haply¹ thou art resting
'Neath the great oak's monster shade,
Think how little was the acorn
Whence that mighty tree was made.

Think how simple things and lowly,
Have a part in nature's plan ;
How the great hath small beginnings,
And the child will be a man.

Little efforts work great actions ;
Lessons in our childhood taught,
Mould² the spirit to that temper,
Whereby noblest deeds³ are wrought.⁴

C. F. H.

¹ *haply*, perhaps.

² *mould*, form it, shape it.

³ *wrought*, done.

ROBIN REDBREAST.

GOOD-BYE, good-bye to Summer !
 For Summer's nearly done ;
 The garden smiling faintly,¹
 Cool breezes in the sun ;
 Our thrushes now are silent,
 Our swallows flown away,—
 But Robin's here, in coat of brown,
 With ruddy breast-knot gay.
 Robin, Robin Redbreast,
 O Robin dear !
 Robin sings so sweetly
 In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
 The leaves come down in hosts ;²
 The trees are Indian princes,³
 But soon they'll turn to Ghosts ;
 The scanty⁴ pears and apples
 Hang russet⁵ on the bough ;
 It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,
 'Twill soon be Winter now.

¹ *smiling faintly*, not looking very bright. ² *hosts*, great numbers.

³ *Indian princes*, clothed in many beautiful colours, like Indian princes.

⁴ *scanty*, few.

⁵ *russet*, reddish brown in colour.

Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear !
And what will this poor Robin do ?
For pinching days¹ are near.

The fireside for the cricket,
The wheatstack for the mouse,
When trembling night-winds whistle
And moan all round the house.
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow,-
Alas ! in winter dead and dark,
Where can poor Robin go ?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear !
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer.

W. ALLINGHAM.

LOVE OF FLOWERS.

OH, Maggie loves the lily fair,
And Annie loves the rose ;
But John, and I, and Willie too,
Love every flower that blows !

¹ *pinching days*, days when he will be pinched for food.

We love the golden buttercup ;
We love the daisy white ;
The violet blooming in the shade,
And the roses in the light.

And the lily that, so like a queen,
Lifts up its beauteous head ;
And the dahlia, and the tulip tall,
Of every hue and shade.

The wallflower and the marigold,
And pretty London-pride ;
And the bluebell hanging down its head,
Its laughing eye to hide.

And the purple heather¹ climbing round
The bonnie² Scottish hills ;
And the little primrose springing up
Beside the mountain rills.³

And the hollyhock that turns about
Its head to seek the sun ;
Oh, dearly do we love the flowers,
And we love them every one.

¹ *heather*, small evergreen shrub with a purple flower, which grows on mountains and moors.

² *bonnie*, beautiful.

³ *rills*, little streams running down the mountains.

Far better than our painted toys,
 Though gilded bright and gay,
 We love the gentle flowers that bloom
 In the sunny summer day.

THE FARM-YARD.

Lo! the sun is o'er the hill-top,
 Lo! the morning breaketh clear;
 Merry sounds of mirth and labour,
 Waken in the farm-yard near.
 There the cock sits on the barn-door,
 Crowing merrily and loud;
 While his crimson feathers glitter,
 As he shakes his pinions¹ proud.
 And the brown hen walks below him,
 Picking grains up from the floor;
 Bring the fresh egg, bring it quickly,
 From the nest behind the door.
 There the thresher bids good-morrow,
 Leaning on his ready flail,²
 To the milkmaid, as she cometh,
 Poising³ on her head the pail.

¹ *pinions*, wings.

² *ready flail*, this means, the flail he is handy or skilful in using.

³ *poising*, balancing.

By the dun cow, meek¹ and quiet,
She has set her stool so low,
And she sings a gentle measure,²
As she makes the white milk flow ;

Which the sweetly-breathing creatures,
Standing patient, love to hear,
Never lift the foot in anger,
Never shrink aside in fear.

With his spade across his shoulder,
To the field the workman goes ;
While the watch-dog, *his* work over,
Seeks the hay-loft for repose.³

There, I see the horses harnessed,
Waiting by the empty cart ;
All are cheerful, all are ready,
And a thought thrills⁴ through my heart :

'Tis the idle that grow weary,
Gaily rings each busy sound ;
'Tis a pleasure to be active ;
There's a joy in labour found.

¹ *meek*, gentle.

³ *repose*, rest, sleep.

² *measure*, song.

⁴ *thrills*, goes through.

THE SPRING WALK.

WE had a pleasant walk to-day
Over the meadows and far away,
Across the bridge by the water-mill,
By the woodside, and up the hill ;
And if you listen to what I say,
I'll tell you what we saw to-day.

Amid a hedge, where the first leaves
Were peeping from their sheaths so sly,
We saw four eggs within a nest,
And they were blue as a summer sky.

An elder-branch dipped in the brook,
We wondered why it moved, and found
A silken-haired smooth water-rat
Nibbling, and swimming round and round.

Where daisies opened to the sun,
In a broad meadow, green and white,
The lambs were racing eagerly—
We never saw a prettier sight.

We saw upon the shady banks
Long rows of golden flowers shine,

And first mistook for buttercups
The star-shaped yellow celandine.

Anemones and primroses,
And the blue violets of spring,
We found, while listening by a hedge
To hear a merry ploughman sing.

And from the earth the plough turned up
There came a sweet refreshing smell,
Such as the lily of the vale
Sends forth from many a woodland dell.

We saw the yellow wall-flower wave
Upon a mouldering¹ castle wall,
And then we watched the busy rooks
Among the ancient² elm-trees tall.

And leaning from the old stone bridge,
Below we saw our shadows lie,
And through the gloomy arches watched
The swift and fearless swallows fly.

We heard the speckled-breasted lark
As it sang somewhere out of sight,
And tried to find it, but the sky
Was filled with clouds of dazzling light.

¹ *mouldering*, crumbling away with age.

² *ancient*, old.

We saw young rabbits near the wood,
And heard a pheasant's wing go "whirr ;"
And then we saw a squirrel leap
From an old oak-tree to a fir.
And many pretty birds we saw,
Which had come o'er the stormy main,¹
To build their nests, and rear their young,
And sing in our old woods again.
We came back by the village fields,
A pleasant walk it was across 'em,
For all behind the houses lay
The orchards red and white with blossom.
Were I to tell you all we saw,
I'm sure that it would take me hours ;
For the whole landscape was alive
With bees, and birds, and buds, and flowers
THOMAS MILLER.

