

CONVERSATIONS.

VOL. II.

# CONVERSATIONS

INTRODUCING

P O E T R Y:

CHIEFLY ON SUBJECTS OF NATURAL  
HISTORY.

FOR THE USE OF

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS.

VOLUME II.

By CHARLOTTE SMITH.

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CONVERSATION THE SIXTH.

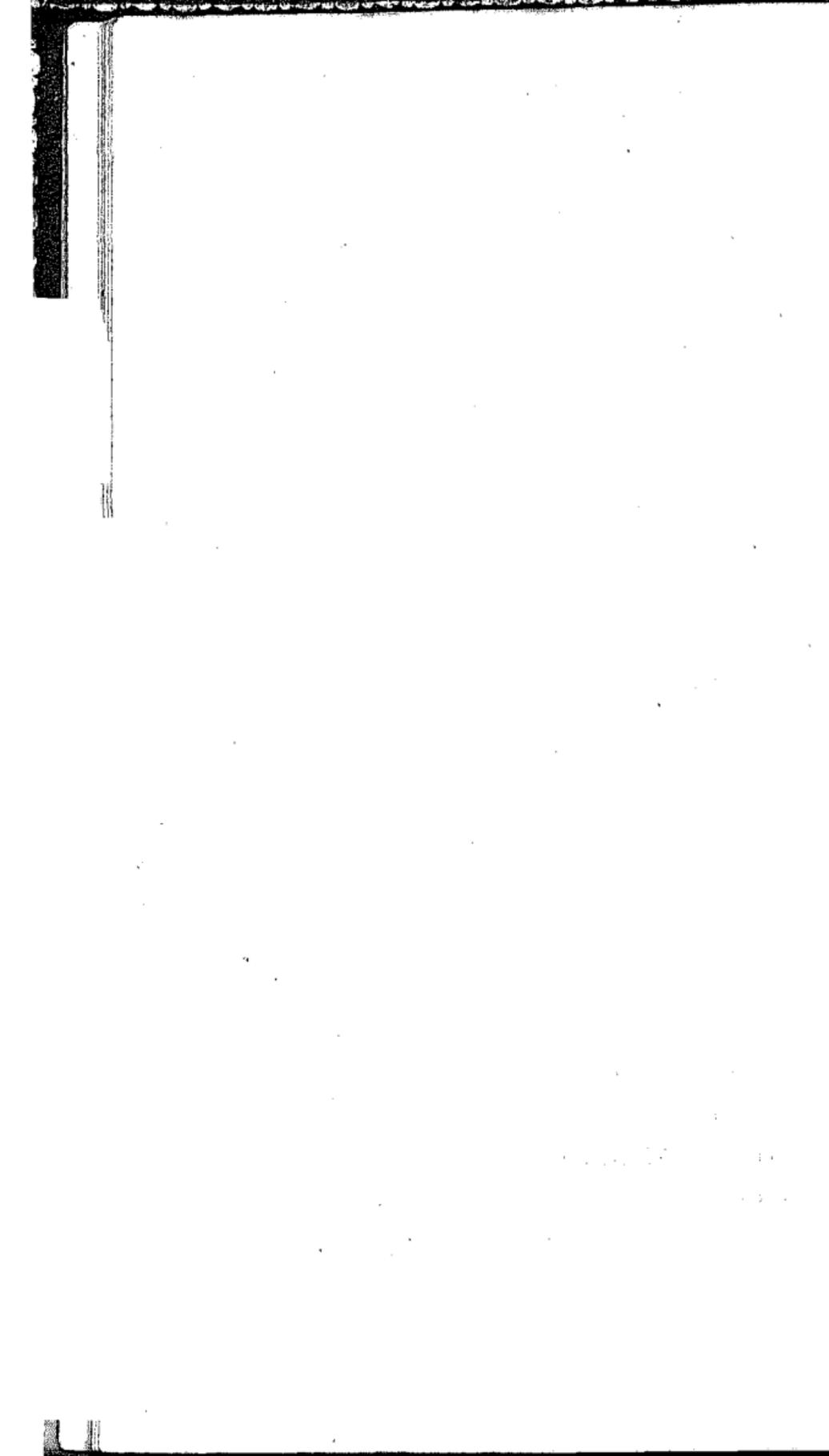
POEMS.

Gossamer.

THE NAUTILUS.

THE WHEAT-EAR.

EVENING WALK BY THE SEA SIDE.



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## CONVERSATION THE SIXTH.

A JOURNEY.

MRS. TALBOT—EMILY—GEORGE ON  
HORSEBACK.

EMILY. And so at last we are really on our way!

MRS. TALBOT. And perhaps enjoy our present journey the more, because it has been so long delayed.

EMILY. My brother seems so happy! and poor old Dumplin looks so spruce it is quite a pleasure to see him. How far is it, Mamma?

MRS. TALBOT. Only sixteen miles; and I am sorry he cannot go the whole way on horseback, since he seems so delighted with it.

EMILY. Mamma, may I ask why he cannot?

MRS. TALBOT. Because of the great expense of keeping two horses, one for him and another for the servant, at a place of public resort; where the rich, and those who follow the rich, either in emulation or for pecuniary advantage, have made the necessary articles of life so extravagantly dear, that persons of moderate fortune are obliged to give up frequenting them, even when their health may require it. The great encrease of expense at home is a matter of serious complaint, but at these places absolutely ruinous.

EMILY. Oh but then I would go to some small private village by the sea, where those people that have so much money do not go.

MRS. TALAOT. That has been tried, but without success. The merest hovel on the coast, which hangs out a little board by way of a sign, is as much the seat of imposition, as the splendid hotel at the most fashionable bathing town; and the only difference seems to be, that in inferior

rior places a great deal is extorted for bad things, and at a considerable one for good things. And those who cannot afford the expense must make up their minds to stay at home. Just as the daughters of those whose mothers a few years ago were drawn by four horses, and whose grandmothers by six, are now glad to get into a stage coach.

EMILY. But why, Mamma? Does not the earth bear the same crops it used to do, and as much?

MRS. TALBOT. More, if we may believe all the improvements that have been made in agriculture, and rural œconomy of every sort.

EMILY. And what is the reason of it then?

MRS. TALBOT. The change of manners; the accumulation of wealth, which has made a great difference in the value of money; and wars, which have cost such immense sums to the nation.

B 3 EMILY.

EMILY. I don't understand it, I am sure—it seems all a contradiction.

MRS. TALBOT. It is not necessary you should understand it yet awhile, my dear Emily, nor would I have you puzzle your poor little head about it for a great many years to come: yet it is necessary that children and young people should understand why those who would most gladly gratify them, are compelled to deny them many little enjoyments, that might a few years ago have been allowed to the children of persons in the middle rank of life without imprudence, or giving them an early bias towards indulgences, which as they grow up will probably be even more difficult of attainment than they are now. It is therefore very material, my dear Emily, that persons in our situation, who cannot often go forth in search of remote pleasures, should acquire an early habit of finding them at home. And I have endeavoured to give you, and I hope have succeeded in giving you a taste for those  
pure

pure and innocent enjoyments that are always to be found, and which not only amuse the passing hour, but teach us,

To look thro' Nature up to Nature's God.

But see, Emily, we are come to the foot of Mileford hill. It is so steep, that the poor horses would, I dare say, be very much obliged to us if we were to save them the labour of drawing us up.

EMILY. Let us walk then, Mamma, I am sure I should like it a great deal the best.—Come, my dear George, we are going to walk up the hill—come and help us out.—Oh! how delightful it is to walk while the dew is yet on the ground!

GEORGE. And see those fine cobwebs covered with dew-drops, like so many globes of silver—how the net work is spun from one of those furze bushes to the other!

MRS. TALBOT. And webs of the same fine structure, perhaps a part of these, carry those minute spiders into the air, and

that also weave the substance which sometimes is said to fall in showers, of which in the mornings and evenings of Autumn there are minute threads floating, that are sometimes felt against the face, and is called gossamer.

GEORGE. Gossamer, you know, Emily, is a part of the harness of Queen Mab's chariot.

Her waggon spokes are made of spiders legs,  
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,  
The traces of the smallest spider's web.

And that smallest is the insect of the gossamer, is it not, Mother?

MRS. TALBOT. I believe so, and I think I can remember a Sonnet, which I will repeat to you as we slowly ascend the hill.

## SONNET

TO THE INSECT OF THE GOSSAMER.

SMALL, viewless aeronaut, that by the line  
Of Gossamer suspended, in mid air  
Float'st on a sun-beam—Livi atom, where

Ends

Ends thy breeze-guided voyage? With what design  
In æther dost thou launch thy form minute,  
Mocking the eye? Alas! before the veil  
Of denser clouds shall hide thee, the pursuit  
Of the keen Swift may end thy fairy sail!  
Thus on the golden thread that Fancy weaves  
Buoyant, as Hope's illusive flattery breathes,  
The young and visionary Poet leaves  
Life's dull realities, while sevenfold wreaths  
Of rainbow light around his head revolve.  
Ah! soon at Sorrow's touch the radiant dreams dis-  
solve.

EMILY. Explain one thing to me, if  
you please, Mamma.

MRS. TALBOT. Let us sit down then  
a moment on this block of stone and  
rest ourselves, for to explain and walk up  
hill too is rather fatiguing.—Now put  
your question.

EMILY. Why do you call the little  
spider an aeronaut? I thought that meant  
a person who goes into the air in a bal-  
loon.

MRS. TALBOT. The term was, I ra-  
ther think, invented to signify those ad-  
venturers

venturers who have learned to float *in the air*, by *means of the air*; for the reason the balloon rises is, that the air within which it is filled is lighter than the air we breathe, and which surrounds us. However, this little insect suspended on an imperceptible thread, and floating in the regions of boundless space, may not improperly be termed an aeronaut also.

GEORGE. Mother, I have often thought how amazing the prospect must be from the gallery of one of those balloons, and have wished to go up in one.

MRS. TALBOT. The prospect must be undoubtedly magnificent, but I much suspect that no young aeronaut is sufficiently at his ease to contemplate it with much calmness. So my dear George, however I honor your spirit of enterprize and enquiry, you must at present, I believe, content yourself with such prospects, for example, as we can command from this hill.

GEORGE. And indeed, Mother, it might

might satisfy any one, for it is very beautiful.

MRS. TALBOT. It is certainly; and it is difficult for any one, who has not been in more mountainous countries, to imagine any thing more lovely. Observe how the distant sea sparkles in the bright beams of the ascending sun. And even from hence the sails of the fishing boats, returning with the morning tide, are distinctly seen.

GEORGE. They look like little white feathers as they catch the light. There is a larger ship I can distinguish a great deal farther off, and beyond I can count many more—one, two, three—I dare say there are at least a dozen of them.

MRS. TALBOT. My eyes do not so well assist me. Those ships, however, which you distinguish, are probably merchant ships sailing with convoy, that is, a ship of war to fight, in case they should be attacked by the enemy as they go down the Channel. The man of business, or  
the

the patriot, glorying in the superiority which commerce gives to this small island over those countries, which in natural advantages are greatly superior, may look with unalloyed satisfaction at one of these fleets, sent with the natural produce of this country, or that which it imports from other quarters of the world, to the settlements beyond the Atlantic; but one on whom these considerations make less impression, than the domestic comforts and affections, is apt to reflect on the separation of families, and the many aching hearts which are left by those embarked in these vessels, who go, some as military men to garrison remote colonies, and some on mercantile adventures. But this is a speculation I will not now indulge—George, does the sea view, span-gled as it now is with small white sails, bring nothing to your recollection that you have heard of?

GEORGE. Let me consider a moment—Indeed I do not immediately remember any thing—

MRS.

MRS. TALBOT. No little Poem that you once heard, and even learned to repeat and wrote out in your book, though I do not believe it is among those Emily has yet in her collection ?

GEORGE. Oh yes ! I now recall it—the Nautilus—a little poem which my aunt gave me. But I never wrote it in the book I am filling now ; and you know when I came home Emily was ill, and did not learn any thing for a good while.

EMILY. But you will let me have it now, Mamma?

MRS. TALBOT. Assuredly I will ; and as the horses, after they have reached the summit of the hill, must rest a few moments, we may have time to give Emily an account of it, and to recite your aunt's stanzas.

Of the marine animal she celebrates there are several species ; and the shells of those found in the Indian seas are large and beautiful. They are highly valued, and made into drinking cups set in gold  
by

by the natives of some parts of India. The inhabitant is a limax, or sea snail. The nautilus or sailor of the Mediterranean is smaller, and has the singular property of spreading a little membrane like a sail above the surface of the water, and putting out other filaments which seem occasionally to serve him for oars. But the stanzas themselves tell all this; and when I saw the fishing boats looking at this distance not much larger than those little animals, these stanzas immediately occurred to me.

### THE NAUTILUS.

WHERE southern suns and winds prevail,  
And undulate the Summer seas;  
The Nautilus expands his sail,  
And scuds before the fresh'ning breeze.

Oft is a little squadron seen  
Of mimic ships all rigg'd complete;  
Fancy might think the fairy queen  
Was sailing with her elfin fleet.

With

With how much beauty is design'd  
Each channell'd bark of purest white !  
With orient pearl each cabin lined,  
Varying with every change of light.

While with his little slender oars,  
His silken sail, and tapering mast,  
The dauntless mariner explores  
The dangers of the watery waste.

Prepared, should tempests rend the sky,  
From harm his fragile bark to keep,  
He furls his sail, his oar lays by,  
And seeks his safety in the deep,

Then safe on ocean's shelly bed,  
He hears the storm above him roar;  
Mid groves of coral glowing red,  
Or rocks o'erhung with madrepore.

So let us catch life's favouring gale,  
But if fate's adverse winds be rude,  
Take calmly in th' adventurous sail,  
And find repose in Solitude.

EMILY. I like them very much, though  
I do not quite understand what Madrepore  
is; is it a sea weed?

Mrs

MRS. TALBOT. It is a zoophyte; by which I understand is meant that link in the chain which unites the animal and vegetable kingdoms—Madrepore, Tubipore and Millipore are corals, the works of sea insects; and Madrepore, of which mention is made in these lines, has the appearance of a vegetable, in small plaited or indented cups not bigger than half a pea, closely adhering together, and often covers the sea rocks as mantles of ivy hang over those on land.

EMILY. Oh! now I comprehend —

GEORGE. And I think I have seen stones, and large coarse shells, with something like what you describe growing upon them.

MRS. TALBOT. I dare say you have—and perhaps we shall find some in our walks when we are on the coast. But our conversation has been long; and it is now time we proceed; a few miles farther, George, and you and Dumpling part.

GEORGE. I shall bear the separation  
with

with great fortitude, Mother, for Dumplin will be taken good care of at home, and have good grass to run in; while, you know, I can make use of my legs to scramble up and down the rocks, and scamper on these pleasant green hills, like a mountaineer.

MRS. TALBOT. Now, since we are a little refreshed and have looked about us, let us avail ourselves of this beautiful evening to take a walk:—whither shall we go, to the sea side or to the hills?

EMILY. To the hills now, Mamma, and the sea afterwards; because George has just been down to the sea, and says the tide will not be down these two hours; and therefore we cannot walk on the sands yet, and those stones between the cliffs and the sands do so hurt one's feet!

MRS. TALBOT. Well then, from the back of the house we can immediately reach the down—and here is George coming just in time to accompany us.

GEORGE. Oh Mother, what a pleasant country this is in fine weather! I love the sea so much, that sometimes I think I should like to live always upon it.

MRS. TALBOT. But you would then see no country at all: the green hills, and the woods you love so much, you would never then enjoy; for when you happened to go on shore it would only be to a port, you know, which is any thing but pleasant to any of the senses of a person accustomed to the pure air and pleasant scenes of the country.

GEORGE. That is very true: I don't know that I should like to be a sailor, and to live the greatest part of my life in a ship; but I should like to be always within sight of the sea.

MRS. TALBOT. And so should I, if with it the pleasures of a garden, and woods, and shrubberies could be enjoyed; but on the bold open coast on this side of England, that is impossible; for if the salt dews of the ocean are not, as many persons

persons assert, injurious to vegetation, the south-west winds are so violent, that trees hardly ever attain any great size, and very early in Summer their leaves become brown and withered, and they lose their beauty.

GEORGE. Well, one cannot have every thing. Now I will tell you, Mother, what I should like best—a cottage a little on the other side, where a garden might be sheltered, and yet on walking a few paces, the sea would be visible from the top of the hill.

MRS. TALBOT. I always find occasion to admire your taste, George, but there are objections, I believe, to such a situation. Water, I fear, would be wanting, an article of the first necessity.

GEORGE. I did not think of that, Mother. But there is, you told me, and indeed I read a good deal about it, an art called hydraulics, by which water can be raised to any height.

MRS. TALBOT. Yes, there is such an

art or science, but the expense attending the necessary mechanism is so great, that your cottage would be provided with water, at a price that would build a palace; and after all, you would have probably a scanty and precarious supply.

GEORGE. Well, then I must give up my cottage in the air, to be sure, Mother.

MRS. TALBOT. Cottages, and castles too, George, are often built with great pleasure in the air; but when reason is called in, our beautiful fabrics tumble to the ground, and we are under the necessity of being content with a very small part of all the fine things our fancy furnished us with.

EMILY. And is it not the same thing, Mamma, in regard to people? You said, I remember, one day, that one evil of those books which Miss Levingstone is so fond of reading, was, that the authors represented such characters as did not exist in the world, and that made young people  
who

who read them discontented with those that really live in the world.

MRS. TALBOT. I believe I did say something like that, Emily; but those characters are often drawn to show us what we *should* be. And if instead of expecting to find perfect characters in others, each person endeavoured to correct his or her own faults, the personages of real life would oftener than they do approach those that novelists describe as perfect. It is very rare that any one is called upon to exert all the heroism, which is often given in these books to the principal characters; but it is in every one's power to think justly, and act with integrity and firmness, and at least to command themselves.

GEORGE. I don't know whether any persons are in the world like those that are called Heroes and Heroines in those books, but I hope there are none so wicked and so foolish, as some of the other characters. I took up a book the other day which lay on the counter at Ellis's, while

he was looking out some paper, and there was a character in it of a Sir Something Somebody, for all the people had titles, that seemed so wicked, as to be quite out of all probability; and if any such man was really in the world he would be forced to leave society, for nobody would be found to keep company with him.

MRS. TALBOT. I do not know what character you mean, or what book you allude to, as indeed I read but few books of that description now, I cannot, therefore, judge how far your idea is, or ought to be just; but I am afraid it too often happens, that those we call *the World* worship circumstance rather than character; and that few have resolution to shun vice and folly if they are covered by the trappings of fortune. Shakspeare, the great observer of men and manners, says with too much truth—

Thro' tatter'd clothes small vices do appear,  
 Robes and furr'd gowns hide all: plate sin with gold,  
 And the strong lance of justice harmless breaks;  
 Arm it in rags, a pigmy's spear doth pierce it.

But

But we are getting into a grave and satyrizing vein. It is better, methinks, to admire the setting Sun sinking beneath the horizon, while all those magnificent clouds tinged with hues of crimson, gold and purple, such as no human art can give the faintest description of, change their hues as he recedes.

EMILY. Yes, and it is better, Mamma, for us to talk of animals and birds. You told me, I remember, that these pieces of turf which seem cut away from the rest, and look parched and brown, covered holes that had been made to take Wheat-ears, and that great numbers are caught on these downs. Now tell me how that is contrived.

MRS. TALBOT. Come, George, let us sit down on this mass of something, which I doubt whether to call a large stone brought hither, or a number of stones cemented together by art, and which was formerly part of a beacon where signals were lighted. This high mound of turf that

surrounds it will shelter us a little from the ruffling sea wind; and while you give Emily the history of the Wheat-car in prose, I think I can put it into verse.

GEORGE. But Mother, your verse will be so much better than my prose, that I am sure Emily, as well as I, would rather sit still and silent, while you compose.

MRS. TALBOT. Only tell her how the birds are caught.

GEORGE. Why you see, Emily, these square pieces of turf—stay, I can take one out—these square pieces of turf are cut, and the earth under them, six or seven inches deep; then the piece is laid across the hole, so, and makes a sort of cave; a wire or horse hair with a noose in it is fixed within, and the Wheat-cars are so foolish as to be afraid of the least appearance of storm or darkness, so that every shadow drives them into these holes, and they run their silly heads into the nooses and are caught.

EMILY.

EMILY. And do they breed here in England?

GEORGE. Yes, I believe so; the book I have says, they are seen at all times of the year in some countries, while in others they are not known at all; but the great numbers, for they are caught by dozens and dozens to eat, being reckoned very good, do not appear till some time in August; and now they are almost out of season, and you see the traps are not set. Their nests are made under stones, or pieces of rock, among rough ground, but these nests are not often found; and therefore some people have supposed, as the greatest number of them are seen about these Sussex downs, which you know are, except some part of Kent, the nearest of any part of England to the coast of France, that they come from thence to breed, and go back again in Winter, because like many other birds, they would fare but badly here, for there are no insects at that time to feed them, and they live on flies, gnats and worms.

worms. But my Mother, I know, has finished her verses.