THE FOX AND THE CROW.

THE fox and the crow, in prose, I well know,
Many good little boys can rehearse ;²
Perhaps it will tell pretty nearly as well,
If we try the same fable³ in verse.

¹ *main*, ocean.

² *rehearse*, repeat, recite.

³ *fable*, a story, not true, which is generally meant to teach you some good lesson.

In a dairy a crow having ventured to go
Some food for her young ones to seek,
Flew up in the trees with a fine piece of cheese,
Which she joyfully held in her beak.

A fox, who lived by, to the tree saw her fly,
And to share in the prize made a vow ;
For having just dined, he for cheese felt in-
clined,
So he went and sat under the bough.

She was cunning, he knew, but so was he too,
And with flattery¹ adapted² his plan ;
For he knew if she'd speak, it must fall from
her beak :

So, bowing politely, began :—

“ ’Tis a very fine day ; ” (not a word did she
say) :—

“ The wind, I believe, Ma’am, is south ;
A fine harvest for peas ; ” he then looked at
the cheese,

But the crow did not open her mouth.

Sly Renard, not tired, her plumage³ admired,
“ How charming ! how brilliant its hue !

¹ *flattery*, praise not true, meant to please.

² *adapted*, arranged.

³ *plumage*, feathers.

The voice must be fine of a bird so divine,¹
Ah, let me just hear it—pray do.

“ Believe me, I long to hear a sweet song.”
The silly crow foolishly tries—
And she scarce gave one squall, when the
cheese she let fall,
And the fox ran away with the prize.

THE LEAFY SPRING.

I LOVE the pleasant spring,
When buds begin to push,²
And flowers their nosegays bring
To hang on every bush,
Till stores of May, with snowy bloom,
Fill the young hedge-rows with perfume.

Above the garden-beds,
Watched well by lady's eye,¹
Snowdrops with milky heads
Peep to the soft'ning sky,
And welcome crocuses shoot up,
With gilded spike and golden cup.

¹ *divine*, heavenly, excellent.

² *push*, push through the leaves, to open, unfold.

Oh, I some meadows know
Beside our good old town,
Where millions of them grow,
Just like a purple down !
They come,—but why, there's none can tell,
Only we love to see them, well.

On pastures wide and green,
Upon a thousand stems,
Fit for a fairy queen
To wear for precious gems,¹
Young cowslips smile at earth and sky,
With sweetest breath and golden eye.

And where the banks are wet
With drops of morning dew,
The gentle violet
Steals out in hood of blue,
And primroses in clusters rise,
Like pretty, pale-faced families.

I love the pleasant spring,
Those days of warm and light,
When every leafy thing
Comes peeping into sight ;
It makes me feel,—I cannot tell
How brisk and happy, kind and well.

¹ *for precious gems*, to wear as ornaments : like diamonds or valuable stones are worn.

THE MOTHERS.

As I walked over the hills one day,
I listened, and heard a mother-sheep say :
“ In all the green world there is nothing so
sweet

As my little lamb with his nimble feet,
With his eye so bright,
And his wool so white :
Oh ! he is my darling, my heart's delight.

“ The robin, she
That sings in the tree,
May dearly dote on her darlings four ;
But I love my one little lambkin more.”
And the mother-sheep and her little one
Side by side lay down in the sun,
And they went to sleep on the hill-side warm,
As a child goes to sleep on its mother's arm.

I went to the kitchen, and what did I see
But the old grey cat with her kittens three ;
I heard her whispering soft—said she :
“ My kittens, with tails all so cunningly curled,
Are the prettiest things in the wide, wide
world.

“The bird on the tree,
And the old ewe, she
May love her baby exceedingly ;
But I love my kittens with all my might,
I love them by morning, by noon, and by
night.

“Which is the prettiest, I cannot tell—
Which of the three, for the life of me—
I love them all so well.
Now I’ll take up my kitties, the kitties I love,
And we’ll lie down together beneath the warm
stove.”

I went to the yard and saw the old hen
Go clucking about with chickens ten.
She clucked, and she scratched, and she
bristled away ;
And what do you think I heard the hen say ?
I heard her say : “The sun never did shine
On anything like to these chickens of mine.

“You may hunt the full moon, and the stars,
if you please,
But you never will find ten such chickens
as these.

The cat loves her kittens, the ewe loves her
lamb ;

But they do not know what a proud mother
I am ;

Nor for lambs nor for kittens will I part with
these,

Though the sheep and the cat should go down
on their knees :

No, no ! not though

The kittens could crow,

Or the lammie on two yellow legs could go.

“My own dear darlings ! my sweet little
things !

Come, nestle now cosily under my wings.”

So the hen said,

And the chickens all sped

As fast as they could to their nice feather-bed.

And there let them sleep, in their feathers so
warm,

While my little chick nestles here snug on my
arm.

AUNT MARY.

*THE LITTLE GIRL'S ADDRESS TO
THE RIVER.*

GENTLE river, gentle river !

Tell us, whither do you glide,
Through the green and sunny meadows,
With your sweetly-murmuring tide ?¹

You for many a mile must wander,
Many a lovely prospect see :
Gentle river, gentle river !

Oh, how happy you must be !

Tell us, if you can remember,
Where your happy life began ;
When at first, from some high mountain,
Like a silver thread you ran.

Say, how many little streamlets
Gave their mite² your depth to swell ;
Coming each from different sources,³
Had they each a tale to tell ?

When a playful brook you gambolled,⁴
And the sunshine o'er you smiled,
On your banks did children loiter,
Looking for the spring-flowers wild ?

¹ *tide*, tide means stream here.

³ *sources*, beginnings.

² *mite*, very small portion.

⁴ *gambolled*, played.

Gentle river, gentle river,
Do you hear a word we say?
I am sure you ought to love us,
For we come here every day.

Oh! I pray you, wait a moment,
And a message bear from me
To a darling little cousin
We should dearly love to see.

You will know her, if you see her,
By her clear and laughing eyes,
For they sparkle like your waters
'Neath the bright blue summer skies.

She's a pretty, playful creature,
Light of heart, and footsteps too;
I am sure you must have seen her,
For she often speaks of you.

AUNT MARY.

THE DOG.

THE dog is man's most faithful friend
Of all the lower race;
For ever at his master's side,
He knows no happier place.

His warning voice is often heard
To tell of danger near ;
Quick to obey his master's word,
And slow his foes¹ to fear.

No stranger can his service win,
From him to whom 'tis due ;
One master, and but one he owns,
And unto him how true !

For, even should his faithful love
Meet with unkind return ;
E'en though his honest services
Some thankless master spurn ;²

He meekly³ bears, though undeserved,
Harsh word, or cruel slight,⁴
Almost as if he reason had
To teach him what is right.

Children ! to you, who reason have,
Who are blest with power of speech,
Patience, obedience, love and truth
The poor dumb dog may teach.

¹ *foes*, enemies.

³ *meekly*, humbly, patiently.

² *spurn*, treat with contempt, despise.

⁴ *slight*, neglect.

A FABLE.

IN early times, the story says,
 When birds could talk and lecture,¹
 A magpie called her feathered friends
 To teach them architecture.²
 "To build a nest, my courteous³ friends,"—
 They all began to chatter,—
 "No need to teach us *that*, good Mag,
 'Tis such an easy matter!"
 "To build a nest," Professor Mag
 Resumed⁴ her speech demurely,⁵
 "First choose a well-forked bough wherein
 The nest may sit securely."
 "Of course," said Jenny Wren. "Now cross
 Two sticks for the foundation."
 "O, all know that," quoth Mr. Rook,
 "Without this long oration."⁶
 "Now bend some slender twigs to form
 The round sides of the dwelling."
 "A fool knows that," exclaimed the thrush,
 "Without a magpie's telling."

¹ *lecture*, teach.³ *courteous*, polite.⁵ *demurely*, quietly.² *architecture*, art of building.⁴ *resumed*, began again.⁶ *oration*, speech.

“Next take some wool and line the nest,
And bind it well together.”
“Why that’s as clear,” exclaimed the owl,
“As stars in frosty weather !”

While thus they talked, Professor Mag
Her nest had *half* completed ;
And growing quite indignant¹ now,
To see how she was treated,
“Ladies and Gentlemen,” she said,
“I see you are all so clever,
My lessons are superfluous,²—
I leave you then for ever.”
Away she flew, and left the birds
Their folly to discover,
Who now can build but *half* a nest,
And cannot roof it over.
The magpie sits beneath her roof,
No rain nor hail can pelt her :
The others, brooding o’er their young,
Themselves enjoy no shelter.

No better fate do men deserve,
When self-conceit can lead them
Friendly instructions to despise,
And think they do not need them.

¹ *indignant*, offended, angry with reason, rightly.

² *superfluous*, not required, unnecessary.

THE RAIN AND THE SUN.

How gently falls the rain
 Upon the thirsty earth,
 To bring to life the seed of grain
 And save the land from dearth !¹

It clothes our fields with green ;
 With foliage,² too, the trees,
 Whose grateful leaves, with pleasant sheen,³
 Wave softly in the breeze.

The sky drops fatness down,
 When rain doth gently fall ;
 Flowers and trees, grass and corn,
 By it are nourished all.

The earth would be forlorn⁴
 But for refreshing showers ;
 Its fruitfulness would all be gone ;
 Its bright and lovely flowers.

The sun, too, gives us light and heat
 To make the plants uprise,
 The grass on which we press our feet,
 The deep blue of the skies.

¹ *dearth*, scarcity, want. ² *foliage*, leaves. ³ *sheen*, shining.

⁴ *forlorn*, destitute, without all things which need rain.

The rich and varied bloom which plays
Round nature's beauteous face,
Are glances of the sun's bright rays—
Her charm, her joy, her grace.

C. F. H.

THE GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN.

THE smallest bird that can be found,
If you search all England round,
Everywhere through glade¹ or glen,²
Is the golden-crested wren.
Though little, 'tis a brave bird too,
And stays with us the winter through ;
Goes picking here and hopping there,
And never leaves us all the year.
When it freezes, when it snows,
When it thaws, and when it blows,
You still may see its little form
Tossed about upon the storm ;
Rumpled, crumpled every feather,
And all backward blown together ;
While it puffs, and pants, and draws
Together close its little claws

¹ *glade*, an opening in a forest or wood.

² *glen*, valley.

On some branch or mossy rail,
Turning to the wind its tail.
But if there be a hole at all,
It can get in—it is so small—
And shelter from the piercing cold
Its pretty head and crest of gold.
In spring it builds a little house,
Scarce larger than the harvest-mouse ;
And in it you'll find children five,
The size of bees, and all alive.
And for all these she must find bread,
From morning till 'tis time for bed.
And you will see this little wren
Works harder far than many men,
Beginning when the dawn doth peep,
Nor ending till 'tis time to sleep.
Without a minute's pause or rest,
She carries food into her nest
Near forty times in every hour.
Through the sunshine and the shower,
Food doth she to her young convey,¹
For sixteen hours through every day,
Without a moment's time to play!
Ever coming, ever going,
Never idle, always doing,

¹ *convey*, to carry.

This a bit, and that a taste ;
 Then she's off again in haste,
 Across the field and by the mill,
 Bringing something for each bill,—
 Bill wide-gaping every minute,
 And she dropping something in it.
 Such a hungry family
 As a man doth seldom¹ see,
 Helpless, and without a feather,
 Opening all their mouths together.
 As soon as brought, the food is gone,
 All the five agape like one !
 She herself can't get a bit,
 There is such a "twit, twit, twit."

T. MILLER.

TRY AGAIN.

'TIS a lesson you should heed,
 Try, try, try again ;
 If at first you don't succeed,²
 Try, try again.
 Then your courage should appear,
 For if you will persevere,³

¹ *seldom*, not often, rarely.

² *succeed*, do what you are trying to do.

³ *persevere*, go on trying to do the thing.

You will conquer,¹ never fear,
 Try, try again.
 Once or twice though you may fail,
 Try, try, try again ;
 If at last you would prevail,²
 Try, try again.
 If we strive,³ 'tis no disgrace,
 Though we may not win the race ;
 What should we do, in that case ?
 Try, try again.
 If you find your task is hard,
 Try, try, try again.
 Time will bring you your reward,
 Try, try again.
 All that other people do,
 Why, with patience, should not you ;
 Only keep this rule in view,
 Try, try again.

THE CHOSEN TREE.

A BIRD built her nest in a fair green tree,
 In the midst of a beautiful wood ;
 She lined it with feathers and made it so soft,
 As only a mother could.