MRS. TALBOT. I have—but it is necessary, as George has so well related the history of the Wheat-ear, or Cul-blanc, or at least as much as is known of it, to tell you, that this place where we sit, and which is one of those they much frequent, is one of those circular trenches, in the midst of which a pile of stone was raised, and on them a fire was made, to give notice of the approach of an enemy. Since the art of war has been otherwise conducted, the same artifice is often used by smugglers, whose comrades on shore make these signals to warn them of danger, in landing their contraband cargos. This, you may perhaps recollect, George, I once explained to you, when you were reading a poem by Mr. Crowe, called Lewesdon Hill, celebrating an high hill in Dorsetshire, where among other circumstances, he mentions a place called Burton.

*Thce,*

*Thee*, Burton, and thy lofty cliff, where oft  
The nightly blaze is kindled; farther seen  
Than erst was that love-tended cresset hung  
Beside the Hellespont. Yet not like that,  
Inviting to the hospitable arms  
Of beauty and youth, but lighted up, the sign  
Of danger, and of ambush'd foe to warn  
The stealth approaching vessel, homeward bound  
From Havre, or the Norman isles.

EMILY. But that is not verse.

GEORGE. Yes it is; it is blank verse :  
the same as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, you  
know, and the *Task*, and a great many  
other poems we have read parts of.

EMILY. But what I mean is, that it  
is not in measure, in rhyme.

MRS. TALBOT. In measure, certainly,  
but not in rhyme, and that is what dis-  
tinguishes it from heroic verse of ten syl-  
lables, where the lines rhyme to each  
other, or rhyme alternately—as in that  
sort of verse in which elegies are usually  
written. But we will discuss this another  
time.—Here are my rhymes, which if  
George



To take you, shepherd boys prepare  
 The hollow turf, the wiry snare,  
 Of those weak terrors well aware,  
     That bid you vainly dread  
 The shadows floating o'er the downs,  
 Or murmuring gale, that round the stones  
 Of some old beacon, as it moans,  
     Scarce moves the thistle's head.

And if a cloud obscure the Sun  
 With faint and fluttering heart you run,  
 And to the pitfall you should shun  
     Resort in trembling haste ;  
 While, on that dewy cloud so high,  
 The lark, sweet minstrel of the sky,  
 Sings in the morning's beamy eye,  
     And bathes his spotted breast.

Ah! simple bird, resembling you  
 Are those, that with distorted view  
 Thro' life some selfish end pursue,  
     With low inglorious aim ;  
*They* sink in blank oblivious night,  
 While minds superior dare the light,  
 And high on honor's glorious height  
     Aspire to endless fame !

EMILY. Oh, Mamma! I shall at last  
 have birds in my collection, as well as  
 plants and animals.

Mrs.

MRS. TALBOT. I hope so; I know your aunt is adding to your numbers, and will bring, or perhaps send them.

EMILY. I hope she will come soon, we shall then be quite happy.

MRS. TALBOT. But let us not lose the intermediate time. Our stay here will not be very long; many interruptions will occur from the necessity we shall be under of associating now and then with such acquaintance as we shall meet here: the weather is at this season usually variable; we shall lose some days by storms, or heavy rain; therefore it is wise to take advantage of every interval to enjoy the sea. I see that the tide is now sufficiently down to allow us to escape the stones, of which Emily expresses such apprehension, and which are undoubtedly very uneasy to the feet. The evening is still bright and lovely—and as we walk, I think I can add to your little book, by describing in measure—

AN EVENING WALK BY THE SEA  
SIDE.

'Tis pleasant to wander along on the sand,  
Beneath the high cliff that is hallowed in caves ;  
When the fisher has put off his boat from the land,  
And the prawn-catcher wades thro' the short rippling  
waves.

While fast run before us the sandling and plover,  
Intent on the crabs and the sand-eels to feed,  
And here on a rock which the tide will soon cover,  
We'll find us a seat that is tapestried with weed.

Bright gleam the white sails in the slant rays of even,  
And stud as with silver the broad level main,  
While glowing clouds float on the fair face of Heaven,  
And the mirror-like water reflects them again.

How various the shades of marine vegetation,  
Thrown here the rough flints and the pebbles among,  
The feather'd conferva of deepest carnation,  
The dark purple slake and the olive sea thong.

While Flora herself unreluctantly mingles  
Her garlands with those that the Nereids have worn,  
For the yellow horned poppy springs up on the  
shingles,  
And convolvulas rival the rays of the morn.

But

But now to retire from the rock we have warning,  
Already the water encircles our seat,  
And slowly the tide of the evening returning,  
The moon beams reflects in the waves at our feet.

Ah! whether as now the mild Summer sea flowing,  
Scarce wrinkles the sands as it murmurs on shore,  
Or fierce wintry whirlwinds impetuously blowing  
Bid high maddening surges resistlessly roar;

That Power, which can put the wide waters in motion,  
Then bid the vast billows repose at His word;  
Fills the mind with deep reverence, while Earth, Air,  
and Ocean,  
Alike of the universe speak him the Lord.

GEORGE. I think, Mother, you make verses more easily, and better than ever. Why these are what is called extempore.

MRS. TALBOT. Not entirely so, for they cost me near an hour, but they are on a simple subject, and one with which I am well acquainted. On a subject more abstruse, I should not compose with equal facility. But you know, George, there are in Italy, and the Southern provinces

Provinces of France, and I believe also in Spain, persons; who on any given subject will recite many hundred stanzas of perfectly good rhymes, which they have never written, or even run over in their own minds.

GEORGE. I remember having read accounts of them, and that they are called Improvisatori.

MRS. TALBOT. I do not imagine it to be so difficult to do this in the language they compose in, as it would be in English; but to return for a moment to those verses you have just heard.—Do you understand them?

GEORGE. Yes, I think I do, tolerably well—Plovers and Sandlings are, I suppose, sea birds—those which we actually see on the sands at a little distance.

MRS. TALBOT. Birds that live on sea insects.—I know not whether those are the proper names of the birds which I mean to describe, but they are the names usually given to them; I rather think,

think, *Sanderling*, or Sand-piper, is the name of one of them, tho' the fishermen call them Sandlings.

EMILY. And what is the sea-thong?

MRS. TALBOT. This long weed, which looks not unlike a dark plaited ribbon. *Conferva* is the red branched weed, of which there are many varieties—and these dark purple weeds are called slake. There are names to all the fuci, or seaweeds.—The other plants are familiar to you.—I have shown you a drawing of the *chelcidonium*, the horned sea-poppy, and here is a specimen of it, still in flower; you see on breaking a part of its stalk, there is a yellow juice exudes from it, just as it does from the *celendine*, of which it is a species. The *convolvulus soldinella* is more rare, but extremely beautiful, and grows in some places almost close to the sea, among the sand. There also grows the *eryngium maritimum*, the sea *eryngium*, of which the poorer people on the sea coast make pies.

And

And I have sometimes found the sea peas, which are said to have supplied whole parishes with food, in a scarcity of corn.

EMILY. But you did not name them, Mamma?

MRS. TALBOT. I could not enumerate them all in so short an essay.

EMILY. One question more, Mamma—I don't quite comprehend what you mean by the Nereids.

MRS. TALBOT. Your brother will explain it—but he is looking for shells, of which there are none on this coast that are worth gathering as being at all curious.—So I will tell you, that there are in the heathen mythology divinities presiding over the different elements. Of water, the rivers have each their imaginary god; and thus you know, Grey, in the Ode on the distant Prospect of Eton College, addresses the ideal God of the Thames—

“ Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen

“ Full many a sportive race.”

And the Naiads preside over the smaller brooks and streams. The Nereids are Sea Nymphs, attendant on Neptune, the God of the Sea, and his Queen Amphitrite.

EMILY. Now I comprehend.—But all these imaginary people are difficult to remember.

MRS. TALBOT. You cannot, however, understand poetry without knowing the heathen mythology; for tho' it is not so often alluded to in modern poetry as it formerly was, yet there are frequent references to these beings that were once supposed to direct and animate the operations of nature. It is growing late, and I am fatigued.—Come, my dear children, let us return to our lodgings.—This has not been an unpleasant, nor I hope an unprofitable day.

CONVERSATION THE SEVENTH.

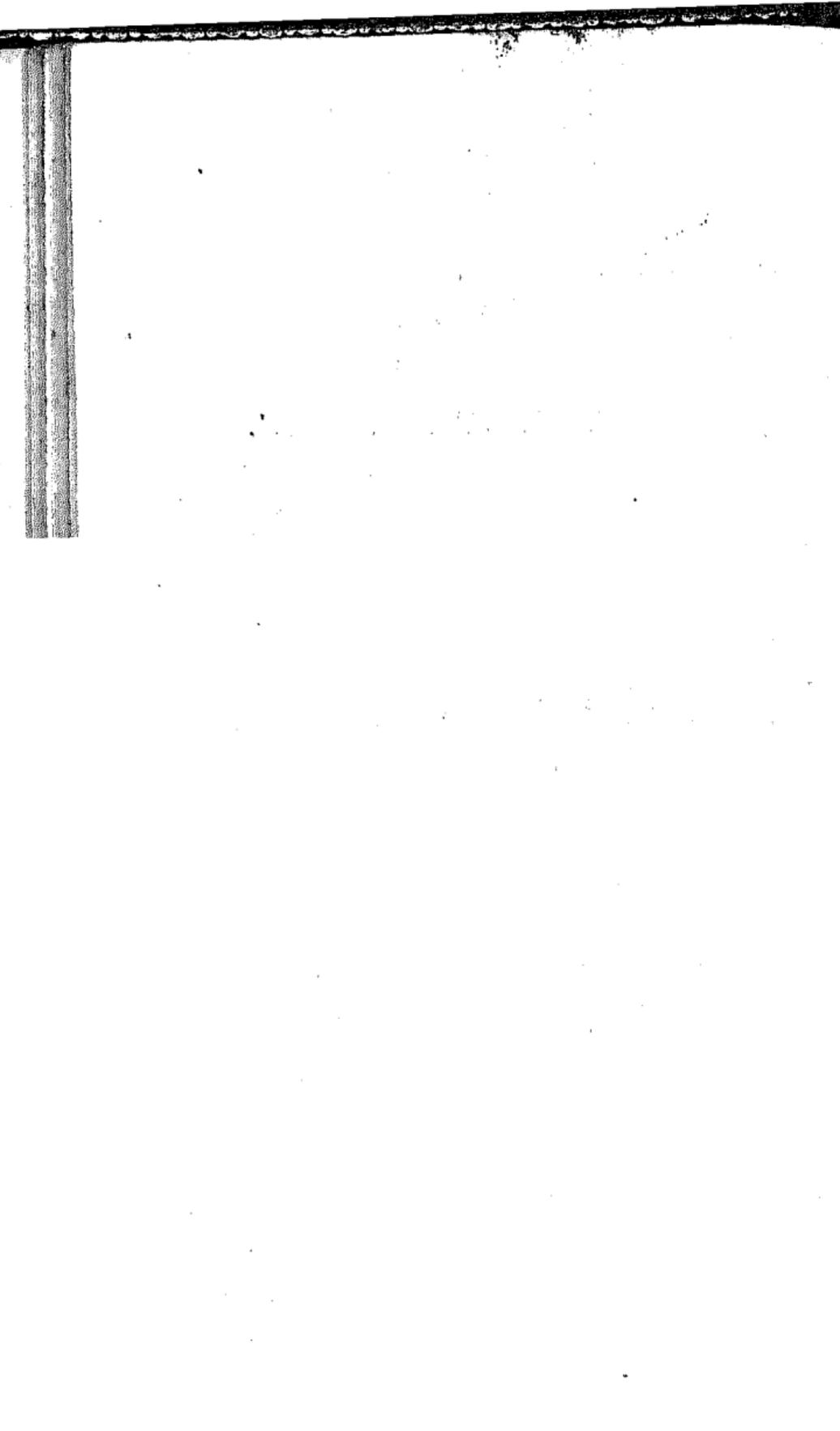
POEMS.

THE HUMMING BIRD.

THE HEATH.

ODE TO THE MISSEL THRUSH.

ODE TO THE OLIVE TREE.



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## CONVERSATION THE SEVENTH.

MRS. TALBOT—EMILY.

MRS. TALBOT. Come, my Emily, let us now we are returned from our morning's walk set about something. The system of idling, or to use a phrase wholly unknown, I believe, till these last thirty or forty years, *lounging*, will not do for us. We must not acquire habits here, which it would be perhaps difficult to break thro' when we return to our quiet home.

EMILY. No indeed, Mamma, I do not find any such pleasure in this place, as would make me sorry to go home, if there was no other reason for our staying here. I do not like the public walks half so well as a ramble with my brother on the hills, nor half a quarter so well as when you

walk with us, and instruct us as to the objects we happen to see.

MRS. TALBOT. Such a walk I meant to have proposed to-day, after an earlier dinner than usual; as it is one of those mild autumnal days, which the French aptly enough call, “*jours des dames*”—because there is neither sun nor wind.

EMILY. And cannot we be indulged with this walk, Mamma?

MRS. TALBOT. Yes, if George returns in time; but from his not being already at home, I think it very likely he is gone with the acquaintance he met yesterday to some distant village; and if he is, he will be perhaps too much fatigued for a long excursion after dinner.

EMILY. Perhaps he is gone out in a boat. I heard him and his companions talking of going on the water, and some of them said they were to have a sailing party very soon, and to go to fish on some distant rocks.

MRS. TALBOT. I am sure he is not  
gone

gone on such a scheme, because it is one of the things he has promised me never to do, unless I knew and approved of it; and George, my dear Emily, never, as we may be both proud to say, forgets or breaks a promise given.

EMILY. Indeed, Mamma, I *am* proud of him; and when I see some other boys of his age so rude, so ill-natured to their sisters, and treating them with contempt, or never seeming to care at all about them, I think myself a very happy girl to have two such brothers as Edward and George. Oh! here he comes to put an end to our conjectures.

MRS. TALBOT. We began, my dear George, to think you had made some longer excursion than usual, as you are later than you usually are.

GEORGE. I have had a long walk, and I have seen a sight.

MRS. TALBOT. Both pleasant, I hope.

GEORGE. Extremely so, indeed. I only

only wished for you and Emily, and then it would have been pleasanter still.

EMILY. Tell us what you have seen.

GEORGE. A collection of natural curiosities, most of them from the East and West Indies. Birds, shells, fishes, and the dresses and arms of some of the inhabitants of the South Sea islands. They belong to Beechcroft's uncle, who lives about three miles off, at a very pretty house. I told him you were very fond of seeing such things, and he desired me to tell you, he shall be very glad if you will call any day to look over these objects of natural history. Some of them are foreign birds—among others, several curious Indian birds.

MRS. TALBOT. It is exactly what I wished you might have an opportunity of seeing: describe some of the birds. Did you see the least and most beautiful of that species of creature, the humming bird?

GEORGE. Yes, there were two sorts of them; one not much larger than a large  
humble

humble bee ; another, with a crest upon its head not quite so big as the golden crested wren. And there were their nests like little globes of cotton, and two small eggs in each, white and polished like ivory, not much exceeding peas in size.

EMILY. Beautiful little creatures !— what colour are they ?

MRS. TALBOT. It is hardly possible to describe their colour ; since it is in some parts so changeable, and mingled, that it appears crimson, blue, green, and all these as if laid on a ground of gold. Much of this varied elegance, however, is lost, when the bird is not seen living, because, like the neck of some pigeons and the plumage of the peacock, it varies with the different lights as the bird flies. Its little wings vibrate while it feeds with so quick a motion, as hardly to be perceptible ; and they are seen glittering like volant gems, among the highly scented glowing blossoms of the warm countries which they inhabit.

EMILY. Oh ! Mamma, how I should like  
like

like to see one living, or rather to see them in their own country. But are they never brought hither alive?

MRS. TALBOT. As they live on the honey and the sweet juices secreted in the most odorous flowers, you must suppose that it is extremely difficult to find any substitute which will support these little delicate creatures during a voyage across the Atlantic Ocean; they are therefore usually shot, for the cabinets of the curious, with water forced out of a small tube, as the only means of preserving their plumes uninjured. And sometimes, as I have been told, the children of the Negroes shoot them with small pins. One attempt, however, to bring an humming bird living to England was made some years ago by an Officer of the Artillery. He fed it with sugar, and actually succeeded in keeping it alive till he reached the residence of the late Duchess of Richmond, for whom he designed it: but though he had preserved its fragile life so far, it expired on the very instant

instant he was presenting it to the Duchess.

EMILY. How vexed I should have been!

MRS. TALBOT. It was very disappointing, though probably no care could long have preserved it in this climate.—The reason, however, my loves, why I have entered at some length into the history of this bird is, because your aunt, in a packet I received from her this morning, has sent me a very elegant little poem on this plumed beauty, which was composed after reading an account of the various productions of some parts of the West Indies; and where, among the ornaments of its native inhabitants, the bright feathers, minute as they are, of this bird, sometimes make a part. Uncertain of the day of her arrival, she sent me this contribution to Emily's collection of birds.

GEORGE. How much are we both obliged

obliged to my aunt. It is in that measure too, which I like so much.

MRS. TALBOT. Try then to do it justice; and we must afterwards consider when we can accept of the invitation you have brought us, to see the collection which Mr. Beechcroft has made of so many pleasing objects, and which you have so opportunely seen.

### THE HUMMING BIRD.

MINUTEST of the feather'd kind,  
Possessing every charm combin'd,  
Nature, in forming thee, design'd

That thou should'st be

A proof within how little space,  
She can comprise such perfect grace,  
Rendering thy lovely fairy race,

Beauty's epitome.

Those burnish'd colours to bestow,  
Her pencil in the heavenly bow  
She dipp'd; and made thy plumes to glow  
With every hue

That





GEORGE. Tired? no, my dear Mother; when I bathe, and breathe the air of these hills, I am insensible of all fatigue, and seem to tread on the clouds.

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### EVENING.

GEORGE. Let us walk to that common, or heath, which spreads out beyond the windmills under the downs.—I went towards one of those mills the other day, imagining they were inhabited, but on talking to the miller, I learned that he does not live there, but only goes thither occasionally, to grind the corn.

MRS. TALBOT. And what did you observe? tell me as we walk.

GEORGE. The miller shewed me the machinery by which the body of the mill is moved, as the wind shifts to different quarters; and how it works the mill, by the action of those vanes or sails.

MRS. TALBOT. The same power is applied to other purposes. Water is often raised by windmills.—You see how man subjugates all the elements to his use. Let us, however, at present, confine ourselves to the objects immediately before us.—What a vast horizon this height affords! you now clearly perceive, that the world is round, since the line, where the sky seems to meet the water, forms a stupendous arch.

EMILY. Mamma, I often puzzle myself, when I think of these things.—I cannot comprehend how it is, that people who live on the opposite side of the world do not stand upon their heads. I don't at all understand how it is possible, that this globe should turn on its axis, as you told me it did, so as to make day and night, without its inhabitants being sensible of the motion.

MRS. TALBOT. I was, at your age, equally distressed by all these phenomena, till I was shewn an orrery; an instrument

ment invented by a nobleman of that name, or at least under his patronage; where by means of balls representing the planets, and moving by clock work, the revolutions of the heavenly bodies are described much more clearly than can be done by any other method. Your brother will explain this to you, as well as he can, the first day your time and his admit of it; and as soon as we are again settled at home, we will endeavour to enlarge our stock of ideas on these subjects. Let us now confine our studies to objects more within our reach at this moment.

GEORGE. And we shall not want employment, Emily. How much, Mother, when I see these views, I regret not being able to put them upon paper.—I am afraid I shall never draw well.

MRS. TALBOT. That, my dear George, is one of the cases in which diffidence is misplaced. You have considerable talents, otherwise I should not desire you to give up much time to the pursuit. But I

know you have that disposition towards it, which is usually called genius ; and therefore perseverance, and attention to rules, will very soon enable you to excell. But were it even certain that you would never attain great excellence, I should still be desirous of your studying the art, because it at once forms the taste of the student, and awakens him to a thousand beauties which common observers do not see, or see without pleasure. The gradations of light and shade ; the colours that Nature so harmoniously employs ; the beautiful forms of trees, and the various effects, sometimes magnificent, sometimes lovely, which are produced by the simple materials she works with, Earth, Water, and Wood ; the tender hues and evanescent forms of the clouds, all afford to persons who know how to view them with a painter's eye, the enjoyment of what I may call a new sense, unknown to those who have not a natural or an acquired taste for such studies. A rude and uncultivated

vated waste, such as we are now approaching, has as little apparent beauty in the eyes of common observers as any tract of land can have. But the Landscape Painter often prefers rugged masses of broken ground, covered with rude plants, to any thing that is presented by the most polished art, or laboured cultivation. I recollect, Emily, that some time since, when we were talking of blank verse, I promised to compose something for you in that measure ; let us try what can be made of the spot immediately present to us, and describe

### THE HEATH.

EVEN the wide Heath, where the unequal ground  
Has never on its rugged surface felt  
The hand of Industry, though wild and rough,  
Is not without its beauty ; here the furze,  
Enrich'd among its spines, with golden flowers  
Scents the keen air ; while all its thorny groups  
Wide scatter'd o'er the waste are full of life ;  
For 'midst its yellow bloom, the assembled chats  
Wave high the tremulous wing, and with shrill notes,  
But clear and pleasant, cheer the extensive heath.

Linnets in numerous flocks frequent it too,  
And bashful, hiding in these scenes remote  
From his congeners, (they who make the woods  
And the thick copses echo to their song)  
The heath-thrush makes his domicile; and while  
His patient mate with downy bosom warms  
Their future nestlings, he his love lay sings  
Loud to the shaggy wild—The Erica here,  
That o'er the Caledonian hills sublime  
Spreads its dark mantle, (where the bees delight  
To seek their purest honey,) flourishes,  
Sometimes with bells like Amethysts, and then  
Paler, and shaded like the maiden's cheek  
With gradual blushes—Other while, as white,  
As rime that hangs upon the frozen spray.  
Of this, old Scotia's hardy mountaineers  
Their rustic couches form; and there enjoy  
Sleep, which beneath his velvet canopy  
Luxurious idleness implores in vain!  
Between the matted heath and ragged gorse  
Wind natural walks of turf, as short and fine  
As clothe the chalky downs; and there the sheep  
Under some thorny bush, or where the fern  
Lends a light shadow from the Sun, resort,  
And ruminates or feed; and frequent there  
Nourish'd by evening mists, the mushroom spreads  
From a small ivory bulb, his circular roof  
The fairies fabled board—Poor is the soil,  
And of the plants that clothe it few possess  
Succulent moisture; yet a parasite

Clings

Clings even to them; for its entangling stalk  
The wire like dodder winds; and nourishes,  
Rootless itself, its small white flowers on them.  
So to the most unhappy of our race  
Those, on whom never prosperous hour has smiled,  
Towards whom Nature as a step-dame stern  
Has cruelly dealt; and whom the world rejects  
To these forlorn ones, ever there adheres  
Some self-consoling passion; round their hearts  
Some vanity entwines itself; and hides,  
And is perhaps in mercy given to hide,  
The mortifying sad realities  
Of their hard lot.

EMILY. Dear Mamma! And did all that come into your head at once?

MRS. TALBOT. It is nothing very wonderful, Emily. When there is no occasion to distort or invert the sense for the purpose of making the closes rhyme, it is not difficult to compose in that way, which Dr. Johnson said was "verse only to the eye;" I mean, that it is not difficult to put together a certain number of words which shall be sense; but to compose good blank verse, which must be

done by varying the pauses, and by a great deal of study and pains, is not at all easy. I pretend not to do that. I cannot, like Milton, "pour out my unpremeditated verse" in that way, though I can sometimes do it in Lyrical or Heroic verse, with some facility. All I meant was, as we were speaking of blank verse a few days ago, to give you in that manner a slight sketch of an heath, and some of its inhabitants.

GEORGE. There are at this moment a great number of the birds you mention; whin chats they are called in the book I have; and there is also another bird greatly resembling it that lives on heaths, called the stone chat.—See, they sit on the highest points of the furze, and flutter their wings, and sing or rather chirp with a pleasant sort of note.

MRS. TALBOT. You may see also some of the linnets already, though the great flocks that frequent these downs and heaths do not assemble till a rather later period of the  
the

the year. I have seen them like small clouds covering those tracts of land which after having been ploughed three or four years, are thrown up again, and are then covered with thistles, on the seeds of which the linnets as well as goldfinches feed: but look, Emily, for the dodder, I believe it is not yet quite out of bloom.

GEORGE. Here, Emily, is a knot of it; you see it has twisted itself so strongly round those branches of dwarf furze, that it is hardly possible to get it off.

MRS. TALBOT. You may perceive, perhaps, that my comparison is not unapt; and we frequently observe prejudices and conceits adhere to the human heart, which are as little supported by reason as this singular parasitical plant is by the earth nourishing its own roots; but I allow that there are some harmless errors which hurt nobody, and are rather to be rejoiced in, if they conceal from persons who hold them any mortifying truth; and  
if

if such misconceptions are not offensive or injurious to others. The poor dwarf, whose misfortunes, those of having a person hardly human, and being in the lowest state of poverty, so strongly excited your compassion yesterday, especially when those ill bred and unfeeling young women we met, appeared to be so highly amused by his calamitous appearance; even that poor little ill-fated being does not think himself by any means so contemptible, but has been known to save the small earnings which he gets by carrying out parcels for the market people, or the money bestowed on him by the charitable, to purchase something like finery, a frill to his shirt, or a ribbon for his hair, and a puffed neckcloth, in which he has often exhibited himself at church, with as much apparent satisfaction as a fine man struts up Bond-street, who fancies himself remarkable for some new and striking absurdity in his dress, or because he has done something which is the topic of conversation,

versation, and for which he probably deserves to be expelled from society.

EMILY. I dislike such people, and do so hate to hear about them ! Pray tell me rather about birds. I did not know there was a thrush that lives on heaths.

MRS. TALBOT. Yes, there is such a bird ; and his song is said to excell greatly that of the thrush we hear in our thickets in the Spring. Perhaps you have not forgotten Thomson's beautiful lines on the birds ?

EMILY. O no, Mamma !

MRS. TALBOT. Well ! but that description does not of course enumerate the varieties of different species of birds. Of thrushes, for example, there are four or five sorts. I left you this morning with a promise to consider of some other subjects for our little Poems ; and I began to recollect what was most likely to answer our purpose. The nightingale has been sung in every language of Europe, even to satiety ; and you know there are innumerable

ble verses, and fables in English and French, relating to the nightingale; and there are also some wild and beautiful fictions of the Eastern poets.—It would, therefore, be difficult to find any thing new to say of that most charming of our feathered musicians—but there is a bird, which if it does not sing so exquisitely, is yet usually heard with great pleasure, since it announces the approach of Spring, even before the earliest plants appear, and often in the first days of January. It is also a thrush, the largest of English singing birds, and feeds much on the berries of missletoe; and because of its loud notes from the top of some high tree, in blowing, or showery weather, the country people in Hampshire, and Sussex, call it the storm-cock.—George will read what I have written upon it.

## ODE TO THE MISSEL THRUSH.

THE Winter Solstice scarce is past,  
Loud is the wind, and hoarsely sound  
The mill-streams in the swelling blast,  
And cold and humid is the ground.  
When, to the ivy, that embowers  
Some pollard tree, or sheltering rock  
The troop of timid warblers flock,  
And shuddering wait for milder hours.

While thou! the leader of their band,  
Fearless salut'st the opening year;  
Nor stay'st, till blow the breezes bland  
That bid the tender leaves appear:  
But, on some towering elm or pine,  
Waving elate thy dauntless wing,  
Thou joy'st thy love notes wild to sing,  
Impatient of St. Valentine!

Oh, herald of the Spring! while yet  
No harebell scents the woodland lane,  
Nor starwort fair, nor violet,  
Braves the bleak gust and driving rain,  
'Tis thine, as thro' the copses rude  
Some pensive wanderer sighs along,  
To sooth him with thy chearful song,  
And tell of Hope and Fortitude!

For

For thee then, may the hawthorn bush,  
The elder, and the spindle tree,  
With all their various berries blush,  
And the blue sloe abound for thee !  
For thee, the coral holly glow  
Its arm'd and glossy leaves among,  
And many a branched oak be hung  
With thy pellucid missletoe.

Still may thy nest, with lichen lined,  
Be hidden from the invading jay,  
Nor truant boy its covert find,  
To bear thy callow young away ;  
So thou, precursor still of good,  
O, herald of approaching Spring,  
Shalt to the pensive wanderer sing  
Thy song of Hope and Fortitude !

GEORGE. I remember very well, Mother, hearing that bird last year, and that you gave me White's History of Selbourn to read an account of it.—There it is related, that the missel thrush is of a very courageous nature, and drives away from its neighbourhood many larger birds, which would molest his young—An instance, however, is told, in which  
this

this bravery availed nothing.—A missel thrush had built in a garden, where he was often assailed by the jay, magpye, and other birds larger than himself; against these he resolutely defended his family, but at length a great many jays came upon the unfortunate bird together; overpowered him and his mate by their numbers, tore the nest to pieces, and destroyed the young without mercy.

EMILY. Hateful!—I shall always detest those jays, though they are so beautiful, particularly in the blue shaded colours of their wings, that it is quite a pleasure to look at them.

MRS. TALBOT. Beauty is no apology for such ill qualities as they possess.—They are not only most oppressive foes to other birds by destroying their young, but they do a great deal of mischief in the kitchen garden.—Our pease, our currants, and raspberries, they appropriate without ceremony; and ducklings, and young chickens, are equally exposed to their attacks.

GEORGE.

GEORGE. There is a jay in Mr. Becchcroft's collection, which came from the East Indies; it is a great deal larger than those in this country, and has a crown of blue feathers on the head. There is also a very beautiful bird, called the oriole, which are plentiful in France, he told me, and are sometimes, though very rarely, seen in England. There are other birds from America, and all the different regions of Asia—Rice birds, and Java-sparrows, and many, whose names I have not been able to remember.

MRS. TALBOT. Well, we shall see them all in a day or two, and they will serve to bring to our recollection those we saw at the Leverian Museum. I cannot, however, say, that I feel as much pleasure in the contemplation of these objects, however beautiful, as I do in looking at a collection of plants.—The birds, or insects, or quadrupeds, though they may be very well preserved, lose that spirit and brilliancy, which living objects only  
can

can possess. The attitudes of the birds are stiff and forced, and without their natural accompaniments. Their eyes are seldom so contrived as to resemble those of the living bird; and altogether, their formal or awkward appearances, when stuffed and set on wires, always convey to my mind ideas of the sufferings of the poor birds when they were caught and killed, and the disagreeable operations of embowelling and drying them. Quadrupeds, which are for the most part larger, are still more difficult subjects to preserve well; and insects, taken for the collections of the curious, must probably have resigned their short lives in some degree of suffering, which nature would not have inflicted. But a collection of plants offers only pleasing ideas—even the most common, that spring up under our feet, and are thrown from our gardens as weeds, are many of them very elegant, and others are of medical utility. I cannot say that I think the pleasure of bo-

tanizing destroyed, by considering plants as convertible into drugs; on the contrary, I reflect with satisfaction, that objects so beautiful in themselves, are also endowed with the power of alleviating pain, or diminishing fever.—And when I am sick, much of the disgust which the taste of medicine excites, is conquered, when I know, that what is proper for me to take is only the roots, bark, flowers, leaves, or seeds of a plant. To the vegetable kingdom we are indebted for most of the conveniences and comforts of life.—Except carpets, and those articles which must bear the fire, our rooms are furnished with the produce of vegetables. Even silk, which in noblemen's houses, or those of persons of fortune, is used for furniture, is only a modification of the vegetable juices of the mulberry, passing, by a wonderful contrivance of nature, through the manufacturing organs of a moth. There is, you perhaps remember, since I think we lately met with  
it

it in the course of our reading, an oriental proverb, or aphorism, that says—

“ By patience and industry, the mulberry leaf becomes silk.”

This may serve as a subject for a little poetical essay, hereafter ; at present, I will read to you an ode, or address, to a plant, little known but by its product in this country. I mean the Olive, which is, you know, cultivated in Spain, Italy, and the southern provinces of France, where it supplies to the cultivators, the want of butter, and other requisites for the table, which are, to a certain degree, denied them by the heat of the country, and forms also a valuable staple of commerce. Oil is, as you, George, remarked, one of the blessings of life enumerated in Scripture ; and in stories like the Arabian nights, you often hear of it among valuable merchandise, and articles of luxury or use. You know, that the olive-branch is a symbol of peace ; and that it is given in fabulous story to Minerva, who, notwithstanding she is called

the Martial Maid, would hardly have deserved the superior appellation of the Goddess of *Wisdom*, if she was not supposed to prefer the *Olive* to the blood-stained *Laurel* of Victory. The tree, like some characters in human life, is rather to be admired for good than brilliant qualities. It is by no means handsome; the form neither majestic nor elegant; the leaves narrow, and of a dull colour; and the blossom small and white. Even in groups, or small groves, as it is planted about the farms in the South of France, it adds no beauty to the landscape. Under all these disadvantages of figure, however, we will give it a place among our plants; and we must suppose it the accompaniment of scenery in one of the most southern provinces of France, since I am better acquainted with that part of the world than with Italy or Spain; though I have often thought much of the pleasure derived from reading Spanish stories arises from the description of the country. I like to imagine Don Quixote

Quixote and Sancho, with their borachio, or goat-skin, filled with wine, carefully provided by the latter, sitting under the shadow of spreading chesnut trees.—Or Gil Blas and Fabrice, eating the remains of the hare they dined upon under a tuft of cork trees, at the foot of a rock; for, while the wearysome descriptions that we read in many works of imagination displease, because we feel that they are only tawdry copies; the simplest sketch which gives us an idea of truth and reality, makes the figures it presents appear with greater effect, and puts the scene and the persons immediately before us.—But this is a digression—let us return to my Ode.—

### ODE TO THE OLIVE TREE.

ALTHO' thy flowers minute, disclose  
 No colours rivalling the rose,  
     And lend no odours to the gale;  
 While dimly thro' the pallid green  
 Of thy long slender leaves, are seen  
     Thy berries pale.

Yet for thy virtues art thou known,  
 And not the Anana's burnish'd cone,  
                   Or golden fruits that bless the earth  
 Of Indian climes, however fair,  
 Can with thy modest boughs compare,  
   For genuine worth.

Man, from his early Eden driven,  
 Receiv'd thee from relenting Heaven,  
                   And thou the *whelming surge* above,  
 Symbol of pardon, deign'd to rear  
 Alone thy willowy head, to cheer  
   The wandering dove.

Tho' no green whispering shade is thine,  
 Where peasant girls at noon recline,  
                   Or, while the village tabor plays,  
 Gay vine-dressers, and goatherds, meet  
 To dance with light unwearied feet  
   On holidays;

Yet doth the fruit thy sprays produce,  
 Supply what ardent Suns refuse,  
                   Nor want of grassy lawn or mead,  
 To pasture milky herds, is found,  
 While fertile Olive groves surround  
   The lone Bastide.

Thou



one of those I intend chiefly to employ in a little composition, which may serve to reconcile Emily to the necessity of learning the heathen mythology, that she may understand many poems and histories, which, without some degree of that knowledge, must be incomprehensible.—For to-night, my dear loves, adieu.

CONVERSATION THE EIGHTH.

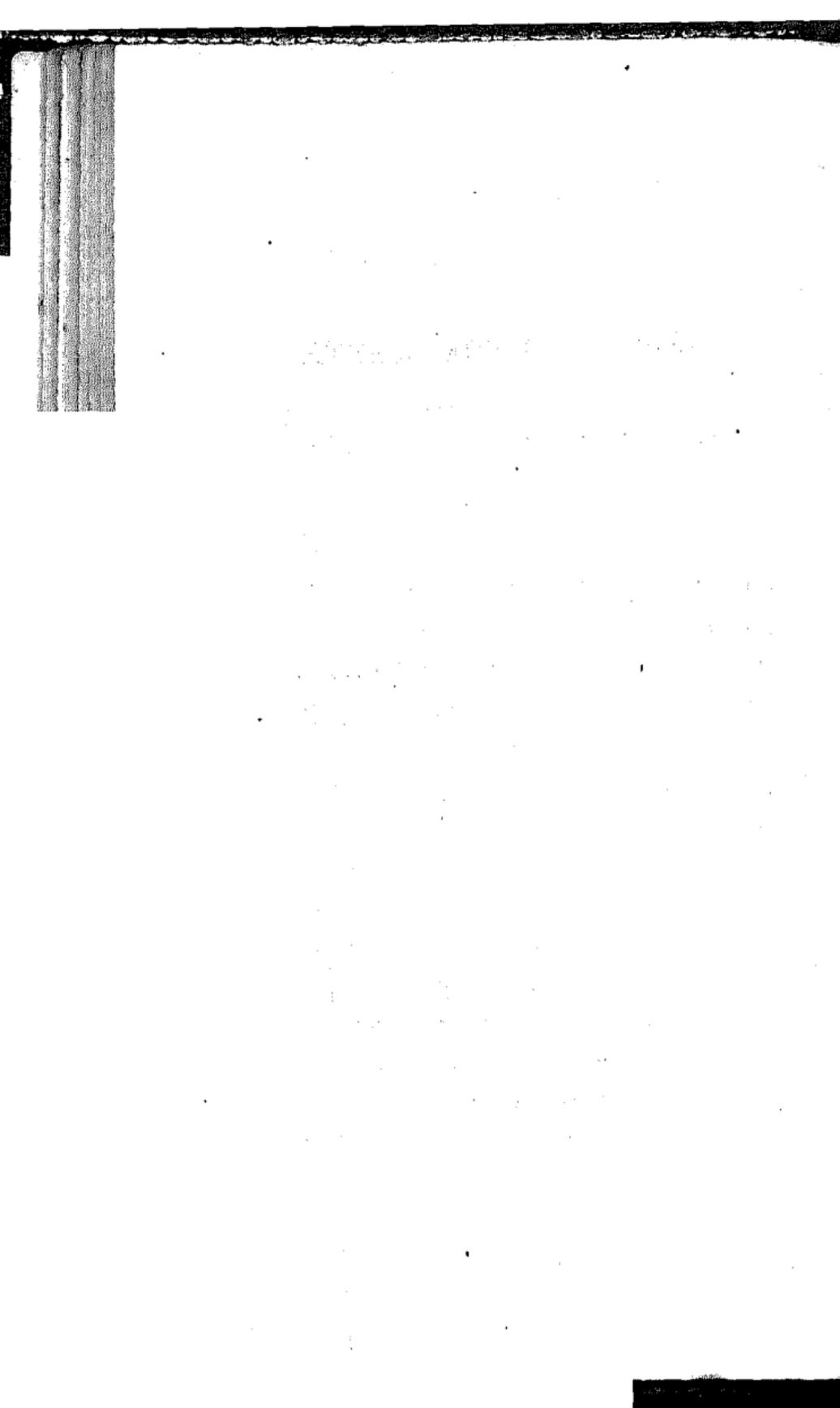
POEMS.

THE WATER-FOWL, FROM BURNS.

THE FULGORA, OR FIRE-FLY.

VERSES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

VERSES WRITTEN IN A FOREST IN GER-  
MANY.



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## CONVERSATION THE EIGHTH.

MRS. TALBOT—EMILY—GEORGE.

MRS. TALBOT. This, my dear children, is one of those days when we must depend on ourselves to furnish amusement within the house; for, by the present appearance of the clouds, there is but little probability of our enjoying a walk.

GEORGE. There were a few persons down on the beach early this morning, and one or two proposed to go into the sea, but the men refused to go with them, and said it was not safe.—There were two or three others, eagerly enquiring of the bathing men, and the fishermen, whether it would clear up; and they seemed very much out of humour, when they were told, that there was every appearance

pearance of stormy weather, for at least the next four and twenty hours.

MRS. TALBOT. They had some match at cricket, or with their horses I suppose, upon the hills, which made them so anxious, and probably they were of a race of beings who find their existence rather tedious in very bad weather, because they do not know what to do with themselves, unless they are galloping about.

GEORGE. But Mother, the library was quite full this morning.—I suppose the people went to get books for the rest of the day?

MRS. TALBOT. Some, undoubtedly, applied to that resource; but if the library was crowded, it is most likely there were more loungers than readers.—And I suspect, that if the billiard-room had been looked into, you would have seen it more occupied than the library, and with persons more eagerly engaged.

EMILY. I wish, Mamma, I knew what pleasure can be found in rolling or pushing  
ing

ing those red and white balls about upon a table covered with green cloth.

MRS. TALBOT. The pleasure is that, which all games of chance, and still more of skill, afford—something to engage the attention, and get the time passed by, without any other reflection. The avaricious, and the necessitous, (and professed gamblers are generally both) are actuated by the hope of winning—and all the wit they have, is collected to enable them to succeed. Many men who are seen at places of public resort, and who make splendid figures, have no other resources than they obtain by their knowledge of these games. And many an unhappy desolate young person, date the commencement of their indigence and dependence, from the time their parents became addicted to the ruinous passion for gaming. You enquire what pleasure pushing these balls about can afford; which probably struck you, as not being a very entertaining method of passing the time, because you never happened  
to

to have seen it till lately ; while, perhaps, Emily, it never occurred to you, to enquire what great satisfaction could be found in looking at, and sorting pieces of thickened paper, painted with ugly figures. Yet in that occupation, many of my acquaintance, who are, notwithstanding, "mighty good sort of people," pass near half their lives.