¹ *conquer*, get over the difficulty or trouble, gain the battle.

² *prevail*, overcome the difficulty.

³ *strive*, try very hard.

Primroses grew in the long green grass,
At the foot of the chosen tree ;
And the scent of sweet violets filled the air,
Like odours¹ from Araby.

There the daisy, that modest,² simple flower,
With its eye of golden hue,
The cowslip sweet, and the wind-flower light,
And the graceful harebell grew.

And the dragon-fly, and the painted³ moth,
And musical-winged bee,
And the grasshopper came with his chirping
voice,
To play 'neath the chosen tree.

Not long ere three tiny heads were seen,
Peeping out from their downy nest ;
And, oh ! what a happy mother was she,
That warmed them beneath her breast.

She loved them as only a mother loves,
And she sang them her songs of glee ;
There were no little birds more happy than
they,
In their nest in the chosen tree.

¹ *odours*, smells, scents, perfumes.

² *modest*, bashful, not forward, unpretending.

³ *painted*, of bright colours, as if painted.

But one of this little family
Grew tired of his mother's care ;
He sat all day in a sullen mood,
And nought to him looked fair.

For the heart of this little bird was changed,
And he thought he should like to roam
Away o'er the fields, and the high green hills,
In search of a brighter home.

Ah, me ! there is not a brighter home
Than that which is lighted by love ;¹
There is no other light so divinely sweet,²
Not the moon nor the stars above.

But he fled away, and he sported awhile,
Amid flowers of each perfume and hue ;
And when night came on he was weary and
cold,
And it rained, and the storm-wind blew.

Ah, then, how he thought of his mother's
wing,
Which had covered him tenderly ;
And his little brothers so happy and good,
In their home in the chosen tree.

¹ *lighted by love*, made bright and happy by love.

² *divinely sweet*, heavenly.

Then he lifted his voice, but none to hear
The sound of his sorrow was nigh ;
So he covered his head with his half-fledged¹
wing,
And sat on a stone to die.

Oh, never more, in that beautiful wood,
Was the song of his gladness heard ;
And for many a day did his brothers weep
For the loss of the truant bird.

And for many a day no song of joy
Came up from his mother's breast ;
She mourned for him with drooping wings,
But he came not again to his nest.

And thus, dear children, from this you may learn,
How even one child may be
The cause of sorrow, which nought may remove
From a little family.

You each have a home in a chosen tree,
Which your parents have lit with love ;²
Oh, cause not the shadows of grief to descend,³
The beautiful light to remove.⁴

From " Little Poems for Little Readers."

¹ *half-fledged*, with feathers half-grown.

² *lit with love*, made light and happy with love.

³ *descend*, come down upon it.

⁴ *remove*, to take away.

THE WIND.

THE wind it is a mystic¹ thing,
 Wand'ring o'er ocean wide,
 And fanning all the thousand sails
 That o'er its billows² glide.³

It curls the blue waves into foam,
 It snaps the strongest mast;
 Then like a sorrowing thing it sighs,
 When the wild storm is past.

And yet how gently does it come
 At ev'ning through the bowers,
 As if it said a kind "Good night"
 To all the closing flowers.

It bears the perfume of the rose,
 It fans the insect's wing;
 'Tis round me, with me everywhere,
 Yet 'tis an unseen thing.

How many sounds it bears along,
 As o'er the earth it goes—
 The songs of many joyous hearts,
 The sounds of many woes!⁴

¹ *mystic*, strange, wonderful.

³ *glide*, to move swiftly and smoothly over.

² *billows*, waves.

⁴ *woes*, sorrows.

It enters into palace halls,
And carries thence the sound
Of mirth and music ;—but it creeps
The narrow prison round,

And bears away the captive's sigh
Who sits in sorrow there ;
Or from the martyr's¹ lonely cell
Conveys his evening prayer.

It fans the reaper's heated brow ;
It through the window creeps,
And lifts the fair child's golden curls,
As on her couch she sleeps.

'Tis like the light, a gift to all,
To prince, to peasant² given ;
Awake, asleep, around us still
There is this gift of Heaven :

This strange, mysterious thing we call
The breeze, the air, the wind ;
We call it so, but know no more,—
'Tis mystery, like our mind.

HAWKSHAW.

¹ *martyr*, a Christian who suffers death or persecution for his religion.

² *peasant*, a labourer.

Think not the things most wonderful
Are those beyond our ken,¹
For wonders are around the paths,
The daily paths of men !

VIOLETS.

UNDER the green hedges after the snow,
There do the dear little violets grow,
Hiding their modest and beautiful heads
Under the hawthorn in soft mossy beds.

Sweet as the roses, and blue as the sky,
Down there do the dear little violets lie :
Hiding their heads where they scarce may be
seen,
By the leaves you may know where the violet
hath been.

THE DONKEY.

POOR patient beast ! how sad thy fate,
How rudely, hardly used !
And for thy very patience too,
Most cruelly abused.²

¹ *ken*, knowledge.

² *abused*, ill-used.

Well may'st thou shrink at man's approach¹
And twist thy timid head ;
Well may'st thou lay thy rough brown ears
With such instinctive dread.²

And yet how useful is thy life,
How very small thy need ;³
Give thee thy thistles and thy drink,
Thou art content indeed.

What heavy burthens thou wilt bear,
And what a toilsome way
Thy little limbs will travel o'er
From weary day to day !

For all your pains, you often get
From man a savage blow ;
I cannot think how any one
Has heart to use you so.

And yet, poor donkey, unto all
How tamely you submit ;⁴
I'm sure I'd kick if I were you,
And would not work a bit.

¹ *approach*, coming near.

² *instinctive dread*, natural fear, or fear by instinct.

³ *small thy need*, very little you want.

⁴ *submit*, give way, yield to.

Stay, little one—before you teach,
This better lesson learn ;
To bear as meekly, when reprov'd,¹
And good for ill return.

BEAUTIES IN NATURE.

THERE'S beauty in the summer's eve,
When flowers their petals² fold ;
When eastern skies are wrapped in gloom,
And western clouds in gold.

There's beauty in the brilliant stars
That gem the purple sky,
As dance their image³ on the brook
That slowly ripples by.

There's beauty in the mighty storm
Along the sea-girt shore,⁴
When heave the rolling billows high,
And pealing thunders roar.