EMILY. You mean playing at cards.

MRS. TALBOT. Yes ; yet cards, and every amusement of that sort, are innocent, if they are used only as such, and do not engross the thoughts, or impair the fortunes of those who are attached to them. They are, merely as an amusement of the affluent, no more to be condemned, than passing hours and days in flying about from place to place, only because such and such people frequent these places ; or than driving round London in search of bargains, or in hunting after fashions, which many women make the business of their lives. All those who have  
money,

money, and time to dispose of, have not a taste for books; and many would think it the severest punishment that could be inflicted on them, were they obliged to pass their hours in reading; these persons of either sex, must have something to fill up their hours, and some motive stronger than that of enjoying each other's conversation, to bring them together.

EMILY. It is very dull tho', Mamma, to the sitters-by; and I must say, I have hated to see people so earnest round a card-table, ever since I was so tired when I was with you once for two days at Lady H's. I remember nobody dared to speak—and there was an old, little, odd, cross looking gentleman there, who frightened me with his fierce looks, tho' I hardly ventured to breathe, when I was told that he could not bear the least disturbance when he was at cards.

MRS. TALBOT. That little, odd, cross old man, who, in fact, Emily, is not old,  
but

but in the apprehension of the very young, is a man of great talents, a Statesman—a man capable of directing the government of kingdoms; and the amusement he was pursuing was merely the necessary relaxation, as he says, from severe application. There was not one of that party, which you thought so formidable, but what were really very worthy people; and none of them come under the description of professed gamblers. I am persuaded that every one of them would have given their winnings most readily to any indigent fellow creature; for I have known each do occasional acts of kindness of that sort; tho', perhaps, none of them would have taken much trouble to find out distressed objects, or have thought of them beyond the moment when their bounty was asked for; but we must not expect, that such characters as are represented in books, who are always on the alert to execute extraordinary acts of benevolence, are very frequently found

found. Nor should we in an every-day life, suppose we are to meet with remarkable instances of perfection; though we must endeavour ourselves to attain it, as far as our situation in life will allow us.

EMILY. But, Mamma, you never play at cards.

MRS. TALBOT. I never play because I cannot keep up my attention; and therefore, while the attempt punishes me, my inability is very likely to disturb those I am at play with. Another reason is, that I know myself very unlikely to win, and cannot afford to lose even small sums. And it is for these causes, among others, that I should not; if I lived in what is called the world, mix in society where there is much play.

GEORGE. But, my dear Mother, you said you were tired, when you went to what is called a conversation.

MRS. TALBOT. Indeed, George, I was; though the persons collected, were

all of them remarkable for some talent, and were chiefly ranked among the literati. But the time passed at first, in listening to the sententious, though common place remarks of a lady who is considered as a sort of Sybil, a poetess, and a prophetess, and who talked at, rather than to the rest of the company; and when she withdrew, after telling us the charitable mission she was going upon, the greater part of the remaining company, as if to make themselves amends for the awful silence they had been compelled to observe, began to talk together. I remember in a periodical paper, (that called the World, I believe,) a letter from a man, who had passed his whole life in the miseries of dependence, as an humble hearer, and who at length becoming *deaf*, thought himself better qualified than ever for that post; and in the assembly you mention, amidst all the loud talking, much of which sounded to me too much like wrangling, I wished to have been for a time in the  
situation

situation of that patient sufferer, so little was I edified by the conversation of these *very clever* people; while I envied the powers of abstraction, possessed by one of the company, who fairly fell asleep, after having made some ineffectual attempts to fasten himself, in the way of argument, on some other man whom he could consider as worthy of the intellectual exertion he was disposed to make.

GEORGE. Mother, those people would have been better employed at cards, than in being so uncivil to each other.

MRS. TALBOT. Good breeding is not, however, much exerted at the card-table, George; for I have heard quarrels there, which would have been quite alarming, had the disputants been less in habits of affronting each other in the same way every night. Nor were my acquaintance, the men of talent, at all civiler to each other. They seemed to consider conversation as a continual trial of the strength of their lungs, rather than of their understandings,

derstandings, for every one appeared determined to enforce attention, by talking as loud as he could. But we have wandered to a great distance from the enquiry I was going to make of you—what provision you had been able to make for me against a stormy day, in a place where I have no books of my own?

GEORGE. First then, Mother, here are the first volumes of three novels, which the master of the shop assured me were all excellent, and just new from London.

MRS. TALBOT. Alas! George, I see already that I cannot read any of them. The first is a clumsy attempt at Satire, by a good body who uses coarsely, and I should think ineffectually, that weapon against vices and errors, of which, though some resemblance to them do exist in real life, she draws hideous caricatures.—The second is an absurd assemblage of supernatural horrors, and would, from its extravagance and tediousness, be rejected by

by even the most depraved taste in this kind of reading. And the last, is a wretched and bald translation, performed at so much a sheet, by some person compelled through necessity, to do into English, by the aid of a dictionary, a French novel of no value in the original language. Have you nothing else for me?

GEORGE. Yes, Mother—though I know you have one, or more volumes, among your books, of Burns' poems, I was not sure you had seen these which are printed with an account of his life, and many of his letters.

MRS. TALBOT. I have them at home, George; but the poetry of Burns, though all of it is not exactly desirable for our present poetical studies, is much of it so excellent, and so truly the production of original genius, that I am never weary of reading it. You are already acquainted with several of his most celebrated pieces. You shall now read to me a

G 3

poem,

poem, printed in the third volume, I think, of this edition, which, though not equal to "the Cotter's Saturday Night," and some other of his pieces, is expressive of his feelings and sentiments, and, however unequal to the highest efforts of his extraordinary talents, is infinitely above the generality of those productions which are every day so highly extolled. Burns was *really*, what so many others have very slender pretensions to be; he was born a Poet, and perhaps unfortunately for him, individually, his genius was powerful to attract notice, and force him at once from the humble obscurity where he would have been among "the mute and inglorious" men of extraordinary talents, who probably are born from time to time, and die unknown and unheard of, in every rank of life. Here are the verses I mean, read them to me. They are entitled,

ON

ON SCARING SOME WATER-FOWL  
IN LOCH TURIT.A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS OF OUGHTER-  
TYRE.

GEORGE.

GEORGE.—WHY, ye tenants of the lake,  
For me your watry haunts forsake?  
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why  
At my presence thus you fly?  
Why disturb your social joys,  
Parent, filial, kindred ties?  
Common friend to you and me,  
Nature's gifts to all are free:  
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,  
Busy feed, or wanton lave;  
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,  
Bide the surging billows shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,  
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace;  
Man, your proud usurping foe,  
Would-be lord of all below—  
Plumes himself in Freedom's pride,  
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The Eagle from the clifty brow,  
Marking you his prey below,  
In his breast no pity dwells,  
Strong necessity compels.  
But Man, to whom, alone is given  
A ray direct from pitying Heaven,  
Glories in his heart humane,  
And creatures for his pleasure slain.

In these savage liquid plains,  
Only known to wandering swains,  
Where the mossy rivulet strays,  
Far from human haunts and ways;  
All on Nature you depend,  
And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or if Man's superior might,  
Dare invade your native right,  
On the lofty ether borne,  
Man with all his powers you scorn;  
Swiftly seek on clanging wings,  
Other lakes and other springs,  
And the foe you cannot brave,  
Scorn at least to be his slave.

EMILY. Mamma, may I make one remark ?

MRS. TALBOT. Certainly, Emily, I wish always to hear your remarks.

EMILY.

EMILY. It is, then, that there are two lines in those verses, very like, *indeed*, to some which you wrote on the hedgehog.

GEORGE. Yes, so there are, Emily; and yet I fancy, Mother, you never thought of them at the time.

MRS. TALBOT. I assure you I did not; nor do I recollect having read these verses of Burns, at least these five years. But nothing is more usual, than for the same train of thought to produce in poetry, lines greatly resembling each other, of which I could give you many instances of more importance than my little unintentional plagiarism.—I am very well pleased, however, to see this instance of observation. It encourages me to continue our poetical attempts. Last night, after our return from seeing Mr. Beechcroft's collection of specimens in natural history, I was considering what a different figure the Fire-fly, the Fulgora, made in its *then* state, from that it naturally bore in  
its

its own country; illuminating the magnificent woods of Jamaica, or Vera Cruz. —It brought to my mind, the many light and shewy characters, that continually arise, are wondered at, and forgotten.— These ideas gave rise to a few stanzas, which I will read to you; but that you may understand them, I must give you a slight drawing of the country in which the insect is produced. The Mahogena, or Swietan, called so after a celebrated Swedish botanist, in honour of his native land; the Guazuma, or great Cedar; the Pimento, and other immense trees, form extensive woods, overshadowing the higher parts of the island of Jamaica.— Among these woods, are rocky eminences from whence flow rapid streams of water; and there are tracts where these waters, swelled by the equinoctial rains, have worn vast trenches in the earth; the sides of which, being full of trees and brushwood, these cavities, as well as rocky hollows and caves in the mountains, frequently become the  
hiding

hiding places of fugitive negroes; and there several sorts of monkies, the great bat, or vampyre, and other animals, find refuge. Round the houses, the scene is softened, by avenues of coco trees, or Palmetos; and amidst plantations of the maize, or Guinea corn, which is an article of food for the black people, and extensive fields of canes, and groups of coffee and cotton trees, the odorous plumeria, the pomegranate, the orange, lime, and citron, are mingled, and perfume the air. The most elegant and splendid Cactus Grandiflora, usually called the night blowing Cereus, a stove plant, in this country, grows naturally there on the rocks; and is said, though incorrectly, to open exactly at midnight; the fact, however is, that it slowly unfolds its large and lovely white petals, and yellow calyx, during the night, but closes before the next day's sun, to open no more. As soon as the sun is below the horizon, it is dark in tropical countries; and then a land wind,

wind, and most copious dews, cool the air—but to these it is seldom safe for an European to be much exposed. We are to imagine the ugly insect, for ugly it is in the state we saw it, illuminating with its singular and volant light, scenes like these I have been describing.

GEORGE. I remember you told me, some time ago, that these flies in Italy, were called *Luciola*, and were flying glow-worms.

MRS. TALBOT. I did so.—They are, however, as I believe, of a different class; I am not so good an entomologist, as to be able to give you very correct information on these subjects, and I have no books now within my reach. I think, however, that glow-worms are called *Lampyris*, and these Fire-flies, *Fulgora*, and that the insect we saw, which is one of the largest kind, and bearing its light in its snout, is called the *Fulgora Lanternaria*. Now let us see what figure it makes, as a member of our little poetical miscellany.

TO

## TO THE FIRE-FLY OF JAMAICA,

SEEN IN A COLLECTION.

How art thou alter'd ! since afar,  
Thou seem'dst a bright earth wandering star ;  
When thy living lustre ran,  
Tall majestic trees between,  
And Guazume, or Swietan,  
Or the Pimento's glossy green,  
As caught their varnish'd leaves, thy glancing light  
Reflected flying fires, amid the moonless night.

From shady heights, where currents spring,  
Where the ground dove dips her wing,  
Winds of night reviving blow,  
Thro' rustling fields of maize and cane,  
And wave the Coffee's fragrant bough ;  
But winds of night, for thee in vain  
May breathe, of the Plumeria's luscious bloom,  
Or Granate's scarlet buds, or Plinia's mild perfume.

The recent captive, who in vain,  
Attempts to break his heavy chain,  
And find his liberty in flight ;  
Shall no more in terror hide,  
From thy strange and doubtful light,  
In the mountain's cavern'd side,

Or

Or gully deep, where gibbering monkeys cling,  
And broods the giant bat, on dark funereal wing.

Nor thee his darkling steps to aid,  
Thro' the forests pathles shade,  
Shall the sighing Slave invoke ;  
Who, his daily task perform'd,  
Would forget his heavy yoke ;  
And by fond affections warn'd,  
Glide to some dear sequester'd spot, to prove,  
Friendship's consoling voice, or sympathising love.

Now, when sinks the Sun away,  
And fades at once the sultry day,  
Thee, as falls the sudden night,  
Never Naturalist shall view,  
Dart with corruscation bright,  
Down the coco avenue ;  
Or see thee give, with transient gleams to glow,  
The green Banana's head, or Shaddock's loaded bough.

Ah ! never more shalt thou behold,  
The midnight Beauty, slow unfold  
Her golden zone, and thro' the gloom  
To thee her radiant leaves display,  
More lovely than the roscate bloom  
Of flowers, that drink the tropic day ;  
And while thy dancing flames around her blaze,  
Shed odours more refin'd, and beam with brighter  
rays.

The

The glass thy faded form contains,  
 But of thy lamp no spark remains;  
 That lamp, which through the palmy grove,  
 Floated once with sapphire beam,  
 As lucid as the star of Love,  
 Reflected in the bickering stream;  
 'Transient and bright! so human meteors rise,  
 And glare and sink, in pensive REASON'S eyes,

Ye dazzling comets that appear  
 In Fashion's rainbow atmosphere,  
 Lightning and flashing for a day;  
 Think ye, how fugitive your fame?  
 How soon from her light scroll away,  
 Is wasted your ephemeron name?  
 Even tho' on canvas still your forms are shewn,  
 Or the slow chisel shapes the pale resembling stone.

Let vaunting OSTENTATION trust  
 The pencil's art, or marble bust,  
 While long neglected modest worth,  
 Unmark'd, unhonor'd, and unknown,  
 Obtains at length a little earth,  
 Where kindred merit weeps alone;  
 Yet there, tho' VANITY no trophies rear,  
 Is FRIENDSHIP'S long regret, and true AFFECTION'S  
 tear!

EMILY.

EMILY. Mamma, your poem is I think rather melancholy.

MRS. TALBOT. I did not intend, Emily, that it should be gay.

GEORGE. For my part, I like the most melancholy verses the best.—I remember, Mother, that two years ago, I read for the first time, Grey's Elegy, and I was pleased with it, without quite understanding some part of it.—But when you explained to me, what I did not clearly comprehend before, it gave me more pleasure than any thing I ever had met with.

MRS. TALBOT. It has been observed, George, that almost all men of genius, have a disposition to indulge melancholy and gloomy ideas; and in reading our most celebrated poets, we have evidence that it was so. But these very men had also the keenest relish for the pleasures and enjoyments of life; the liveliest sense of the absurd and ridiculous, and were most of them severe satyrists, as well

well as entertaining companions. But there are so many prejudices entertained about those who are called Poets, that a parent, who thought as the greater part of the world think, would never act like the worthy father of Pope, who used to encourage his son to make verses; correct and recorrect them, and when they satisfied him, would exclaim with great appearance of satisfaction, "these are good rhymes." To this encouragement, we are probably indebted, for the most correct and elegant, if not the most original of English Poets. But from the prevalence of a received opinion, that a man of genius must want common sense, and be of course unfortunate, many young men of superior talent have been discouraged from the cultivation of them, and have directed to pursuits much less laudable, the powers that might have raised them to the greatest eminence in literature. The errors and misfortunes of men of genius, are

evident, and recorded.—The errors, and consequent misfortunes, of common characters, are so frequent, and the world is accustomed to despise and forget them, while it is also forgotten, that infinitely more mischief is done by folly than by wit, that innumerable men are every day ruining themselves and their families, who are as destitute of common sense, as the most enthusiastic victim of poetical pursuits can be imagined to be. Do not, therefore, my dear George, suffer the pleasure you derive from poetry, or the inclination you may one day feel to attempt it, to be checked by these common place sayings about wit and abilities, such as that—

Great wit to madness nearly is allied,  
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

And many others of the same sort, confidently repeated by people, who seem to value themselves on the want of that intellect, which is the distinguishing characteristic

racteristic of man; for, if understanding and reason are the great marks of the superiority of the human race, he who possesses that reason in a more eminent degree, and cultivates it for the benefit of his fellow creatures, approaches the nearest to an higher order of beings.— Another prejudice is, that understanding is not so often accompanied by good and easy temper, as weakness; and, in consequence of this notion, it is not an uncommon thing to hear people say—“Such a one is not very wise, but extremely good-natured.” And “a good-natured weak man,” is a very usual expression. But I very much doubt whether goodness of heart, and weakness of understanding ever go together; that they are not frequently united, I am convinced. A weak and ignorant man, is almost always conscious of his inferiority—but his self love is alarmed at the involuntary discovery, and he at once hates and fears every

every one whom he feels to be his superior, and is always apprehensive of imposition or ridicule. Such a man is happy, if, while he is enjoying, and perhaps wasting, the fortune which he never would himself have been able to acquire, he can drag at his chariot wheels, in the degrading situation of a retainer, some unfortunate man of talents, reduced either by circumstances or indiscretion, to the humiliation of dependence. But far less irksome to the man who feels the proud consciousness of abilities, must it be, to submit to the humblest labour that procures him bread, than to accept from one of these *good-natured men*, the least favour that can give a base mind what he conceives to be a triumph over one whom he knows is his superior. To be the butt of clumsy attempts at wit, or to degrade that which God has given him, by reducing it to the gross and depraved taste of such a patron, must surely be the most humiliating and mortifying situation

ation to which a man of sense and spirit can be reduced. In the vocabulary of half the world, the want of money, implies the want of common sense; and thus, poetry and poverty have become associated in the minds of the vulgar.— Ill fated genius perpetuates and immortalizes at once his failings and his sufferings—while those of the common herd are forgotten with them. I believe it to be far from true, that the powers and feelings which constitute a Poet, unfit a man for success in any other liberal walk of life. On the contrary, I am persuaded, that the talents which have acquired great eminence and affluence in other pursuits, would not enable their possessor to become a Poet; yet, that the talents which make a Poet, (I speak not of the common rhymers of a magazine, or a newspaper,) would enable him, to whom they are given, to excel in any pursuit to which he should steadily apply them. Gray, very truly observes, that

money is desirable to literary men, because money is independence and freedom. And he as justly remarks, that the great can do little for them, but to leave them to the enjoyments of that leisure, which independence gives them. I have not the book by me at this moment—but I have dwelled rather long on the subject, brought to my mind by the mention of Burns, because I would lose no occasion to enforce the necessity of your maintaining, in whatever line of life you may hereafter be thrown, that independence, without which, talents are often the disgrace, and acute feelings the misery of their possessor.

GEORGE. Pope was not poor, Mother.—I think I have heard, or read, that he took great care of his fortune.

MRS. TALBOT. The greater part of which he honourably acquired by the exertion of his poetical abilities.

GEORGE. He was of a melancholy disposition, however, I suppose; for I remember

member writing out as a task, a letter from him in his youth, which is inserted in the Guardian, I believe, or some book of that kind, which I used to read to my Grandmamma, four or five years ago.

MRS. TALBOT. Do you remember it?

GEORGE. A part of it I think I can still repeat.

“ When I reflect what an inconsiderable little atom every single man is, with respect to the whole creation, methinks 'tis a shame to be concerned at the removal of such a trivial animal as I am. The morning after my exit, the sun will shine as bright as ever, the flowers will smell as sweet, the world will proceed at its old course, people will laugh as heartily, and marry as fast as they used to do.”

MRS. TALBOT. This chearful kind of melancholy, is the truest philosophy. On the ideas of the letter, of which you have repeated some lines, West, the friend of

Gray, formed a very interesting poem; mingling that turn of thought, with part of one of the elegies of Tibullus. In the last volume of the Mirror, there is also a poem on the same subject, written by Michael Bruce, a young man of considerable genius, and in indigent circumstances, who in early youth, was conscious that he was lingering in an incurable illness. As another instance of unintended plagiarism, and unconscious imitation, without thinking of, and certainly without having the power to refer to either of these compositions, I recollect that a young man, with whom I was once acquainted, wrote, some years ago, a few stanzas in the same desponding, yet resigned spirit.—A peculiar and disastrous chain of events, seemed to pursue him through life; but after his fortune apparently changed for the better, other circumstances arose, which deprived him of the happiness, independence, and affluence promised him. I remember also,  
some

some lines he wrote, when after a long absence he returned to England, and looking at that moment with a more sanguine disposition of mind on the prospect then before him, he compared the revival of his hopes to the renewal in the spring of the beauties of nature, of which he had a lively enjoyment.

## VERSES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

As in the woods, where leathery lichen weaves  
Its wintry web among the sallow leaves,  
Which (thro' cold months in whirling eddies blown,)  
Decay beneath the branches once their own.  
From the brown shelter of their foliage sear,  
Spring the young blooms that lead the floral year,  
When waked by vernal Suns, the Pilewort dares,  
Expand her clouded leaves and shining stars ;  
And, veins empurpling all her tassels pale,  
Bends the soft wind-flower in the vernal gale.  
Uncultured bells of azure jacinths blow,  
And the breeze scenting violet lurks below.  
So views the Wanderer, with delighted eyes,  
Reviving hopes from black despondence rise ;

When

When blighted by Adversity's chill breath,  
Those hopes had felt a temporary death ;  
Then with gay heart he looks to future hours,  
When Love and Friendship dress the summer bowers ;  
And, as delicious dreams enchant his mind,  
Forgets his sorrows past, and gives them to the wind.