¹ *reprov'd*, blamed, corrected for a fault.

² *petals*, the leaves of a flower.

³ *image*, likeness, reflection.

⁴ *sea-girt*, with the sea like a band or girdle round it.

There's beauty in deep solitude,
In ocean, earth, and air :
On mountain-peak,—in shady grove ;
Creation¹ all is fair.

There's beauty in the song of birds,
On spray or greening sod :
In ev'ry clime, from pole to pole,
These beauties tell of God.

THE WASP AND THE BEE.

A WASP met a bee that was just buzzing by,
And he said, " Little cousin, can you tell me
why

You are loved so much better by people than I ?

" My back shines as bright and as yellow as
gold,

And my shape is most elegant, too, to behold ;
Yet nobody likes me for that, I am told."

" Ah, cousin !" the bee said, "'tis all very true ;
But if I were half as much mischief to do,
Indeed they would love me no better than you.

¹ *creation*, everything created.

“ You have a fine shape, and a delicate wing ;
They own you are handsome ; but then there’s
 one thing
They cannot put up with—and that is your
 sting.

“ My coat is quite homely and plain, as you see,
Yet nobody ever is angry with me—
Because I’m a harmless and diligent¹ bee.”

From this little story, let people beware ;
Because, like the wasp, if ill-natured they are,
They will never be loved, if they’re ever so
 fair.

A SWALLOW.

A SWALLOW in the spring
Came to our granary,² and ’neath the eaves
Essayed³ to make her nest, and there did bring
 Wet earth, and straw, and leaves.

Day after day she toiled
With patient heart ; but ere her work was
 crowned,⁴

¹ *diligent*, industrious, hardworking.

² *granary*, a store-house for corn.

³ *essayed*, tried, attempted.

⁴ *crowned*, here this means finished.

Some sad mishap the tiny fabric¹ spoiled,
And dashed it to the ground.

She found the ruin wrought :
Yet not cast down, forth from her place she flew,
And, with her mate, fresh earth and grasses
brought,
And built her nest anew.

But scarcely had she placed
The last soft feather on its ample² floor,
When wicked hands, or chance, again laid
waste,

And wrought the ruin o'er.

But still her heart she kept,
And toiled again ; and last night, hearing calls,
I looked, and lo ! three little swallows slept
Within the earth-made walls.

R. ANDROSS.

THE WREN.

AN Irish legend³ old,
A curious tale hath told,
Of birds that met to hold
A conclave⁴ in the spring ;

¹ *fabric*, building.

³ *legend*, a tale.

² *ample*, large.

⁴ *conclave*, a meeting called together.

At which it was decreed¹
That he who could exceed
The rest in flight and speed
Should be their chosen king.

Now, as you may suppose,
The noble eagle rose
At once o'er friends and foes,
And soared towards the sun ;
And soon, with stately² call,
He published³ unto all
The others, great and small,
The victory he had won.

When, lo ! from out his wing,
A wren—pert little thing—
With quick and sudden spring,
Flew up an inch or two ;
And from its station there,
It hastened to declare,
With proud, conceited air,
I am the king, not you !”

So folks, in later days,
Have often sought to raise
Themselves to heights of praise,
Not by their own endeavour,⁴

¹ *decreed*, determined, ordered by law.

³ *published*, made known.

² *stately*, fine, grand.

⁴ *endeavour*, attempt.

But by another's aid ;
 By triumphs " ready-made,"
 They take some lofty grade,¹
 And pass for being clever !
 But you and I, dear friend,
 In striving to ascend²
 Where'er our wishes tend³
 Will leave such schemes alone ;
 For if we mean to claim⁴
 The heritage of fame,⁵
 We first will win the same
 By efforts of our own !

HOPE, FAITH, AND LOVE.

HOPE is like a harebell trembling from its birth,
 Love is like a rose the joy of all the earth ;
 Faith is like a lily lifted high and white,
 Love is like a lovely rose the world's delight ;
 Harebells and sweet lilies show a thornless
 growth,
 But the rose with all its thorns excels⁶ them both.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

¹ *grade*, step in rank.

² *ascend*, take a high place, rise, or get on in the world.

³ *tend*, aim at, or are turned towards.

⁴ *claim*, demand, ask for as our right.

⁵ *heritage of fame*, a name for having done something great.

⁶ *excels*, is better than.

THE WORM.

TURN, turn thy hasty foot aside,
 Nor crush that helpless worm!
 The frame¹ thy wayward² looks deride,³
 Required a God to form.

The common Lord⁴ of all that move,
 From whom thy being flow'd,
 A portion of his boundless⁵ love
 On that poor worm bestowed.⁶

The sun, the moon, the stars he made
 For all his creatures free ;
 And spread o'er earth the grassy blade,
 For worms as well as thee.

Let them enjoy their little day,
 Their humble bliss⁷ receive :
 Oh! do not lightly take away
 The life thou canst not give.

GISBORNE.

¹ *frame*, form, body.

² *wayward*, wilful, perverse.

³ *deride*, laugh at, mock. ⁴ *common Lord*, Lord common to all, of all.

⁵ *boundless*, without bounds.

⁶ *bestowed*, gave.

⁷ *bliss*, happiness.

THE WIND IN A FROLIC.

THE wind one morning sprang up from sleep,
 Saying, "Now for a frolic! now for a leap!
 Now for a mad-cap galloping chase!
 I'll make a commotion¹ in every place!"

So it swept with a bustle right through a great
 town,

Cracking the signs, and scattering down
 Shutters; and whisking, with merciless squalls,²
 Old women's bonnets and gingerbread stalls.
 There never was heard a much lustier³ shout,
 As the apples and oranges trundled about;
 And the urchins, that stand with their thievish
 eyes

For ever on watch, ran off each with a prize.

Then away to the field it went, blustering and
 humming,

And the cattle all wonder'd what monster was
 coming;

It plucked by the tails the grave matronly⁴ cows,
 And tossed the colts' manes all over their
 brows;

¹ *commotion*, disturbance. ² *squall*, a strong and sudden gust of wind.

³ *lustier*, stronger.

⁴ *matronly*, motherly, elderly.