Some years afterwards, though he had then obtained a fortune more than adequate to all his wishes, the loss of a mother and a sister, to whom he was most affectionately attached, added to a disappointment in the character and conduct of a young woman, who proved to be a very different being from that which his elevated and ardent imagination had represented her, were circumstances so affecting his mind, that he never could determine to pursue any of those objects, either of ambition or amusement, which usually attract young men of his rank and situation—but relinquishing his establishment, he passed the greatest part of his time in wandering into different countries. It was in travelling through one of those  
those



While in a few short months, to clothe the mould,  
Would velvet moss and purple melic rise,  
By Heaven's pure dew drops water'd, clear and cold,  
And birds innumerable sing my obsequies;  
But, in my native land, no faithful maid  
To mourn for me, would pleasure's orgies shun;  
No sister's love my long delay upbraid;  
No mother's anxious love demand her son.  
Thou, only thou, my friend, would feel regret,  
My blighted hopes and early fate deplore;  
And, while my faults thou'dst palliate or forget,  
Would half rejoice, I felt that fate no more.

If, however, a certain degree of melancholy is supposed to be the accompaniment of genius, there is no species of affectation more absurd and disgusting, than pretending to be absent, "melancholy and gentlemanlike"—an air which is often assumed by solemn coxcombs, who, while they would fain have it mistaken for a symptom of superior intellect, make it the cloak of supercilious pride, and pompous stupidity. Such persons are splenetic, and fancy themselves affected with pensive poetical dejection; their  
nervous

nervous system, forsooth, is deranged by every trifle; and they pretend to shrink, with extreme sensibility, from the common intercourse of life; when, in fact, they have no sensibility but for themselves, and no study but how to make themselves of importance. But I know not how it has happened that we have fallen into this gloomy vein; I am unwilling to impute it to the weather, for nothing is more weak and unworthy than to yield to such impressions, and to fancy that we cannot do so and so, because the weather affects us.—A rational being should endeavour always to be able to command his faculties, and divest himself of minute attention to outward circumstances which he cannot alter.

GEORGE. That is true, Mother; but I am very glad, notwithstanding, to see so much blue sky; the weather is going to clear up, and we shall have a little ramble by the sea this evening.—Will you not go out?

MRS.

MRS. TALBOT. I shall enjoy it very much. There is something particularly magnificent in the sullen swell of the waves as the storm subsides, and the broad shadows on the still rolling surface of the sea while the clouds are breaking away. I love the monotonous heavy burst of the surges on the shore, and to listen to the echos as they foam under the distant cliffs. The sea birds too, who had withdrawn to their nests in the rocks, while the violence of the tempest raged, then leave their shelter to fish before sunset. We shall have an opportunity, this evening, to make these and other observations.

CONVERSATION THE NINTH.

POEMS.

THE GERANIUM.

THE MULBERRY-TREE.

THE BLIGHTED ROSE.

STUDIES BY THE SEA.



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## CONVERSATION THE NINTH.

MRS. TALBOT—EMILY—GEORGE.

MRS. TALBOT. My dear Emily, you are later than usual to day—where have you been?

EMILY. Mamma, as my brother and I came from our walk, Mrs. Davidson, the landlady of the house where my aunt and cousins are to lodge, desired us to walk in, just for a moment, to see what nice order every thing was in, against their arrival: and she shewed us all her rooms, and had something to tell us about the furniture of each of them; and then she would make us hear the names of all the Ladies, and Lords, and Sir Johns, and I don't know who, that have inhabited her house for the last seven years, I believe.

GEORGE. And then, just as we had done with all this, she entreated us to go and look at her geraniums.—They were just taken in, four or five of them, out of a little court where she keeps them in the Summer; and she desired us to tell her, whether my aunt, and her family, had any objection to flowers; because, “Sir,” said she, “you are to know the case is this; that there is a window in my *big* drawing-room as looks direct south; and all the Winter sun, and sunshine at this season, is there till two o’clock; so if you think the family has no dislike, I’ll just take two of my best pots, and just put them in that window. She was going on, when I assured her, for I thought I might safely venture to do so, that nobody would object to her geraniums, for that my aunt was very fond of flowers.

EMILY. She talked a great deal, Mamma, in such an odd tone and manner, that I could hardly understand her.

MRS.

MRS. TALBOT. She is a Scotch woman, and speaks in the tone, and in some instances in the dialect of her country.— But we must forgive her language, in consideration of her love for geraniums.

EMILY. O yes! and I am sure when my aunt, and cousins, and sister come, we shall all most willingly assist in taking care of these favourites of hers, which are as fine as any I ever saw in a greenhouse.

MRS. TALBOT. And I dare say she takes great pride in them, and they afford her as much pleasure as one of the same race of plants did to me. Before I had possessed a green house, and while it was my lot to pass a good deal of time alone, I had raised one of these beautiful plants from a cutting, given me in a nosegay.— It became in a few months large and flourishing, and was one of the handsomest, though not the most tender of the numerous race of exotic geraniums. I grew as fond of my plant as I should

have been of a domestic animal, and took great pains to nourish it with fresh earth, by exchanging the pot for a larger, whenever there was occasion for such a transposition; sheltering it from frost, and giving it light and air. In consequence of this unremitting care, my geranium attained a luxuriance of growth very unusual, and was always covered with flowers. At that time, for it is now near twenty years ago, the ever-blowing rose, and many other plants, now familiar to our parlours, were not so generally possessed; and my favourite geranium was an object of admiration to every one who saw it, and of pride to myself; and as it was a sort of habit I acquired to write little pieces of poetry on any subject that happened particularly to flatter my imagination, I addressed an Ode to my geranium, which I will try to recollect and repeat to you; though I do not know that, till your mention of Mrs. Davidson's fine plants, I have ever thought  
of

of it since. As I had at that time no book of poesy, such as we now prudently use to secure our essays in, I had only my memory to trust to, or some fugitive paper, not now to be recovered.—But I believe I can recall it pretty correctly, for it is remarkable, that I have an almost perfect remembrance of every thing I learned, and every thing I wrote, in the former part of my life.—I believe I could even write out a speech from Racine, of near an hundred lines, which perhaps I have never read since I was at school.

TO A GERANIUM WHICH FLOWERED  
DURING THE WINTER.

WRITTEN IN AUTUMN.

NATIVE of Afric's arid lands,  
Thou, and thy many-tinctur'd bands,  
Unheeded and unvalued grew,  
While Caffres crush'd beneath the sands  
Thy pencil'd flowers of roseate hue.

But our cold northern sky beneath,  
For thee attemper'd zephyrs breathe,  
And art supplies the tepid dew,  
That feeds, in many a glowing wreath,  
Thy lovely flowers of roseate hue.

Thy race, that spring uncultur'd here,  
Decline with the declining year,  
While in successive beauty new,  
Thine own light bouquets fresh appear,  
And marbled leaves of cheerful hue.

Now buds and bells of every shade,  
By Summer's ardent eye survey'd,  
No more their gorgeous colours shew;  
And even the lingering asters fade,  
With drooping heads of purple hue.

But naturalized in foreign earth,  
'Tis thine, with many a beautiful birth,  
As if in gratitude they blew,  
To hang, like blushing trophies forth,  
Thy pencill'd flowers of roseate hue.

Oh then, amidst the wintry gloom,  
Those flowers shall dress my cottage room,  
Like friends in adverse fortune true;  
And soothe me with their roseate bloom,  
And downy leaves of vernal hue.

EMILY.

EMILY. I shall be fonder than ever, my dear Mamma, of my own geraniums when I get home. But tell me—for I am not quite sure—by Caffres, you mean Hottentots, do you not?

MRS. TALBOT. The race of men inhabiting the country about the Cape of Good Hope are so called.—They are Negroes, and by every account, the least favoured by nature of any of the natives of Africa. Yet beneath their feet, the same nature has chosen to lavish some of her most beautiful and fragrant productions. An almost endless variety of ixiads, such, you know, as we saw great numbers of last Spring at the nursery garden; geraniums of I know not how many kinds; the lovely and odorous Cape jasmín; and so many others, that I cannot attempt to enumerate them, and can only say, that our gardens, and still more our green-houses and hot-houses, are obliged to the native country of the Caffres for a considerable part of their

rarest ornaments. And you see, Mrs. Davidson is now, as I once was, indebted to that country for much innocent pleasure.

GEORGE. Mother, what is the reason that the people of Scotland, though they reside in this country the greatest part of their lives, never learn to speak as we do.

MRS. TALBOT. The defect is by no means peculiar to the people of Scotland. The provincial tone and manner of many English people is quite as remote from the language of those who speak good and pure English, though, perhaps, they have long conversed only with the well educated of their own country; and the reason, I believe is, that an habit acquired in early youth, is never eradicated without much observation, and taking a good deal of trouble.—Now very few of those who have learned early to speak in a provincial accent, will either make the observations, or take the trouble. I cannot otherwise imagine,

imagine, how it is possible for any one to talk of *midnent* and *mought*, and say this is wery pretty, and the other wasty disagreeable.—Or how any custom can reconcile it to the ears of persons that can spell, when they say, “they saw a flower in the *edge*; and in trying to get at it, trod just at the *hedge* of the stream. That they have had their *air* cut by a fashionable dresser, and have bought a beautiful *at*, which is a most becoming *ed-dress*, and they shall wear it the next time they go *hout* to dinner.” Now, though I can easily imagine that a Scotch woman finds it very difficult to divest herself of the tone and manner of her country, I cannot conceive how English people can contrive so to disfigure and mutilate their own language.—Nothing is more desirable than a correct and pure style, whether in speaking or in writing, and nothing should more sedulously be avoided than any particular words, or imitating the language of uneducated

educated persons, or those who have acquired in early life a provincial dialect—such as I have just now given an example of. How disagreeable it is, to hear any one speak with a nasal tone, and indolently drawl out their words, as if it was too much trouble to speak at all. Nor is it less so, when a person speaks so fast, and inarticulately, that it requires the utmost attention in the hearer to comprehend his or her meaning. Conversation is often rendered irksome by these faults, and by others still more common; such as the rage people have to talk altogether, no one being willing to hear, but every body expecting to be heard; or by rude inattention, crying *hum*, and *haxe*, and *indeed*, in a sort of way that tells you, the party is thinking of something else.

GEORGE. And I met with another unpleasant sort of talker to-day, Mother. While I waited on the beech for Emily's return from bathing, a gentleman I never

saw

saw before, sat down by me, and entered into conversation—but it consisted entirely of questions. He asked me what my name was, where I lived, where I was educated, how old I was, what number we were in family, and to what family of the Talbots I belonged, and a great many other questions; till at last I was so weary of answering him, that I abruptly wished him a good morning, and hastened away to find Emily, who joined me just as my questioning acquaintance again came in sight. I am sure, however, he would have followed us, and have attacked us anew, but Mrs. Davidson at that moment called to us, to beg we would step into her house for a little while, and by that means we escaped him.

Mrs. TALBOT. This impertinence, disgusting and troublesome as it is, means nothing, but that this poor man is idle, and has no ideas but what he is forced to collect with all this pains, from any body who will give him their attention. He  
will

will now have to tell some other sauntering man, or woman, the next time you happen to pass, who you are; and so gain another ten minutes from the lassitude of having nothing to think of and nothing to do.—These sort of characters abound in all places of public resort like this, and here the idle can relieve each other; however, if their enquiries were limited to such as this honest gentleman made to you, there would be no great harm in indulging them; but unfortunately, they seldom can resist improving upon the narratives they are thus anxious to collect; and are very apt to embellish them, without much adherence to truth, or respect for the feelings of those of whose history they are pleased to inform themselves. How much more usefully employed are the poor women that we hear singing so merrily at their doors, as they make or repair the fishing nets, with which their husbands, brothers, or sons, exercise the hazardous employment that supports their  
numerous

numerous families.—There is something in chearful industry, that is always gratifying; and though the English have perhaps less natural taste and talent for music than any nation in Europe, it is to me very pleasant to hear the peasants singing at their work. I have been told, that in Scotland these rustic concerts are much more scientifically performed. In France, you see the *petillante*, lively French women, sitting at their doors making lace, and singing; while the bobbins on their cushions mark the cadence.

GEORGE. The fishermen's wives are not, to be sure, very smart figures, nor are their songs very musical; but I like to see them make their nets. I talked to a man the other day, as he was doing something to one of those large nets, which we see carried in great rolls that almost cover the men when they have them on their heads; and he told me, that though their wives make them, and they themselves pitch and prepare the nets afterwards,

wards, yet, that they cost a great deal of money; often as much as two or three hundred pounds. He told me too, that their best nets are sometimes torn by a fish, called the sea-dog, which pursue the mackarel, or herrings, and are so large and strong, that they burst through and break the tackle, and let the fish escape.

Mrs. TALBOT. I am always pleased when you take an interest in these sort of things, and learn how different operations are performed, and the value of the time and industry of that class of society, which some of those in upper life contemptuously call the common people, or the mob; not condescending to recollect, that it is to these common people they are indebted for the privilege of doing nothing themselves. This afternoon, as it promises to be fair, we will devote to a long walk; or if the tide serves, and you like it better, to a short voyage along the shore. And now, to return to the subject of the materials for fishing;

fishing; I recollect, I think, reading in some of those books of voyages, that give an account of the circumnavigators, the spirited and intelligent seamen, who have been round the world, that the Indians in the South seas, who obtain a great part of their subsistence by fishing, have nets, such as we call Seines, made of a grass, that grows in those islands, which they know how to prepare, so as to make much better and larger nets than either we or the French make.

GEORGE. Why don't we do the same, or will not that grass grow in this country?

MRS. TALBOT. Probably it will not. The materials we have, however, are quite sufficient; and are also, you know, prepared from a vegetable. If ever an opportunity occurs, you shall see the process, in one of our great sea-ports, Portsmouth, or Plymouth, of manufacturing hemp, from a slight packthread, into those enormous cables, on which the  
magnificent

magnificent ships of war, carrying sometimes more than an hundred guns, depend for their safety. These are prepared by repeated operations, till they are strong enough to endure the great force with which a ship draws upon its anchor when it rides hard, as the sailors call it; that is, when the sea is very rough.

EMILY. How odd it is, to think, Mamma, that one of those great cables, which must be very large indeed, for those belonging even to the fishing boats are as big as a person's leg; how odd it is to imagine, that the fine, fine thread, not much thicker than a spider's web, that Hester uses when she mends your lace, is made exactly in the same manner, and almost of the same substance, as those very great ropes.

MRS. TALBOT. Silk is capable of being made into a still finer, and more minute thread than flax.

EMILY. But that, you know, is an animal substance.

GEORGE.

GEORGE. Do not you remember, Emily, that my Mother told us not long ago, that silk was also a vegetable substance, or might be called so, because it is the mulberry leaf which supplies the silk worm with its food, and therefore it is the juice of that tree, converted into another material by the worm.

EMILY. And I remember now, Mamma, that you said, when you were last speaking of it, that it might make the subject of another poem for our book.

MRS. TALBOT. I did so; but something or other put it out of my thoughts at the time. I have not failed, however, to recollect it since—and my stanzas are actually composed; I fear, however, Emily, that you will think them too grave, as you thought of those on the fire-fly.

EMILY. No, indeed, Mamma.—But pray tell me one thing. I read a story about two people, called Pyramus and Thisbe, which was very absurd, I thought, and it related that mulberries were white,

till these two lovers being killed near, or under a mulberry tree, all the berries of those trees became red.—What does it mean?

MRS. TALBOT. A fanciful and poetical manner of accounting for the different colours of the fruit of this tree; just as the redness of the rose is fabled to have been caused by the blood which sprang from the feet of Venus, as she was wounded by thorns, when running through the woods, in despair for the loss of Adonis; and as her lover himself, being killed by a boar, was transformed into the flower, which we now call an anemone, I believe; but the botany of these fabulous histories is not very correct, and varies in the relations given of it.—There is a burlesque representation of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, in Shakspeare's play, the *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

GEORGE. Oh yes, I remember it, and Emily, you may recollect that I shewed  
you

you a picture in the Shakspeare gallery, representing Bottom, the weaver, with an ass's head, which had been put on by order of the fairy king; and there were the inferior fairies, Peaseblossom, Moth, and Mustard-seed.

EMILY. Oh, but indeed, my dear George, you do puzzle me so, with so many ideas at a time, that at last I have no ideas at all.

MRS. TALBOT. Well then, that you may not have the same complaint to make of my Mulberry-tree, your brother shall read the stanzas first.—Here, George, look over and explain them, in the way of what is called “the Argument” to a poem, that Emily may not find them obscure.

GEORGE. I believe I comprehend them. I could not, perhaps, explain the process of making silk; but if you will just give us an idea of that—

MRS. TALBOT. That is not necessary now, only let me hear how much is evident to

your understanding, of what I have attempted to convey to you in these lines.

GEORGE. The first stanzas describe the tree in this country, where it is very late in unfolding its leaves. I remember that very well, because David always told me, that when the Mulberry leaves came out I might put out my myrtles, geraniums, and my little orange trees, that I raised myself; for that then there would be no more frost or cold, severe enough to hurt them. That country of Europe is next described, in which the Mulberry tree is particularly cultivated; Italy, where are very high mountains, called the Appenines, and Patience and Industry are personified, and are supposed to call the young and the old—for perhaps strong able men are not employed in it—to begin those works, by which the thread spun by the silk-worm, and which is produced by the juices of the Mulberry leaf, becomes at length silk, and being dyed, after a long process, which we must suppose,

pose,

pose, becomes of course blue as the sky, or red like the roses, or purple, or spotted.

MRS. TALEOT. All that, you perfectly understand.—I could not, you know, in so short a poem as this, describe the various operations performed; such as throwing the cocoons into boiling water, which kills the worm within; winding the silk off on small reels, and preparing it in different manners, according to the purpose it is designed for; then giving it colour; and fitting it for the loom. Had I done all this, I should have made what is called a didactic poem—such as the Fleece, by Dyer, and others of the like nature.—But had I been capable of executing this sort of poem, it would not have entered into my plan, because all I mean is, to excite your curiosity, which there are such ample means of gratifying, by books, that you would perhaps think dry and uninteresting, if you were to sit down to them merely as a task, and

without having collected some general ideas before, on the subjects they treat of. And now, George, read my apostrophe to the Mulberry-tree, which Pliny, the Roman naturalist, calls the wisest of trees, because, even in Italy, it does not put forth its leaves till the cold weather is certainly gone.—You must not forget to notice the moral, though you omitted it in your *argument*.

### TO THE MULBERRY-TREE.

ON READING THE ORIENTAL APHORISM, "BY PATIENCE AND LABOUR THE MULBERRY-LEAF BECOMES SATIN."

HITHER, in half blown garlands drest,  
Advances the reluctant Spring,  
And shrinking, feels her tender breast  
Chill'd by Winter's snowy wing ;  
Nor wilt thou, alien as thou art, display  
Or leaf, or swelling bud, to meet the varying day.

Yet,

Yet, when the mother of the rose,  
Bright June, leads on the glowing hours,  
And from her hands luxuriant throws  
Her lovely groups of Summer flowers;  
Forth from thy brown and unclad branches shoot  
Serrated leaves and rudiments of fruit.

And soon those boughs umbrageous spread  
A shelter from Autumnal rays,  
While gay beneath thy shadowy head,  
His gambols happy childhood plays;  
Eager, with crimson fingers to amass  
Thy ruby fruit, that strews the turfy grass.

But where, festoon'd with purple vines,  
More freely grows thy graceful form,  
And skreen'd by towering Appenines,  
Thy foliage feeds the spinning worm;  
PATIENCE and INDUSTRY protect thy shade,  
And see, by future looms, their care repaid.

*They* mark the threads; half viewless wind  
That form the shining light cocoon,  
Now tinted as the orange rind,  
Or paler than the pearly moon;  
Then at their summons in the task engage,  
Ligh active youth, and tremulous old age.

The task that bids thy tresses green  
 A thousand varied hues assume,  
 There colour'd like the sky serene,  
 And mocking here the roses bloom;  
 And now, in lucid volumes lightly roll'd,  
 Where purple clouds are starr'd with mimic gold.

But not because thy veined leaves,  
 Do to the grey winged moth supply  
 The nutriment, whence Patience weaves  
 The monarch's velvet canopy;  
 Thro' his high domes, a splendid radiance throws,  
 And binds the jewell'd circler on his brows;

And not, that thus transform'd, thy boughs,  
 Now as a cestus clasp the fair,  
 Now in her changeful vestment flows,  
 And filets now her plaited hair;  
 I praise thee; but that I behold in thee  
 The triumph of unwearied Industry.

'Tis, that laborious millions owe  
 To thee, the source of simple food  
 In Eastern climes; or where the Po  
 Reflects thee from his classic flood;  
 While useless INDOLLNCE may blush, to view  
 What PATIENCE, INDUSTRY, and ART, can do.