Till, offended at such an unusual salute,¹
They all turned their backs, and stood sulky
and mute.²

So on it went capering and playing its pranks,
Whistling with reeds on the broad river's
banks,

Puffing the birds as they sat on the spray,
Or the traveller grave on the king's highway.
It was not too nice³ to hustle the bags
Of the beggar, and flutter his dirty rags ;
'Twas so bold, that it feared not to play its joke
With the doctor's wig or the gentleman's cloak.
Through the forest it roared, and cried gaily,

" Now,
You sturdy⁴ old oaks, I'll make you bow ! "
And it made them bow without more ado,
Or it cracked their great branches through and
through.

Then it rushed like a monster on cottage and
farm,
Striking their dwellers with sudden alarm ;
And they ran out like bees in a midsummer
swarm ;

¹ *salute*, greeting.

² *mute*, silent, dumb.

³ *too nice*, this means here, not too particular.

⁴ *sturdy*, strong.

There were dames with their kerchiefs tied
 over their caps,
To see if their poultry were free from mis-
 haps ;
The turkeys they gobbled, the geese screamed
 aloud,
And the hens crept to roost in a terrified
 crowd ;
There was rearing of ladders, and logs were
 laid on,
Where the thatch from the roof threatened
 soon to be gone.
But the wind had swept on, and had met in a
 lane
With a schoolboy, who panted and struggled
 in vain ;
For it tossed him and twirled him, then passed,
 and he stood
With his hat in a pool and his shoes in the
 mud.
Then away went the wind in its holiday glee,
And now it was far on the billowy sea,
And the lordly¹ ships felt its staggering blow,²
And the little boats darted to and fro.

¹ *lordly*, noble, grand, fine.

² *staggering blow*, a blow making them shake, totter, reel from side to side.

But lo ! it was night, and it sank to rest
On the sea-bird's rock in the gleaming west,
Laughing to think, in its frolicsome fun
How little of mischief it really had done.

WILLIAM HOWITT.

MY VILLAGE.

I PRAISE my dear
Sweet village here,
For fairer fields
Than all around
The prospect yields¹
Are nowhere found.
A picture fair
This landscape² were³
In painter's hand.
Here mountains stand,
There fields of corn
And meads in view,
Whose edge adorn⁴
The forest blue.
On yonder height
The sheep and fold,

¹ *yields*, gives.

³ *were*, this means here, *would be*.

² *landscape*, view, prospect.

⁴ *adorn*, to ornament, set off.

And there in sight
“Contentment Hall !”
My cottage here
So sweet and dear,
'Tis thus I call.

O'er hill and dale
Tall elm trees rise,
And poplars wave
In azure¹ skies.
With purling² tones
Creeps through each nook,
O'er pebble stones,
A crystal³ brook ;
It flows beneath
The verdant⁴ sprays,
An arching wreath
They o'er it raise.
Trout glide below,
And bubbles blow ;
Swift from the view
Now down they dart,
Then back unto
The surface start.

¹ *azure*, faint blue colour.

³ *crystal*, this means clear as crystal.

² *purling*, softly murmuring.

⁴ *verdant*, green.

EVERY ONE IN HIS OWN PLACE.

JOHN GRUMLEY swore by the light of the moon,
And the green leaves on the tree,
That he could do more work in a day
Than his wife could do in three !

‘ With all my heart,’ the old dame said ;
‘ And if you will allow,
You here shall stay at home to-day,
And I’ll go mind the plough.

‘ But you must milk the tiny cow,
Lest she should go quite dry ;
And you must feed the little pigs
That are within the sty.

‘ And you must watch the speckled hen,
Lest she should go astray ;
And not forget the spool¹ of yarn
That I spin every day.’

Then the old woman took the stick in her hand,
And went to follow the plough ;
The old man put the pail on his head,
And went to milk the cow.

¹ *spool of yarn*, the reelful of yarn which she spun every day.

110 *EVERY ONE IN HIS OWN PLACE.*

But Tiny she winced,¹ and Tiny she flinched,²
And Tiny she tossed her nose ;
And Tiny gave him a kick on the shin
Till the blood ran down to his toes.

And a 'Ho, Tiny !' and a 'So, Tiny !
Pretty little cow, stand still !
And if ever I milk you again,' he said,
'It shall be against my will.'

And then he went to feed the pigs
That were within the sty ;
He knocked his nose against the shed,
And caused the blood to fly.

And then he watched the speckled hen,
Lest she should go astray ;
But he quite forgot the spool of yarn
That his wife span every day.

And when the old woman came home at night,
He said he could plainly see
That his wife could do more work in a day
Than he could do in three !

¹ *winc*ed, moved aside, made a sudden movement.

² *flin*ched, shrunk from, moved away from, in fear of pain, or not knowing what would be done.

III

EVENING.

LITTLE girl, it is time to retire to your rest ;
The sheep are put into the fold,
The linnet forsakes us, and flies to her nest,
To shelter her young from the cold.

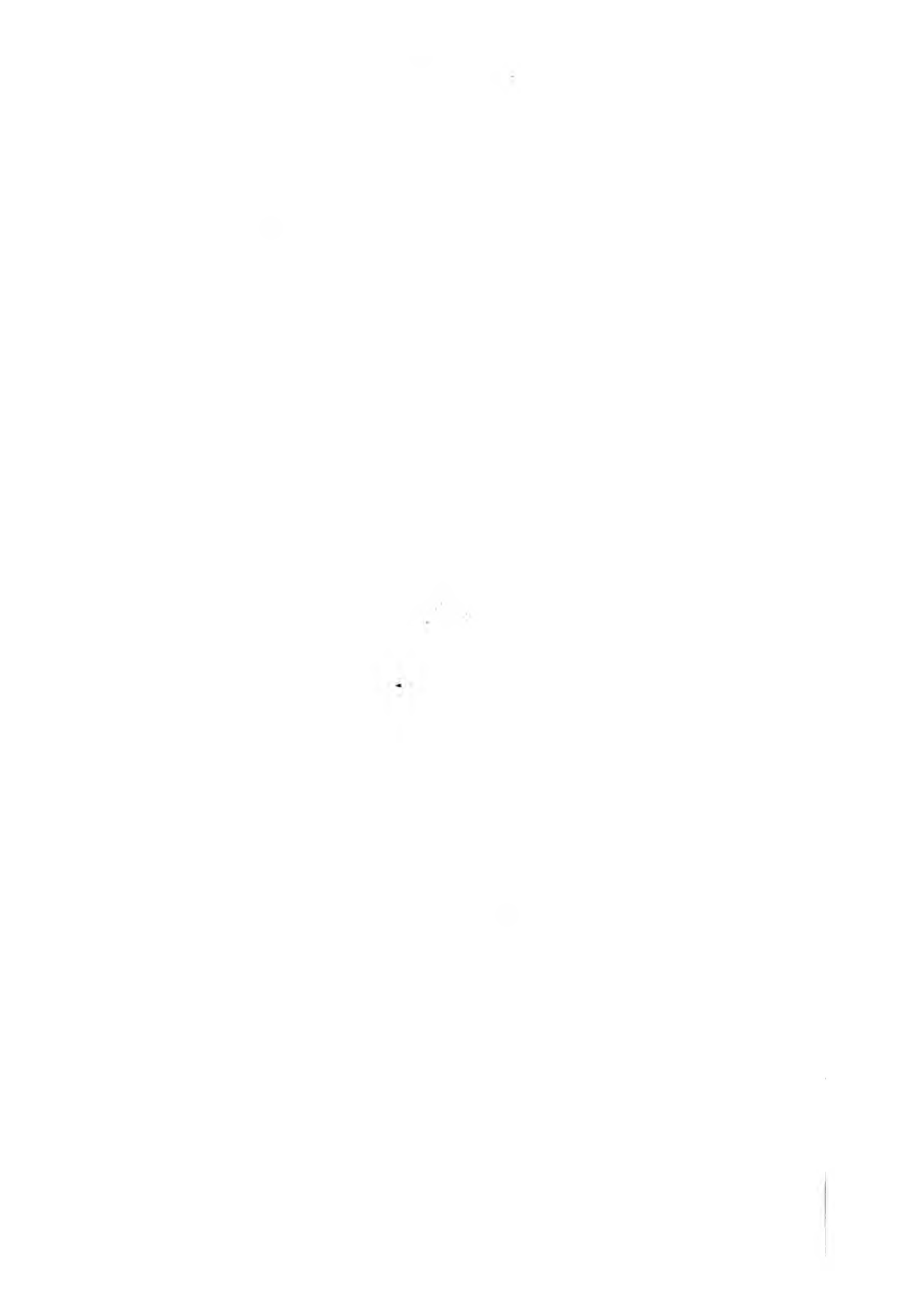
The owl has flown out of his lonely retreat,
And screams through the tall shady trees ;
The nightingale takes on the hawthorn his seat
And sings to the evening breeze.

The sun, too, now seems to have finished his
race,
And sinks once again to his rest ;
But though we no longer can see his bright
face,
He leaves a gold streak in the west.

Little girl, have you finished your daily employ
With industry, patience, and care ?
If so, lay your head on your pillow with joy,
No thorn to disturb shall be there.¹

¹ *no thorn to disturb shall be there* ; this means no troublesome thoughts will prevent you from sleeping.

HYMNS.



THE POOR CHILD'S HYMN.

WE are poor and lowly born ;
 With the poor we bide ;
 Labour is our heritage,¹
 Care and want beside.
 What of this ?—our blessed Lord
 Was of lowly birth,
 And poor toiling fishermen
 Were His friends on earth !

We are ignorant and young,
 Simple children all ;
 Gifted with but humble powers,
 And of learning small.
 What of this ?—our blessed Lord
 Lovèd such as we ;
 How He blessed the little ones
 Sitting on His knee !

MARY HOWITT.

¹ *heritage*, lot.

THE CHILD'S COMPLAINT.

WHAT do I read my Bible for,
But, Lord, to learn Thy will ;
And shall I daily know Thee more,
And less obey Thee still ?

Make me Thy heavenly voice to hear,
And let me love to pray ;
Since God will lend a gracious¹ ear
To what a child can say,

RULE OF LIFE.

BE you to others kind and true,
As you'd have others be to you ;
And do not ever say to men
A word you would not take again.

Love God with all your soul and strength,
With all your heart and mind ;
And love your brother as yourself ;
Be faithful, just, and kind.

¹ *gracious*, kindly, benevolent.

Deal with each other as you'd have
Another deal with you ;
What you would not like them to do,
That be sure you should not do.
JANE AND ANN TAYLOR.

*TO A LITTLE GIRL THAT HAS
TOLD A LIE.*

AND has my darling told a lie ?
Did she forget that God was by ?
That God, who saw the things she did,
From whom no action can be hid ;
Did she forget that God could see,
And hear, wherever she might be ?

Why should you fear the truth to tell ?
Does falsehood ever do so well ?
Can you be satisfied to know
There's something wrong to hide below ?
No ! let your fault be what it may,
To own it is the happy way.

So long as you your crime conceal
You cannot light and gladsome feel :

Your little heart will seem opprest,¹
As if a weight were on your breast ;
And e'en your mother's eye to meet,
Will tinge² your face with shame and heat.

Yes, God has made your duty clear,
By every blush, by every fear ;
And conscience, like an angel kind,
Keeps watch to bring it to your mind.
Its friendly warnings ever heed,
And neither tell a lie—nor need.³

Why should you fear to tell me true ?
Confess,⁴ and then I'll pardon you :
Tell me you're sorry, and you'll try
To act the better by-and-bye,
And then, whate'er your crime has been,
It won't be half so great a sin.

You thought, because you were alone,
Your falsehood never could be known,
But liars always are found out,
Whatever ways they wind about ;
But always be afraid, my dear,
To tell a lie,—for God can hear !

¹ *opprest*, put for oppressed, which means heavy. ² *tinge*, colour, tint.

³ *nor need*, nor act so as to be tempted to tell a lie to conceal what you have done.

⁴ *confess*, tell the whole truth.

AGAINST PRIDE IN CLOTHES

THE tulip and the butterfly
 Appear in gayer coats than I ;
 Let me be drest fine as I will,
 Flies, worms, and flow'rs exceed¹ me still.

Then will I set my heart to find
 Inward adornings of the mind ;
 Knowledge and virtue, truth and grace,
 These are the robes of richest dress.

No more shall worms with me compare,
 This is the raiment² angels wear ;
 The Son of God, when here below,
 Put on this blest apparel³ too.

It never fades, it ne'er grows old,
 Nor fears the rain, nor moth, nor mould ;
 It takes no spot, but still refines ;⁴
 The more 'tis worn, the more it shines.

In this on earth would I appear,
 Then go to heaven and wear it there,

I. WATTS.

¹ *exceed*, go beyond me, excel me.

² *raiment*, clothing.