EMILY.

EMILY. I believe I understand it, Mamma; but I find, that after I have written any poetry out in my book, and considered a moment about the meaning of a passage that was before a little obscure, the difficulties generally vanish.

MRS. TALBOT. Poetry is sometimes obscure at first, because it is often necessary to invert the sentences, in order to obtain the rhyme, or to accommodate the measure. And that is the best poetry, where these points are gained with the least appearance of force; and where the fewest words are admitted, evidently for the sake of the rhyme only. Words which no writer would use, if they could do without them; and which in prose would never enter into elegant composition. Sometimes a poor versemaker is sadly tortured by the wish he feels to use some word of great force to close his couplet, to which there are not, perhaps, above two or three respondents, and  
those

those so awkward and unmanageable, that he must sometimes sacrifice sense to sound. Our friend and favourite, Cowper, gives an admirable account of the pleasure a Poet feels, when he has conquered to his satisfaction one of these distressing passages. —But George! you do not seem to be attending to our digression from a tree to a poet; you were, I fancy, thinking at that moment of something else.

GEORGE. I was thinking it is extraordinary, as there are other insects which spin, that no use has ever been made of their webs.

MRS. TALBOT. I have heard or read, that an attempt has been made to convert the spiders web into some kind of thread, and that gloves or stockings were made of it. But the first manufacturers are in this case too disgusting in their manners and habits, and their product too little worth, to encourage a repetition of these experiments.

GEORGE.

GEORGE. Butterflies, however, have a sort of thread in their caterpillar state.

MRS. TALBOT. No more than suffices them to fasten themselves to some leaf, or piece of wood, while they undergo their metamorphose, from a caterpillar to a butterfly; and while they remain suspended as the chrysalis or aurelia.

GEORGE. But I think, Mother, I remember to have seen black looking webs, that seemed knit round a leaf, and parched it all up, and that beneath the web, there were disagreeable looking insects.

MRS. TALBOT. That ill-looking collection is what is called aphides.—There are I know not how many sorts of these; the people say they are a blight, but they seem to have very little knowledge about them, but as far as relates to the effect of this pest on their crops.

EMILY. Sometimes I have gathered a flower that looked just about to blow, but  
when

when I came to examine it, was quite black, and eaten within by one of these ugly worms.

MRS. TALBOT. They are another sort of the aphides. The disease you mention is particularly ruinous to the rose, and sometimes I have known a tree quite spoiled by them, and producing no fine roses. And that puts me in mind of a few stanzas, that were composed by that young friend of mine, whose verses you heard a few days ago. I found them, as I frequently do a piece of half forgotten poetry, among other papers and unfinished drawings in a neglected port folio. Since we are upon this topic, I will read them to you; and then, after dinner, we will go for our walk by the sea. I do not believe we shall find the tide favour our sailing scheme.





The dark pollution o'er its head,  
 That drooping seem'd to mourn  
 Its fragrance pure, and petals red,  
 Destroy'd e'er fully born.

Unfinish'd now, and incomplete,  
 My garland lay at Fanny's feet,  
 She smil'd;—ah could I then repeat  
 What youth so little knows,  
 How the too trusting heart must beat  
 With pain, when treachery and deceit  
 In some insidious form, defeat  
 Its fairest hopes; as cankers eat  
 The yet unfolded rose.

MRS. TALBOT. How deliciously pleasant is the evening. Let us, since our plan of going out on the water is put an end to by the state of the tide; let us seat ourselves in this chalky cavity, and study the scene, which is in the apprehension of many people quite uninteresting, and affording no variety.

GEORGE. Yes, I remember in some books we were reading—but I have forgot what book it was, the author says, that the sea has no change, but that which  
 is

is made by tides, affecting only its margin, or by the difference of storms and calms.

MRS. TALBOT. There are people who affect to think, nothing but the human character deserves their study, and pass over the great works of God, as unworthy the trouble of contemplating. For my own part, I feel very differently from these philosophers. Perhaps I have seen too much of the fallacy of their studies, and the little benefit that has accrued from them, either to individual, or general happiness; and therefore turn, with more ardour than I did in early life, to contemplate the works of God only, wherever they are unspoiled by man.—I wonder any being, who affects taste, would venture to assert that this immense body of water presents only sameness and monotony.—To me it seems, that even the colours and sounds are little less varied, than those we see or hear, in the midst of the most luxuriant landscape. I remember

ber having been becalmed some years ago in a packet boat between Brighthelmstone and Dieppe; unfortunately for the master of the vessel, who was, he said, engaged by a nobleman to bring over "his Lordship and all his Lordship's family," if he was there sooner than another packet, which could not leave the English coast till the next tide after his departure. When the wind failed so entirely as to leave the sails totally unfilled, the agonizing apprehensions of losing forty guineas began to operate on this poor man with great violence, and he walked backwards and forwards on his small deck, wiping his forehead and deploring his ill fortune, sometimes varying his lamentations with supplications which he made in French, and which consisted, I believe, of all the French he could speak—"Souffle, souffle, St. Antoine," cried he. His supplications were vain, yet they were by no means remitted; and hardly could he attend, though a very civil man, to the questions of his weary

passengers, who were as eager as he was to get on shore, for the weather was very hot, and the confinement in so small a vessel very inconvenient. As a cabin was always intolerable to me, I remained upon deck, and found amusement in the variety I saw of colours and motions upon the surface of the water. Sometimes it was ruffled by a partial breeze, which however did not reach our flagging sails; notwithstanding the Captain, watching it with the greatest anxiety, repeated his energetic apostrophe of "*souffle, souffle donc, St. Antoine,*" and as often as these light airs passed by without giving him the least assistance, he became more clamorous. At length, as I steadily observed the surface of the blue and almost transparent waves, in hopes of seeing some signs of wind, I remarked what I thought was one of these currents of air, which running in the direction of the packet from the north-west, would, I hoped, reach our motionless sails. The Captain was at that moment  
gone

gone down to console himself with some of the passengers eatables and drinkables; but I remarked to the man on deck the alteration in the colour of the water, thro' which it seemed as if a river was poured that kept itself distinct from the salt waves, just as the Rhone is said to pass through the lake of Geneva without mingling with its water.—“ Oh, no, Ma'am,” said the mariner, in answer to my enquiry whether a fresh breeze was not approaching, “ that is not wind, it is a shoal of mackerel, that changes the colour of the water, and makes them there bubbles like as you see, and all them crinkles in the water.” As the shoal approached a little nearer, I distinctly heard that sort of snapping noise, which you may sometimes remember in the river from fish just rising to the surface, and saw that a vast stream of life, if I may so express myself, produced the effect I had remarked on the colour of the sea. Of this stream or shoal of animated beings, many were de-

voured by gulls or other sea birds, others by the dog fish, which threw themselves above the water in the eagerness of pursuit; and great numbers were probably taken the same evening on our coast; and by the hour of dinner the next day contributed another dish to the tables of the rich, while the day after the refuse might be the sole sustenance of several families of the poor. These appearances which may sometimes be observed from the shore, and the various hues reflected by the waves from the sky—the changes of the season, of tides, and of winds, surely give nearly as much variety to this element, as the difference of Winter and Summer does to the earth we inhabit.

GEORGE. There are some lines in Cowper, I remember, comparing the wind among the trees of a wood, to the rush of the sea on the beach.

MRS. TALBOT. Can you remember them?

GEORGE.

GEORGE. ———“ Mighty winds,  
That sweep the skirt of some far spreading wood  
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike  
The dash of Ocean on his winding shore.

MRS. TALBOT. I am always gratified by these recollections, my dear George; they are instances of taste as well as memory. Not only the rush of the water when, heavily and with pauses, it breaks on the shore, is solemnly pleasing; but the low and half heard murmur of the small waves, that just rock the sea weed as it floats upon them, before it is deposited on the shingles, is a sound almost as soothing as that we listen to, when the low Summer wind sighs among woods and copses—a sound, for which I think the English language wants an expressive word. We say indeed the sighing or the murmuring of the air, but the wind among trees seems better expressed by the Scottish word *sugh*, and still more elegantly by the Italian *susuràre*—

Frangersi l'acque, e susurrar le foglie.

L 3

However,

However, the louder bursts and thundering of the sea on the beach is better described in our rough northern language. But sublime and magnificent as those sounds are, as well as the sight of the sea in a tempest, every sensation, when a storm is the object, must be lost in our recollection of the misery, to which its violence exposes numbers of our fellow creatures.

EMILY. I cannot say I like the sight of this wide water, Mamma, so well as I do that of fields and downs, and woods and meadows; yet certainly the colours are very beautiful that we see at this moment upon it.

MRS. TALBOT. And it supports many beings either within its bosom, or on its produce. In some northern countries the natives are indebted almost entirely to the sea for their food and clothing. The sea birds which migrate to their shores, as well as the fish that people their waves, supply to them the want of all, that nature

ture has bestowed on more fortunate climates.—But let me try if the images we have thus collected may not be fixed in our memories by putting them into verse. I made a sketch of them a day or two ago, and perhaps I may be able to read them. I mean to refute the idea that the sea has no variety, but that which arises from the flux and reflux of tides, or from calms and storms.

## STUDIES BY THE SEA.

Al! wherefore do the incurious say,  
That this stupendous Ocean wide  
No change presents from day to day,  
Save only the alternate tide,  
Or save when gales of Summer glide  
Across the lightly crisped wave;  
Or, when against the cliff's rough side  
As equinoctial tempests rave  
It wildly bursts; o'erwhelms the deluged strand,  
Tears down its bounds, and desolates the land.

He who with more enquiring eyes  
Doth this extensive scene survey,

L 4

Beholds

Beholds innumerable changes rise,  
As various winds its surface sway ;  
Now o'er its heaving bosom play  
Small sparkling waves of silver gleam,  
And as they lightly glide away,  
Illumine with fluctuating beam  
Th' deepening surge ; green as the dewy corn  
That undulates in April's breezy morn

The far off waters then assume  
A glowing amethystine shade,  
That changing like the Paon's plume,  
Seems in celestial blue to fade ;  
Or paler colder hues of lead,  
As lurid vapours float on high,  
Along the ruffling billows spread,  
While darkly looms the threatening sky ;  
And the small scatter'd barks with outspread shrouds  
Catch the long gleams, that fall between the clouds.

Then Day's bright star with blunted rays  
Seems struggling thro' the sea-fog pale,  
And doubtful in the heavy haze  
Is dimly seen the nearing sail ;  
Till from the land a fresher gale  
Disperses the white mist, and clear,  
As melts away the gauzy veil,  
The sun-reflecting waves appear ;  
So, brighter genuine Virtue seems to rise  
From Envy's dark invidious calumnies.

What glories on the Sun attend  
When the full tides of evening flow,  
Where in still changing beauty, blend,  
With amber light the opal's glow,  
While in the East the diamond bow  
Rises in virgin lustre bright,  
And from the horizon seems to throw  
A partial line of trembling light  
'To the hush'd shore; and all the tranquil deep  
Beneath the modest Moon is sooth'd to sleep.

Forgotten then the thundering break  
Of waves, that in the tempest rise,  
The falling cliff, the shatter'd wreck,  
The howling blast, the sufferers' cries;  
For soft the breeze of evening sighs,  
And murmuring seems in Fancy's ear  
To whisper fairy lullabies  
That tributary waters bear,  
From precipices, dark with piny woods  
And inland rocks, and heathy solitudes.

The vast encircling seas within,  
What endless swarms of creatures hide  
Of burnish'd scale and spiny fin!  
These, providential instincts guide,  
And bid them know the annual tide,  
When, from unfathom'd waves that swell,  
Beyond Fuego's stormy side,  
They come, to cheer the tribes that dwell

In Boreal climes; and thro' his half year's night  
Give to the Lapland savage food and light.

From cliffs that pierce the northern sky,  
Where eagles rear their sanguine brood,  
With long awaiting patient eye  
Baffled by many a sailing cloud,  
The Highland native marks the flood,  
Till bright the quickening billows roll,  
And hosts of Sea birds clamouring loud  
Track with wild wing the welcome shoal,  
Swift o'er the animated current sweep,  
And bear their silver captives from the deep.

Sons of the North! your streamy vales  
With no rich sheaves rejoice and sing,  
Her flowery robe no fruit conceals,  
Tho' sweetly smile your tardy Spring;  
Yet every mountain clothed with ling  
Doth from its purple brow survey  
Your busy sails, that ceaseless bring  
To the broad frith and sheltering bay,  
Riches by Heaven's parental power supplied,  
The harvest of the far embracing tide.

And, where those fractur'd mountains lift  
O'er the blue wave their towering crest,  
Each salient ledge, and hollow cleft,  
To Sea fowl give a rugged nest.  
But, with instinctive love is drest

The Eider's downy cradle; where  
 The mother bird, her glossy breast  
 Devotes; and with maternal care  
 And plumeless bosom, stems the toiling Seas  
 That foam round the tempestuous Orcades.

From heights whence shuddering sense recoils,  
 And cloud-capped headlands, steep and bare,  
 Sons of the North! your venturous toils  
 Collect your poor and scanty fare.  
 Urged by imperious want, you dare  
 Scale the loose cliff, where Gannets hide,  
 Or scarce suspended, in the air  
 Hang perilous; and thus provide  
 The soft voluptuous couch, which not secures  
 To Luxury's pamper'd minions, sleep like yours.

Revolving still, the waves that now  
 Just ripple on the level shore,  
 Have borne, perchance, the Indian's prow,  
 Or half congeal'd, 'mid ice-rocks hoar  
 Raved to the Walruss' hollow roar,  
 Or have by currents swift convey'd  
 To the cold coast of Labrador  
 The relics of the Tropic shade;  
 And to the wondering Esquimeaux have shewn  
 Leaves of strange shape, and fruits unlike their own.

No more then let the incurious say,  
 No change this World of Water shews,

But

But as the tides the Moon obey,  
Or tempests rave, or calms repose.  
Shew them its bounteous breast bestows  
On myriads life : and bid them see  
In every wave that circling flows,  
Beauty, and use, and harmony.  
Works of the Power supreme who poured the flood  
Round the green peopled earth, and call'd it good.

CONVERSATION THE TENTH.

POEM.

FLORA.

CON-



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## CONVERSATION THE TENTH.

MRS. TALBOT—EMILY.

MRS. TALBOT. What progress have you made, my Emily, in extracting from the books I selected for you such parts as I marked ?

EMILY. Oh, Mamma, not much—it was not indeed that I was at all disposed to be idle yesterday, during your absence ; but after I had read over the names of all the heathen deities, and began some of the stories, I found so little pleasure in them, that I thought you would not insist on my going on. So I went to my drawing, to pass the rest of the morning.

MRS. TALBOT. You know I never wish to punish you by making that a task, which I would ever have you find a pleasure.—It was to enable you to understand and be gratified, with many  
poems

poems and poetical allusions, which must otherwise be incomprehensible, that I was desirous of your entering on a brief account of the Gods of the Pagans. However, you will acquire, as your reading becomes more extensive, as much knowledge as will be necessary for this purpose, without undertaking it as a task. I remember, that fairy tales which, when I was a girl, used highly to delight me, gave you no pleasure; when a year or two since, your friend, Miss Maybank, asked my permission to give you a set.—You was disgusted with the Royal Ram, and the Yellow Dwarf, and all the odd flights of imagination; indeed, I do not believe that, to the present time, you ever read one of them to the end.

EMILY. I suppose it is because I have no fancy, no genius, Mamma, or perhaps it is, because I am stupid.

MRS. TALBOT. I am willing rather to believe, my dear girl, that it arises from the purity of your natural taste, and  
your

your perception of what is most beautiful, truth in its singleness and simplicity. In the present system of education, boys learn at school the heathen mythology; and Ovid, the most fanciful, and by no means the most proper among the Roman poets, for the perusal of youth, is almost the first book put into their hands. Your elder brother, therefore, became acquainted with all these fabulous people; and as soon as Edward was in Virgil, he used to give me, while we looked over his lessons together, very clear accounts of their genealogy and exploits; but mingled with such remarks, as determined me to introduce these imaginary beings to George's acquaintance in another manner. You know, that the taste he has for poetry has induced me to give him many books, which boys at his age seldom desire to read, and if compelled to do it, seldom, and perhaps I may say never, understand. But he is delighted with the fictions of poetry; and has read

with enthusiasm, and a very uncommon relish for their beauties, poems, of which the machinery constitute a considerable part.—Now this could not have happened if he had not been a tolerable mythologist.

EMILY. I don't quite understand what you mean, Mamma.

MRS. TALBOT. I will endeavour to explain it to you. Homer is, as you have often heard, the greatest Epic Poet.—The Iliad is a poetical history of what happened in the last year of the Trojan war.—And the agents employed by the Poet, in bringing about the events, are heathen deities, who became themselves parties in the contest, which began, as the fable relates, from the gift of Paris, one of the sons of Priam, of a golden apple to Venus, in preference to Juno, the Queen of Heaven, and Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom and the Arts. The deities, thus interested, interfere in the war between the associated princes of Greece, and the  
Trojans.

Trojans. Almost all of them are personally brought forward, and some are even described as being wounded. Now to understand the Iliad at all, it is necessary to learn all the fictions on which the story is founded, and from which these supernatural agents, or the machinery, are introduced. The Iliad describes the effects of the anger of Achilles, in retarding the success of the Grecian Princes against Troy. Achilles was the son of a Sea Goddess, Thetis, who knowing that he was destined to fall in early youth, endeavoured to conceal him, and prevent his joining the confederacy; but Ulysses, King of Ithaca, who is represented as the favourite of Minerva, and a man of great wisdom and sagacity, discovered him by a stratagem, disguised in women's cloaths; and in despite of his mother's apprehensions, induced him to assist in the siege, because destiny had decreed that Troy should not fall, unless he was among those who attacked it. I cannot, now, go

into all the preceding circumstances, but you see that they must be known, before the Iliad can be understood. The Odyssey of Homer, another Epic Poem, relates the wanderings and sufferings of Ulysses, after the conquest of Troy.—Pursued by the hatred of the vindictive Juno, he was condemned to suffer innumerable hardships before he returned, after an absence of twenty years, to Penelope and his son Telemachus; whose adventures in search of his father, are the subject of the celebrated work of Fenelon; an Epic Poem, in measured French prose, which is usually, but improperly, one of the first books young people are directed to, after they begin to read French; it is impossible they can comprehend a page of it, if they do not know the heathen mythology, and the stories of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

The next most celebrated Epic poem is Virgil's Eneid.—It relates the adventures of Eneas, the son of Venus and Anchises,

Anchises, a Prince of Troy.—Eneas leading his little son Iulus, and bearing his old and decrepid father on his back, escapes from the flames of that devoted city, and after a great many perils and adventures, some of which do him very little credit, he lands in Italy, marries Lavinia, the daughter of Latinus; and from thence the Poet derives the descent of the Emperor, Augustus Cæsar, in adulation of whom this poem was composed. To understand either of these, therefore, the deities of the ancients must be understood.

Milton, the great Epic Poet of our own country, and who is classed for sublimity and vigour of imagination with the Grecian and Roman bards, chose a more simple, though more magnificent subject.—The creation of the world; the happiness enjoyed by the first pair in Paradise, till the fatal transgression of Eve—their expulsion from thence, and the evils entailed on their unhappy race in consequence of their disobedience. The machinery he

uses is more elevated, and comes more within our comprehension; yet throughout the book, there are frequent allusions to Grecian fable.

But there is another species of poem, called usually the mock heroic; in which satire is conveyed under allegoric or imaginary beings, who bring about ludicrous events.—Some of these, which are not likely to interest you, I pass over.—But there are two which are so elegant, and so much adapted to form the taste of young women, that as soon as you are a little better read in fable, I shall recommend them to your study.—These are Pope's Rape of the Lock, and Hayley's Triumphs of Temper. The machinery used in the first of these is composed of ideal beings, called Sylphs and Gnomes. These are the invention of a philosopher, named Rosicrusius, who imagined that Sylphs and Gnomes presided over the air and earth, and Nymphs and Salamanders over water and fire. Mr. Hayley has  
taken

taken for the mistress and guardian of his sweet Serena a visionary sprite, called Sophrosyne, whom the Genius of the Evening Star calls from her residence in the Moon, to attend on, and guard by dreams, this lovely favourite. Sophrosyne, who is described with great delicacy and elegance, is one of the Rosicrusian family.

Of this enchanting system of air-drawn creatures, Shakspeare had never heard when he created his exquisite Ariel—but Shakspeare was a Poet, or Creator indeed; and the wildest and most delicious visionary scenes and beings, arose in the same comprehensive mind, that read, as by intuition, the effects of all the passions and feelings of the human heart. To return, however, to our Sylphs and Gnomes—these you remember, though you have only heard detached parts of it read, are employed with the Nymphs, as the agents, or the machinery in the Botanic Garden; a work which you know your brothers

have often read parts of to me ; the splendour and beauty of the verse makes it delightful to George, who has an admirable ear for poetry ; while Edward has been attracted by the variety of information conveyed in the notes ; and became interested in experiments and facts, which probably would not, if offered to him in any other way, have excited his curiosity.— I observed, however, that neither your sister, who does not seem particularly gratified by poetry, or you, who confess your preference of such subjects of natural history as you can understand, were neither of you so much charmed as I was, and as your brothers were, with this magnificent poem ; though I attempted to explain some passages to you.

EMILY. It is very true, Mamma ; I liked to hear of the flowers, if I happened to know the names of those which were mentioned, but when they were changed, or as you bade me call it, metamorphosed into men and women, they gave me no  
pleasure

pleasure at all. For I felt myself quite bewildered.

MRS. TALBOT. You will, hereafter, think differently.—You see that your brothers immediately entered into the intention of the author, when I told them that Ovid transformed his men and women into plants or animals, but that Dr. Darwin formed beings like men and women, from plants.

EMILY. Yes, Mamma; and I have not forgotten that.—But it is plants and flowers I like, and not these ladies and their lovers.

MRS. TALBOT. I have heard more profound critics than you are, Emily, make the same objection, or something nearly resembling it; but I am so desirous you should acquire a taste for these agreeable fictions, that I enlisted George in my service, while you were out on your visit to your young friends on Thursday evening; and we fancied we could dress to please you an ideal being, which I know you do  
not

not contemn as much as you do the generality of goddesses in those luckless books which you are determined not to read—I mean the goddess who presides over your beloved flower garden—Flora.

EMILY. How, my dear Mamma?

MRS. TALBOT. Why we imagine her, not in the splendours that surround her in the highly coloured description of Dr. Darwin; but simply clad, even in her own manufacture; and we have placed her in a car of leaves, for all those aerial personages must have cars, you know, wafted by Zephyrs to the earth; whose various flowers spring at her approach. We were very much amused by selecting the vestment of our Goddess; and the armour of her male attendants, and the ornaments of her maids of honour.

EMILY. And that then was what George was so busy about yesterday, that he shortened our walk in the evening, and had borrowed I know not how many botanical books of Mr. Beechcroft. Afterwards

wards he shut himself up near two hours, and then he went out, and brought home a great many sea-weeds.

MRS. TALBOT. Yes, because you know vegetation, over which Flora may poetically be said to preside, is extended even to the rocks and caverns under the sea, where great numbers of plants of the class cryptogamia grow, and are washed from thence in storms, which is the reason, that after rough weather, the shore often seems a bank of weeds. These sometimes adhere to shells, or small stones, or pieces of rock, and they have shapes and colours unlike the productions of the earth; but if you observe samphire, and other plants that grow near the sea, and are watered by its waves, or are within the immediate influence of sea vapours, you will see, that there is a gradual line of connection between them. George is gone to return some books we borrowed, and as soon as he comes home, we will put the concluding hand to our little cabinet picture of Flora. I imagine  
that

that she and her attendants are all fairy beings, like the *elfin* Queen and her retinue, only upon a somewhat larger scale, such as Shakspeare describes; and I am the supposed *seer* of the *vision*, and invoke Fancy on the margin of that river, where my early years were past, and for which I still retain a great partiality.

EMILY. The Thames, Mamma?

MRS. TALBOT. No, one of his tributary streams, the Wey; which formed by several brooks, one of which rises in Hampshire, wanders in a clear broad current till it becomes navigable at Godalming, and joins the Thames at Weybridge. It was on the banks of that river, Emily, I gathered the first flowers that ever conveyed pleasure to my mind. I remember, even at this distance of time, the great ranunculus, which answers Thompson's descriptions; "*The full ranunculus of glowing red;*" others, yellow, clouded with crimson, green, and brown; the parrot tulips, and fine double stocks,  
and

and wall flowers, which in their season a man of the village, who worked in the garden and about the house, used always to bring me on Sunday morning. I recollect the little garden behind my old nurse's cottage, who was retired to a neat little habitation to pass the remainder of her days; and I think I have never seen since such lovely full white lilies as were in a border under some pales, where she used to preserve her finest currants for me. The houses which formed the village are now pulled down, and were I to pass thro' it, I should see no likeness remaining of the place, still represented by a thousand minute circumstances to my memory. I suppose it is because their first years were passed in London, or some other great city, that so many people I meet with are totally insensible to the beauties of nature, the charms of an extensive prospect, or the sight and scents of plants.

EMILY. You cannot imagine, Mamma, how the Miss Welthams stared at me,

me the other day, when I named some plants that were in a nosegay. "Lord," cried one of them, "what signifies what the name of this plant and that plant is?"—"What nonsense and affectation, my dear creature!" said another in an half whisper, "what an amazingly conceited little thing is this Emily Talbot! I am sure I should never know one flower from another if I was to live an hundred years, and I wonder what good it does?"—"O! 'tis the fashion, you know," cried a Miss, a cousin of theirs, in a drawling tone—"but if *my* existence depended upon it, I'm sure I could never make any thing of remembering these hard names. You must know, we have a distant relation that makes herself, Mamma says, quite absurd about such stuff; and once, when we were going down to my father's country-house, she desired the coachman to stop—only think, you know, to stop a coach and four in hand—Mamma's *own* carriage, quite separate from Papa's, is always a coach  
and

and four in hand; but only think, you know, of her desiring it might stop, while she got out to gather, what Mamma said was nothing in the world but a nasty weed."

MRS. TALBOT. I suppose you were much offended with this cousin of your acquaintance, the Miss Welthams; but you should remember that her chief aim was to inform you, that her father had a country-house, her mother a separate carriage, and *that* carriage a coach and four—in hand.

EMILY. Yes, I dare say it was, for I never saw any person more proud, or fancying themselves of more consequence.

MRS. TALBOT. And why should that make you angry, Emily? why should it make you feel any unpleasant sensations of dislike, towards this consequential and apparently happy girl? You do not envy her, I think, her father's villa or her family's carriages? These ladies that cry, "*Lord, my dear creature,*" and "*only think,*

*think, you know,"* do not, I hope, excite any other feeling, than an inclination to smile.

EMILY. No, Mamma—I don't envy them; I am quite as happy as they are—perhaps happier, with all their parade; but tho' I don't envy them, I can't help disliking them.

MRS. TALBOT. You will do wisely then to forbear frequenting often a society, where you meet with persons, who, while, as it seems, they have no power to afford you pleasure, excite sensations that are painful.—Dislike, and all those unpleasant feelings, are better avoided; they border too closely on the uneasiness inflicted by envy, and I would have you totally unacquainted with them.

EMILY. But, Mamma, how can I help disliking people who are, as you yourself say, arrogant, and fond of shewing their consequence. I remember you have often expressed how disagreeable they were to you.

MRS.

MRS. TALBOT. I allow I have done so, so far as to laugh at their overbearing vanity; and I will besides tell you, that in the younger part of my life I used to be mightily discomposed, when I saw people give themselves what are called airs, who, as I had foolishly been taught, were inferior in family and consequence to myself, and had only to boast of suddenly acquired riches: but as I went on in the world, this very common circumstance ceased to make me angry.—I listened with equal indifference to some persons of very high blood, who contrived to let me know, that they waved their privilege of rank while condescending to associate with me; and the good substantial monied folks, who took some trouble to convey obliquely to *me*, what was always present to *them*, a consciousness of the superiority money, of which they had a great deal, gave them over me, who had in their estimation very little. I considered, that my pursuits and pleasures were totally inde-

pendent of high birth or high affluence; that the want either of the one or the other would never make me less alive to the charms of nature, or detract one atom of delight from the enjoyments of reading and writing. I considered that I had learned to live to my own heart, and to find my amusement where my duties lay, and that it would be very foolish to lose the one, and neglect the other, for the sake of vying with people whose happiness seemed so wide of mine, that we need not at all interfere with each other. If they sought me, I met them with civility, and parted from them with as little regret as they probably did with me; but I never sought them, or gave them reason to imagine they could inflict pain on me by any display of the difference between their situation and mine.

EMILY. Oh indeed, Mamma, I shall never desire to increase my acquaintance with the Miss Welthams, or their cousin. You know I did not desire to go the other  
night,

night, and had rather a thousand times have been at home, finishing my flower piece against my aunt sees it.

MRS. TALBOT. Do not, however, misunderstand me, Emily. While I say that it is wrong to put even your momentary satisfaction in the power of every one who can teize you with their fancied superiority, I do not mean to make you fastidious, or to let you fall into the affectation of fancying you can associate only with people, who are or pretend to be well instructed, or of superior education. Among many of these you will find a great deal of arrogance, in the younger circles at least; and sometimes an affectation of elevated endowments or acquirements, more disgusting than the glaring ostentation of vulgar wealth, or the supercilious consequence assumed by ancestral dignity. Perhaps you were a little too fond of shewing what it is on which you value yourself, when you began to talk to these young ladies of the names of flowers, which to them probably

bably seemed affected, and unintelligible jargon. Nothing offends more than pretence to knowledge, in a company which you know cannot possess it; and these girls will never forgive you for telling them that they should say "viola tricolor", instead of "Leap-up-and-kiss-me," or "three-faces-under-an-hood;" and your talking of Chrysanthemums, and Erigeron, has given them occasion to laugh at you, as long as they remember the conversation.

EMILY. Well, Mamma, they will never have another opportunity. And now I care very little about them, for here is George, and you will let me hear the Poem.

MRS. TALBOT. My dear George, Emily is become impatient for our Elfin Flora. I have given her an idea of my plan in writing it, but perhaps you may afford her a farther explanation.

GEORGE. Mother, that would spoil her pleasure, perhaps; besides, if it is  
given

given to her first in prose, possibly she will not take the trouble to recollect the flowers that you have dressed Flora and her attendants in, when she reads the verse.

MRS. TALBOT. I believe, Emily, your Brother is right. However, I will tell you, that all I mean is a playful description of a miniature goddess, and I have dressed her, with a little of George's help, who I assure you is an admirable assistant at a Sylphish toilet, in such plants, as by their names are appropriated to the wardrobe of such ideal beings, or are of a nature to be easily formed in. Fancy's loom into robes and cymures, and scarfs. Some of these the structure of the verse compelled me to insert as they are scientifically called; others are designed by their common or vulgar names. The attendant nymphs, Floscella, Petalla, Nectarynia, and Calyxa, you will understand are named after the parts of flowers; I have drest *them* rather more gaily than their fair Mistress, and in flowers cultivated here, but

not natives of this country; while in Flora herself I have given an example of more pure taste, and of the *great simple*, which should be always attended to by beauty—that is said to be

“When least adorn’d most lovely.”

Now with all this pomp my fairy Goddess enters, to inspire you with something like a taste for these children of imagination; just as it was formerly the idea, that girls should be encouraged to understand dress by ornamenting their dolls. George, will you read it to us?

GEORGE. Willingly—but not without regret, that this is the last Poem we have got to complete our collection.

MRS. TALBOT. “*Tho’ last, not least.*” We shall want no more, when the friends are with us for whom we have so long waited, and of whom we have still said, “they will come to-morrow,” so that at last I fear to say it again. But now we shall have more to talk of, than if we had  
met

met when we first expected it; and may perhaps, though we have experienced that "hope delayed makes the heart sick," find also, that "expectation makes a blessing dear." Well, George, are you ready?

GEORGE. Yes, and I will endeavour to read in my best manner, my dear Mother, your

### FLORA.

REMOTE from scenes, where the o'erwearied mind  
 Shrinks from the crimes and follies of mankind,  
 From hostile menace, and offensive boast,  
 Peace, and her train of home-born pleasures lost;  
 To Fancy's reign, who would not gladly turn,  
 And lose awhile the miseries they mourn  
 In sweet oblivion?—Come then Fancy! deign,  
 Queen of ideal pleasure, once again  
 To lend thy magic pencil, and to bring  
 Such lovely forms, as in life's happier Spring 10  
 On the green margin of my native Wey,  
 Before mine infant eyes were wont to play,  
 And with that pencil, teach me to describe  
 The enchanting Goddess of the flowery tribe,  
 Whose first prerogative it is to chase  
 The clouds that hang on languid beauty's face;

And, while advancing Suns, and tepid showers,  
 Lead on the laughing Spring's delicious hours,  
 Bid the wan maid the hues of health assume,  
 Charm with new grace, and blush with fresher bloom. 20

The vision comes!—While slowly melt away  
 Night's hovering shades before the eastern ray,  
 Ere yet declines the morning's humid star,  
 Fair Fancy brings her; in her leafy car  
 Flora descends, to dress the expecting earth,  
 Awake the germs, and call the buds to birth,  
 Bid each hybernacle its cell unfold,  
 And open silken leaves, and eyes of gold!

Of forest foliage of the firmest shade  
 Enwoven by magic hands the Car was made, 30  
 Oak and the ample Plane, without entwin'd,  
 And Beech and Ash the verdant concave lined;  
 The Saxifrage, that snowy flowers emboss,  
 Supplied the seat; and of the mural Moss  
 The velvet footstool rose, where lightly rest  
 Her slender feet in Cypripedium drest.  
 The tufted Rush that bears a silken crown,  
 The floating feathers of the Thistle's down,  
 In tender hues of rainbow lustre dyed,  
 The airy texture of her robe supplied; 40  
 And wild Convolvulas, yet half unblown,  
 Form'd with their wreathing buds her simple zone;  
 Some wandering tresses of her radiant hair  
 Luxuriant floated on the enamour'd air,

The rest were by the Scandix's points confin'd,  
 And graced, a shining knot, her hair behind—  
 While as a sceptre of supreme command,  
 She waved the Anthoxanthum in her hand.

Around the Goddess, as the flies that play  
 In countless myriads in the western ray, 50  
 The Sylphs innumerable throng, whose magic powers  
 Guard the soft buds, and nurse the infant flowers,  
 Round the sustaining stems weak tendrils bind,  
 And save the Pollen from dispersing wind,  
 From Suns too ardent shade their transient hues,  
 And catch in odorous cups translucent dews.  
 The ruder tasks of others are, to chase  
 From vegetable life the Insect race,  
 Break the polluting thread the Spider weaves,  
 And brush the Aphis from the unfolding leaves, 60

For conquest arm'd the pigmy warriors wield  
 The thorny lance, and spread the hollow shield  
 Of Lichen tough; or bear, as silver bright,  
 Lunaria's pearly circlet, firm and light.  
 On the helm'd head the crimson Foxglove glows,  
 Or Scutellaria guards the martial brows,  
 While the Leontodon its plumage rears,  
 And o'er the casque in waving grace appears;  
 With stern undaunted eye, one warlike Chief  
 Grasps the tall club from Arum's blood-dropp'd leaf, 70  
 This with the Burdock's hooks annoys his foes,  
 The purple Thorn, *that* borrows from the Rose.

In honeyed nectaries couched, some drive away  
 The forked insidious Earwig from his prey,  
 Fearless the scaled Libellula assail,  
 Dart their keen lances at the encroaching Snail,  
 Arrest the winged Ant, on pinions light,  
 And strike the headlong Beetle in his flight.

Nor less assiduous round their lovely Queen,  
 The lighter forms of female Fays are seen;                    80  
 Rich was the purple vest *Floscella* wore,  
 Spun of the tufts the *Tradescantia* bore,  
 The *Cistus*' flowers minute her temples graced,  
 And threads of *Yucca* bound her slender waist.

From the wild Bee, whose wondrous labour weaves,  
 In artful folds the Rose's fragrant leaves,  
 Was borrow'd fair *Petalla*'s light cymarre;  
 And the *Hypericum*, with spangling star,  
 O'er her fair locks its bloom minute enwreathed;  
 Then, while voluptuous odours round her breathed, 90  
 Came *Nectarynia*; as the arrowy rays  
 Of lambent fire round pictured Seraphs blaze,  
 So did the *Passiflora*'s radii shed  
 Cerulean glory o'er the Sylphid's head,  
 While round her form the pliant tendrils twined,  
 And clasp'd the scarf that floated on the wind.

More grave, the para-nymph *Calyxa* drest;  
 A brown transparent spatha formed her vest.

The silver scales that bound her raven hair,  
 Xeranthemum's unfading calyx bear;                   100  
 And a light sash of spiral Ophrys press'd  
 Her filmy tunic, on her tender breast.

But where shall images or words be found  
 To paint the fair ethereal forms, that round  
 The Queen of flowers attended? and the while  
 Basked in her eyes, and wanton'd in her smile.

Now towards the earth the gay procession bends,  
 Lo! from the buoyant air, the Car descends;  
 Anticipating then the various year,  
 Flowers of all hues and every month appear,                   110  
 From every swelling bulb its blossoms rise;  
 Here blow the Hyacinths of loveliest dyes,  
 Breathing of Heaven; and there her royal brows  
 Begemmed with pearl, the Crown Imperial shews;  
 Peeps the blue Gentian from the softning ground,  
 Jonquils and Violets shed their odours round;  
 High rears the Honeysuck his scallop'd horn;  
 A snow of blossoms whiten on the Thorn.  
 Here, like the fatal fruit to Paris given,  
 That spread fell feuds throughout the fabled Heaven, 120  
 The yellow Rose her golden globe displays;  
 There, lovelier still, among their spiny sprays  
 Her blushing Rivals glow with brighter dyes,  
 Than paints the Summer Sun, on western skies;  
 And the scarce ting'd, and paler Rose unveil  
 Their modest beauties to the fighting gale.

Thro'

Thro' the deep woodland's wild uncultured scene,  
 Spreads the soft influence of the floral Queen.  
 A beauteous pyramid, the Chesnut rears,  
 Its crimson tassels on the Larch appears; 130  
 The Fir, dark native of the sullen North,  
 Owns her soft sway; and slowly springing forth  
 On the rough Oak are buds minute unfurl'd,  
 Whose giant produce may command the World!  
 Each forest thicket feels the balmy air,  
 And plants that love the shade are blowing there,  
 Rude rocks with Filices and Bryum smile,  
 And wastes are gay with Thyme and Chamomile.

Ah! yet prolong the dear delicious dream,  
 And trace her power along the mountain stream. 140  
 See! from its rude and rocky source, o'erhung  
 With female Fern, and glossy Adders-tongue,  
 Slowly it wells, in pure and crystal drops,  
 And steals soft gliding thro' the upland copse;  
 Then murmuring on, along the willowy sides,  
 The Reed-bird whispers, and the Halcyon hides;  
 While among Sallows pale, and birchen howers,  
 Embarks in Fancy's eye the Queen of flowers—

O'er her light skiff, of woven bull-rush made,  
 The water Lily lends a polish'd shade, 150  
 While Galium there of pale and silver hue,  
 And Epilobiums on the banks that grow,  
 Form her soft couch; and as the Sylphs divide,  
 With pliant arms, the still increasing tide,

A thousand

A thousand leaves along the stream unfold;  
 Amid its waving swords, in flaming gold  
 The Iris towers; and here the Arrowhead,  
 And water Crowfoot, more profusely spread,  
 Spangle the quiet current; higher there,  
 As conscious of her claims, in beauty rare,      160  
 Her rosy umbels rears the flow'ring Rush,  
 While with reflected charms the waters blush.

The Naid now the Year's fair Goddess leads,  
 Thro' richer pastures, and more level meads,  
 Down to the Sea; where even the briny sands  
 Their product offer to her glowing hands;  
 For there, by Sea-dews nurs'd, and airs marine,  
 The Chelidonium blows; in glaucous green,  
 Each reflux tide the thorn'd Eryngium laves,  
 And its pale leaves seem tintured by the waves; 170  
 And half way up the cliff, whose rugged brow  
 Hangs o'er the ever toiling Surge below,  
 Springs the light Tamarisk—The summit bare  
 Is tufted by the Statice; and there,  
 Crush'd by the fisher, as he stands to mark  
 Some distant signal, or approaching bark,  
 The Saltwort's starry stalks are thickly sown,  
 Like humble worth, unheeded and unknown!—

From depths where Corals spring from crystal caves,  
 And break with scarlet branch the eddying waves, 180  
 Where Algae stream, as change the flowing tides,  
 And where half flower, half fish, the Polyp hides,  
 And

And long tenaceous bands of Sea-lace twine  
 Round palm-shaped leaves empearl'd with Coralline,  
 Enamour'd Fancy, now the Sea maids calls,  
 And from their grottos dim, and shell-paved halls,  
 Charm'd by her voice, the shining train emerge,  
 And buoyant float above the circling surge,  
 Green Byssus, waving in the sea-born gales,  
 Form'd their thin mantles, and transparent veils,  
 Panier'd in shells, or bound with silver strings 190  
 Of filken Pinna, each her trophy brings  
 Of plants, from rocks and caverns sub-marine,  
 With leathery branch, and bladder'd buds between;  
 There its dark folds the pucker'd Laver spread  
 With trees in miniature of various red;  
 There flag-shaped Olive leaves depending hung,  
 And fairy fans from glossy pebbles sprung;  
 Then her terrestrial train the Nereids meet,  
 And lay their spoils saline at Flora's feet.