³ *apparel*, dress (this also means clothing).

⁴ *refines*, improves, becomes purer.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

CHILDREN, do you love each other ?

Are you always kind and true ?

Do you always do to others

As you'd have them do to you ?

Are you gentle to each other ?

Are you careful, day by day,

Not to give offence by actions,

Or by anything you say ?

Little children, love each other,

Never give another pain ;

If your brother speak in anger,

Answer not in wrath again.

Be not selfish to each other,

Never mar¹ another's rest ;

Strive to make each other happy,

And you will yourselves be blest.

I. WATTS.

¹ *mar*, spoil, injure.

EVENING PRAYER.

ERE on my bed my limbs I lay,
God grant me grace my prayers to say :
O God ! preserve my mother dear
In strength and health for many a year ;
And, O ! preserve my father too,
And may I pay him reverence¹ due ;
And may I my best thoughts employ
To be my parents' hope and joy ;
And O ! preserve my brothers both
From evil doings and from sloth,²
And may we always love each other,
Our friends, our father, and our mother:
And still, O, Lord, to me impart³
An innocent and grateful heart.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

¹ *reverence*, respect. ² *sloth*, idleness. ³ *impart*, grant, give.

THE BEAUTIES OF CREATION.

ALL things bright and beautiful,
 All creatures, great and small,
 All things wise and wonderful,
 The good God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
 Each little bird that sings,
 He made their glowing colours,
 He made their tiny wings.

The rich man in his palace,
 The poor man at his gate ;
 God made them, high or lowly,
 And ordered their estate.¹

The purple-headed mountain,
 The river running by,
 The sunset and the morning
 That brightens up the sky.

He gave us eyes to see them,
 And lips that we might tell,
 How great is God the Father,
 Who has made all things well.

C. F. H. (*abridged*).

¹ *ordered their estate*, appointed their station in life.

A LITTLE.

A LITTLE ;—'tis a little word,
 But much may in it dwell ;¹
 Then let the warning truth be heard,
 And learn the lesson well.

The way of ruin thus begins,
 Down, down, like easy stairs ;
 If conscience suffers little sins,
 Soon, larger ones it bears.

A little theft, a small deceit,
 Too often leads to more ;
 'Tis hard at first, but tempts the feet
 As through an open door.

Just as the broadest rivers run
 From small and distant springs,
 The greatest crimes that men have done,
 Have grown from little things.

The child who early disobeys,
 Stands then, on slippery ground ;
 And who shall tell, in future days,
 How low he may be found ?

JANE TAYLOR.

¹ *much may in it dwell.* Little things often lead to great things ; we sometimes speak of an action as little, not seeing that it will lead to great deeds, either *good* or *evil*.

HONESTY.

ON the goods that are not thine
 Take good heed thou lay no finger ;
 Round thy neighbour's better things
 Let no wistful¹ glances linger.²
 Pilfer³ not the smallest thing,
 Touch it not howe'er thou need it.
 Though the owner have enough,
 Though he know it not, nor heed it.
 Taste not the forbidden fruit,
 Though resistance⁴ be a trial ;
 Grasping⁵ hand and roving eye,
 Early teach them self-denial.⁶
 Upright heart, and honest name
 To the poorest are a treasure,
 Better than ill-gotten wealth,
 Better far than pomp or pleasure.
 Poor and needy though thou art,
 Gladly take what God has given ;
 With clean hands⁷ and humble heart
 Passing through the world to heaven.

C. F. H.

¹ *wistful*, longing.² *linger*, remain.³ *pilfer*, steal.⁴ *resistance*, holding back, not yielding.⁵ *grasping*, covetous.⁶ *self-denial*, to do without what you desire.⁷ *clean hands*, honest hands.

*OUR FATHER WHO ART IN
HEAVEN.*

GREAT God, and wilt thou condescend¹
To be my father and my friend,
I a poor child, and Thou so high,
The Lord of earth, and air, and sky.

Art Thou my Father?—let me be
A meek obedient child to Thee;
And try, in word, and deed, and thought,
To serve and please Thee as I ought.

Art Thou my Father?—Then at last,
When all my days on earth are past,
Send down and take me in Thy love,
To be a better child above.

CONSCIENCE.

WHEN a foolish thought within
Tries to take us in a snare,²
Conscience tells us, "It is sin,"
And entreats³ us to beware.

¹ *condescend*, stoop so low, be so good as.

² *take us in a snare*, in a trap, lead us into evil.

³ *entreats*, begs.

If in something we transgress,¹
And are tempted to deny ;
Conscience says, " Your faults confess,
" Do not dare to tell a lie."

When our angry passions rise,
Tempting to revenge an ill,
" Now subdue² it," Conscience cries,
" Do command your temper still."

Thus without our will or choice,
This good monitor³ within,
With a secret, gentle voice,
Warns us to beware of sin.

But if we should disregard
While this friendly voice would call,
Conscience soon will grow so hard,
That it will not speak at all.

JANE TAYLOR.

A CHILD'S MORNING HYMN.

ONCE more the light of day I see ;
Lord, with it let me raise
My heart and voice in song to Thee
Of gratitude and praise.

¹ *transgress*, pass over, or break a law or command.

² *subdue*, keep it under.

³ *monitor*, adviser.

The "busy bee" ere this hath gone
O'er many a bud and bell ;
From flower to flower is humming on,
To store its waxen cell.

O may I like the bee still strive
Each moment to employ,
And store my mind, that richer hive,
With sweets that cannot cloy.¹

The skylark from its lowly nest
Hath soared into the sky,
And by its joyous song expressed²
Unconscious praise on high.

My feeble voice and faltering tone
No tuneful tribute³ bring ;
But thou canst in my heart make known
What bird can never sing.

Instruct me, then, to lift my heart
To Thee in praise and prayer ;
And love and gratitude impart
For every good I share :

¹ *cloy*, make me weary of them.

² *expressed unconscious praise*, gave praise without knowing it by its song.

³ *tribute*, payment.

For all the gifts Thy bounty¹ sends,
 For which so many pine ;
 For food and clothing, home and friends,
 Since all these boons² are Thine.

Thus let me, Lord, confess the debt
 I owe Thee day by day ;
 Nor e'er at night or morn forget,
 To Thee, O God, to pray !

B. BARTON.

¹ *bounty*, goodness.

² *boons*, gifts, favours.

END OF FIRST BOOK.