O! fairest of the fabled forms that stream, 200  
 Dress'd by wild Fancy, thro' the Poet's dream,  
 Still may thy attributes, of leaves and flowers,  
 Thy gardens rich, and shrub-o'ershadow'd bowers,  
 And yellow meads, with Spring's first honors bright,  
 The child's gay heart, and frolic step invite;  
 And, while the careless wanderer explores  
 The umbrageous forest, or the rugged shores,  
 Climbs the green down, or roams the broom-clad waste,  
 May *Truth* and *Nature* form his future taste.  
 Goddess! on Youth's bless'd hours thy gifts bestow, 210  
 Bind

Bind the fair wreath on Virgin Beauty's brow,  
And still may Fancy's brightest flowers be wove  
Round the gold chains of Hymeneal love;  
But most for those, by Sorrow's hands oppress'd,  
May thy beds blossom, and thy wilds be drest;  
And where, by Fortune, and the World, forgot,  
The Mourner droops in some sequester'd spot,  
(“ Sad luxury to vulgar minds unknown”)  
O'er blighted happiness, for ever gone,  
Yet the dear image seeks not to forget,                    220  
But woos his grief, and cherishes regret,  
Loving, with fond and lingering pain, to mourn  
O'er joys and hopes, that never will return,  
Thou, visionary Power, may'st bid him view  
Forms not less lovely—and as transient too,  
And, while they sooth the wearied Pilgrim's eyes,  
Afford an antepast of Paradise.



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NOTES  
TO THE  
SECOND VOLUME.

PAGE 8. Gossamer.—Gossamer is the web of a very small spider. In that entertaining and instructive book, White's History of Selborne, is an account of a wonderful shower of gossamer which fell in and about that village, on the 21st of September, 1741. The letter containing the history of this phenomenon concludes thus—"Every day in fine weather, in Autumn chiefly, do I see those spiders shooting out their webs and mounting aloft. They will go off from your finger if you will take them in your hand. Last Summer one alighted on my book as I was reading in the parlour; and running to the top of the page, and shooting out a web, took its departure from thence. But what I most wondered at was, that it went off with considerable velocity, in a place where no air was stirring; and I am sure I did not assist it with my breath; so that these little crawlers seem to have, while mounting, some loco-motive power, without the use of wings, and to move in the air faster than the air itself." White's History of Selborne, p. 192.

14. The Nautilus—*Argonauta Argo*. The paper Nautilus. "This elegant shell is inhabited by an animal resembling the *Sepia octopodia*. In calm weather

0

"ther

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“ther it rises to the surface, and spreads out its arms  
 “over the shell which serves it for oars; and raising  
 “and expanding a double membrane of wonderful  
 “tenuity, as a sail, it glides along with the breeze.  
 “When danger thrcatens, it suddenly withdraws into  
 “the shell and sinks to the bottom.” Elements of  
 Natural History, Vermees, p. 384.

Pa. 23. Beacons.—I have often wished to know, whether the very large stones of many hundred weight, which are to be seen on the very highest of the South downs, within a few miles of the sea, surrounded generally by a trench, and very different from any stones to be found within many miles, were not artificial, and made by cementing a great number of smaller stones together. I think I have read, that some of the immense circles of stones supposed to have been the temples of the Druids, were by some enquirers believed to have been thus composed. But these are questions which I have generally been stared at for making.

28. The Wheat-ear, *Motacilla Oenanthe*.—These birds frequent open stony places, warrens, downs, &c. They build in stone quarries, old rabbit holes, &c. making their nest of dry grass, feathers and horse-hair. They lay six or eight eggs. They feed on earth-worms and flies, and in Autumn, when fat, are esteemed a great delicacy, and caught in great numbers on the hills between Eastbourne and those above Brighthelmstone. They are sometimes caught more to the westward, but are not found so fat as those taken on the more eastern downs. The females arrive there in March; the male birds not till a fortnight afterwards; in September they all disappear. About  
 the

the stone quarries in Somersetshire, they are, it is said, observed at all times of the year, but I do not remember to have heard that they are taken for the table in any other part of England. Mr. White in his Natural History calls the Wheat-ear "the Sussex bird." It does not seem to be ascertained, whether or not they migrate to France, or other parts of the continent.—Some birds seem to be only partially migrants, and do not all leave the countries where they are bred.

PA. 34. Sandlings, or Sanderlings, Sea Plovers, Sandpipers, all of the genus *Tringa*; these birds, of which there are many varieties, live on sea insects among the rocks, and on the sands; many of them appear in March, and retire in September or October; some remain throughout the year.

It is usual to see, in certain states of the tide, women and strong boys wading through the shallow waves; pushing before them a net, fastened to a pole, to catch Prawns, *Cancer serratus*, and Shrimps, *Cancer Cragon*. On some part of the coast, the former are caught in ozier pots placed among the rocks, in the same manner as for lobsters.

31. *Conserva*—Of this sea weed there is great variety. Some of a deep crimson, others pale red, green, white, or purple; they resemble tufts, or are branched, and appear like small leafless trees.

Slake or Sloke—*Uva umbilicalis*.

Sea Thong—*Fucus elongatus*.

Yellow horned Poppy—*Glaucium chelidonium*.

*Convolvulus Soldinella*—This plant is not frequent on the Southern coast, but in the West, and about Weymouth, it is common.

46. The Humming bird—*Trochilus*. Natives of  
o 3 America,

America, and all, except two sorts, of South America. These beautiful little creatures feed, while, on their shining wings vibrating with so quick a motion, that it is not to be perceived, they hang over flowers, of which they suck the sweet juice—They are courageous, and fight resolutely against the large spiders that attack their young—They lay two little pearl-like eggs in a nest made of cotton—They have an agreeable odour, and seem to be one of nature's most finished and beautiful productions in that class of beings.

Pa. 53. *Ulex*, Furze. It is in some countries called Gorse, in others Whin. It is sometimes sown for fences, and to make coverts for the protection of game; but is naturally produced on heaths and waste grounds. There is a dwarf sort of it—It is sometimes chopped small and given to horses to eat, and is cut and stacked up, to burn lime with.

53. Whin Chats, *Motacilla rubetra*. Stone Chats, *Motacilla rubicola*.

Common Heath, *Erica vulgaris*. Cross-leaved Heath, *Erica tetralix*. Fine leaved Heath, *Erica cinerea*—Of these last there are varieties, pink, blush colour, and white—Cornish Heath, *Erica*, is found only, I believe, in that county.

54. Mushroom, *Fungus*, *Agaric*—Of these there is an infinite variety, but one only is usually eaten in England. Though the Italians, French, and more particularly the Russians consider as very excellent food many Fungus's which we think unwholesome, and turn from with disgust. It is certain, however, that several of them are of a poisonous quality.

55. Dodder, *Cuscuta*—There are of this plant two  
sorts,

sorts, the greater and lesser Dodder. It supports itself on the sap of the plant to which it adheres.

Pa. 61. Missel Thrush, *Turdus visivorus*—Mr. White, in his account of singing birds, puts this among those whose song ceases before Midsummer. It is certainly an error. This remarkable bird, which cannot be mistaken for any other, began to sing so early as the second week in January; and I now hear him uttering a more clamorous song, the 8th of July, between the flying showers. Whenever the weather is windy or changeable, he announces it by a variety of loud notes. There is only one bird of this kind within hearing, who sang last year to the beginning of August. His food consists of berries and insects, but principally the former. The fruit of the Hawthorn, *Mespilus*, Elder, *Sambucus*, Spindle tree, *Euonymus*, Sloe, *Prunus*, and Holly, *Ilex*, occasionally supply him; but the Misseltoe, *Viscum*, from whence he takes his name of *visivorus*, is his favourite food. As bird-lime is often made of its glutinous berries, and this Thrush is supposed to encrease the Misseltoe by depositing the seeds he has swallowed on other trees, he is said in a Latin proverb to propagate the means of his own destruction.

69. The Olive tree, *Olea Europa*—Oil, however useful, either at our tables or in the *Materia Medica*, is yet more so on the continent: a Spanish table presents almost every kind of food prepared with oil. It is also much used in Italy and the South of France; and I have known English people, after a long residence in those countries, declare, that being accustomed to eat fine and pure oil, they had no longer any wish for the indispensable article of English luxury, butter.

The inflammation arising from the stings of venomous reptiles or insects is removed by an application of olive oil. If poured on the water, it makes the rough waves subside. Olives are planted in little groves, round the farms, or as they are there called Bastides, in the South of France.

Pa. 93. Guazume, *Theobroma guazumaa*—Great Cedar of Jamaica.

*Swieten*—Mahogani.

Pimento, *Myrtus Pimento*—Jamaica All-spice.

The ground Dove—a small dove which creeps on the ground, is very frequent in the woods of Jamaica. I have not been able to find its Linnæan name.

Cane, *Saccharum officinarum*.

Coffee, *Coffea Arabica*.

*Plumeria*, commonly called Tree Jasmin, a most beautiful and odorous plant.

*Punica granata*—Pomegranate.

*Plinia pedunculata*, a fragrant native of tropical countries.

Bats bigger than crows are found in the gullies and caverns among the woods of Jamaica, And monkeys hide there, sallying forth in numbers to prey on the canes and fruits.

Stanza 4. The wretched Negro, fearing punishment, or driven to despair by continual labour, often secretes himself in these obscure recesses, and preys in his turn on his oppressor at the hazard of his life.

— 5. After the toils of the day, the poor African often walks many miles, and for a few hours loses the sense of his misery among his friends and companions.

Stanza

Stanza 5. Coco-nut tree, *Cocos*.

*Musa Paradisiacus*—Plantain or Banana.

The Shaddock, which is I believe sometimes vulgarly called the forbidden fruit, is shaped like a lemon with the colour of an orange; it is sometimes as big as the largest melon; but not very good to eat. At least those I have formerly seen brought from Barbadoes were worth nothing.

Whoever has seen the *Cactus grandiflora*, and been gratified with its scent, must acknowledge it to be one of the most magnificent and delicious productions of vegetable nature.

Page 105 and 107. These two short poems have been before printed.

117. The Geranium—Of Geraniums and Pelargoniums, there are almost innumerable varieties. The plants of that species that grow here are some of the prettiest ornaments of our hedgerows, meadows, and downs; but the exotic sorts, which have long been among the most desirable furniture of the Conservatory, are principally natives of Africa. A friend of mine, who has visited the Cape of Good Hope, described to me the splendid appearance of these beautiful flowers covering the rocks and sand hills; many of the most elegant growing as luxuriantly as docks or mallows do here; while others rise to the size of large shrubs.

Stanza 4. The Asters are almost the last ornaments of our gardens; they blow late, and give the appearance of gaiety when the more beautiful flowers are gone.

Pa. 134. *Morus nigra*, the common Mulberry—The  
 O 4 mulberry

mulberry tree, a native of Italy, is cultivated not only for its grateful fruit, but for the more lucrative purpose of supplying food to silk-worms. The leaves of the white mulberry are preferred for this purpose in Europe; but in China, where the best silk is made, the silk-worms are fed with the leaves of the *Morus Tartaricus*. From the bark of another species, *Morus papyrifera*, the Japanese make paper, and the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, the cloth which serves them for apparel. Woodville's Med. Bot.

In Italy, the vines are often seen hanging in festoons from tree to tree in the plantations of mulberry trees.

Pa. 141. The cankered Rose—It is not to be understood, that this address is from a lover; a mother, a brother, or a friend, might equally delight to celebrate the day that gave birth to the object of their fond affections.

Quipos's—The Peruvians had a method of expressing their meaning by narrow knotted ribbands of various colours, which they called Quipos: a certain number of knots of one colour, divided by so many of another, expressed particular meanings; and served these simple and innocent people in place of the art of writing—See "Lettres Peruviennes."

Rosarie—In old poets, this word is used, not as now for a collection of roses, but for a single tree. I remember (but I have not the book now) an imitation of Spencer, by I know not whom, in a poem called Cupid and Psyche, where Cupid hides in a *Rosarie*. It is also used in old French for a rose tree, though the modern word is *rosier*.

Pa. 145. This apostrophe to St. Antoine was supposed, as the packet boat Captain said, to be an infallible receipt

cept for raising the wind, and was always used for that purpose by the Portuguese, among whom he had once been employed.

Pa. 152. Poem, Stanza 3, line 11—The Paon's plume.

The Paon, for peacock, has also the authority of old writers.

153. Stanza 6. Whoever has listened on a still Summer or Autumnal evening, to the murmurs of the small waves, just breaking on the shingles, and remarked the low sounds re-echoed by the distant rocks, will understand this.

—Stanza 7. The course of those wonderful swarms of fishes that take their annual journey is, I believe, less understood than the emigration of birds. I suppose them, without having any particular ground for my conjecture, to begin their voyage from beyond the extreme point of the Southern continent of America. Many of the Northern nations live almost entirely on fish. Their light, during the long night of an arctic winter, is supplied by the oil of marine animals.

—Stanza 8. In the countries where the produce of the sea is so necessary to human life, the arrival of shoals of fish is most eagerly waited for by the hardy inhabitant. Thrown on the summit of an high cliff, overlooking the sea, the native watches for the approach of the expected good, and sees with pleasure the numerous sea birds, who, by an instinct superior to his own, perceive it at a far greater distance, and follow to take their share of the swarming multitude.

Pa. 154, Stanza 9. Ling, a name given in many parts of England to the *Erica vulgaris*—Common Heath.

P. 155. Stanza 10. *Anas mollissima*—While many sea-birds deposit their eggs on the bare rocks, the Eider duck lines her nest most carefully with the feathers from her own breast, which are particularly fine and light: the nest is robbed, and she a second time unplumes herself for the accommodation of her young. If the lining be again taken away, the drake lends his breast feathers; but if after that, their unreasonable persecutors deprive it of its lining, they abandon the nest in despair, the master of the domicile wisely judging, that any farther sacrifice would be useless.

— Stanza 11. Suspended by a slight rope, the adventurous native of the North of Scotland is let down from the highest cliffs that hang over the sea, while with little or no support, he collects the eggs of the sea fowl, in a basket tied round his waist. The feathers also of these birds gathered from the rocks, are a great object to these poor industrious people.

— Stanza 11. *Pelicanus Bassanus*, the Gannet, builds on the highest rocks.

— Stanza 12, line 5. *Trichecus rosmarus*, the Walruss, or Morse, a creature of the seal kind, now said to be no longer found on the coast of Scotland, but still inhabiting other northern countries. They are sometimes eighteen or twenty feet long, and roar like bulls.

Ditto. Gulph currents are supposed to throw the remains of fruits of the tropical regions on the most northern coast of America, and it is asserted that the same fruits are also found on the coast of Norway. See "Les Etudes de la Nature."

## NOTES TO THE POEM OF FLORA.

LINE 15. Whose first prerogative, &c. V. Cowper.

“ The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns,  
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,  
And sullen sadness, that do shade, distort,  
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause  
For such immeasurable grief appears,  
These Flora banishes.”

33. *Saxifrage hypnoides*, Moss Saxifrage, commonly called Ladies cushion.

38. *Carduus*, the Thistle.

41. *Convolvulus arvensis*, a remarkably pretty plant, but no favourite with the husbandman.

45. *Scandix pecten*, Venus's comb, or Shepherd's needle.

48. *Anthoxanthum*, Vernal Meadow grass. It is to this grass that hay owes its fine odour.

60. *Aphis* or *Aphides*. These are the “myriads brush'd from Russian wilds;” the blights, cankers, lice, or vermin, to use common phrases, that so often disfigure and destroy the fairest vegetable productions.

63. *Lichen*. Of these many have the forms of shields, when in fructification.

64. *Lunaria annua*, Moon wort, usually called Honesty.

65. *Digitalis purpurea*, common Fox-glove.

66. *Scutellaria galericulata*, small Skull-cap.

67. *Leontodon officinalis*, common Dent-de-lion.

70. *Arum maculatum*, Arum, vulgarly Cuckoo pint, or Lords and Ladies.

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Line 71. *Arctium lappa*, Burdock.<sup>1</sup>

74. *Forficula*, the Earwig.

75. *Libellula*, the Dragon fly, or as it is called in the southern countries, the Horse-stinger, though it preys only on other insects. Several sorts of these are seen about water, but its introduction here is a poetical licence, as it does not feed on or injure flowers.

77. *Formica*. In one state of their existence the male Ants have wings.

78. *Scarabeus*, the Beetle.

82. The silk-like tuft within the plant called *Tredescantia* appears to the eye composed of very fine filaments; but on examining one of these small silky threads through a microscope, it looks like a string of amethysts.

83. *Cistus helianthemum*, Dwarf Cistus.

84. *Yucca*, Thready Yucca, an Aloe, I believe.

85. The wild Bee, *Apis centuncularis*. This insect weaves or rather cements rose leaves together to form its cell.

88. *Hypericum*, an elegant shrub of which Cowper thus speaks—

“Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm  
Of flowers like flies cloathing her slender rods  
That scarce a leaf appears.”

It seems admirably adapted to a fairy garland.

93. *Passiflora*, the Passion flower.

98. *Spatha*, the sheath from which many flowers spring, such as the *Narcissus*, &c.

100. The scales of one species of the *Xeranthemum* are particularly elegant.

101. *Ophrys*, Spiral Ophrys, Ladies traces.

The

The following lines describing well known flowers, notes would be superfluous.

Line 129. *Hippocastanum*, Horse chesnut.

130. *Pinus larice*, Larch.

131. *Pinus sylvestris*, Scotch Fir.

133. *Quercus rober*, the Oak.

142. *Polypodium, filix femina*, female Fern.

— *Scolopendrium*, Hart's tongue, more usually called Adder's tongue.

146. *Motacilla salicaria*, the reed Sparrow, or willow Wren. A bird that in a low and sweet note imitates several others, and sings all night.

— *Alcedo ispida*, the King fisher, or Halcyon, one of the most beautiful of English birds.

150. *Nymphaea alba*, the white Water lily.

151. *Galium palustre*. White Lady's bed straw.

152. *Epilobiums*, various species of Willow herbs.

157. *Iris palustris*, common Flag, or yellow Iris.

— *Sagittaria*, Arrow-head.

158. *Ranunculus aquaticus*, white water Crow-foot.

161. *Butomus*, the flow'ring Rush, or water Gladiole, the only native of England of the class *Enneandriu hexagyniu*.

168. *Chelidonium*, the horned or sea Poppy. See a former note.

169. *Eryngium maritimum*, Sea Holly.

173. *Tamarix gallica*, the Tamarisk. This elegant shrub is not very uncommon on cliffs in the West of England, and was in 1800 to be found on an high rock to the Eastward of the town of Hastings, in Sussex.

Line 174. *Statice*, Sea Pink, Sea Lavender, commonly called Thrift, is frequently used for borders of flower beds. It covers some of the most sterile cliffs.

177. *Salsola kali*, Saltwort, this plant when burnt affords a fossile alkali, and is used in the manufacture of glass. The best is brought from the Mediterranean, and forms a considerable article of commerce. It is very frequent on the cliffs on the Sussex coast.

181. *Algæ*, Sea weeds of many sorts. Sea Lace, line 183, is one of them. *Algæ*, *Fuci* and *Conserua*, include, I believe, all sea plants.

182. *Polyp*, the Polypus, or Sea Annemone.

184. *Coralline* is, if I do not misunderstand the only book I have to consult, a shelly substance, the work of sea insects, adhering to stones and to sea weeds.

189. *Flos aquæ*, Green Byssus, Paper Byssus, a semi-transparent substance floating on the waves.

Panier'd is not perhaps a word correctly English, but it must here be forgiven me.

191. *Pinna*. The *Pinna*, or Sea Wing, is contained in a two-valved shell. It consists of fine long silk-like fibres—The *Pinna* on the coast of Provence and Italy, is called the silk-worm of the sea. Stockings and gloves of exquisite fineness have been made of it—See note 27th to the *Œconomy of Vegetation*.

The subsequent lines attempt a description of sea plants, without any correct classification.

## ERRATA TO VOL. I.

Page 33, in the French, *for* agreeable, *r.* agréable.

66, l. 17, the sentence should run thus—The *datura arborea*, or tree thorn-apple, which is a native of Mexico and Peru, and is of the same genus as the common thorn apple, a plant frequently found in lanes, &c.

40, *for* mignonette, *r.* mignonette.

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## ERRATA TO VOL. II.

Pa. 17. There is an omission of the press here, which the reader is desired to correct. Between the sentence ending with the word *Mountaineer*, and the sentence immediately following, a line should have been printed, thus,

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to signify the pause necessary, when the party are supposed to arrive at the end of their little journey, and after having rested and refreshed themselves, prepare for a walk. This omission makes an awkwardness and obscurity in the page, which I did not see till it was too late to amend it.

Page 152, line 7, *for* Th read The.

— 155, Stanza 12, line 3, should have been *proa*.