

THE
CORAL
NECKLACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE PEARL BRACELET,"
"BOTANICAL RAMBLES," ETC.



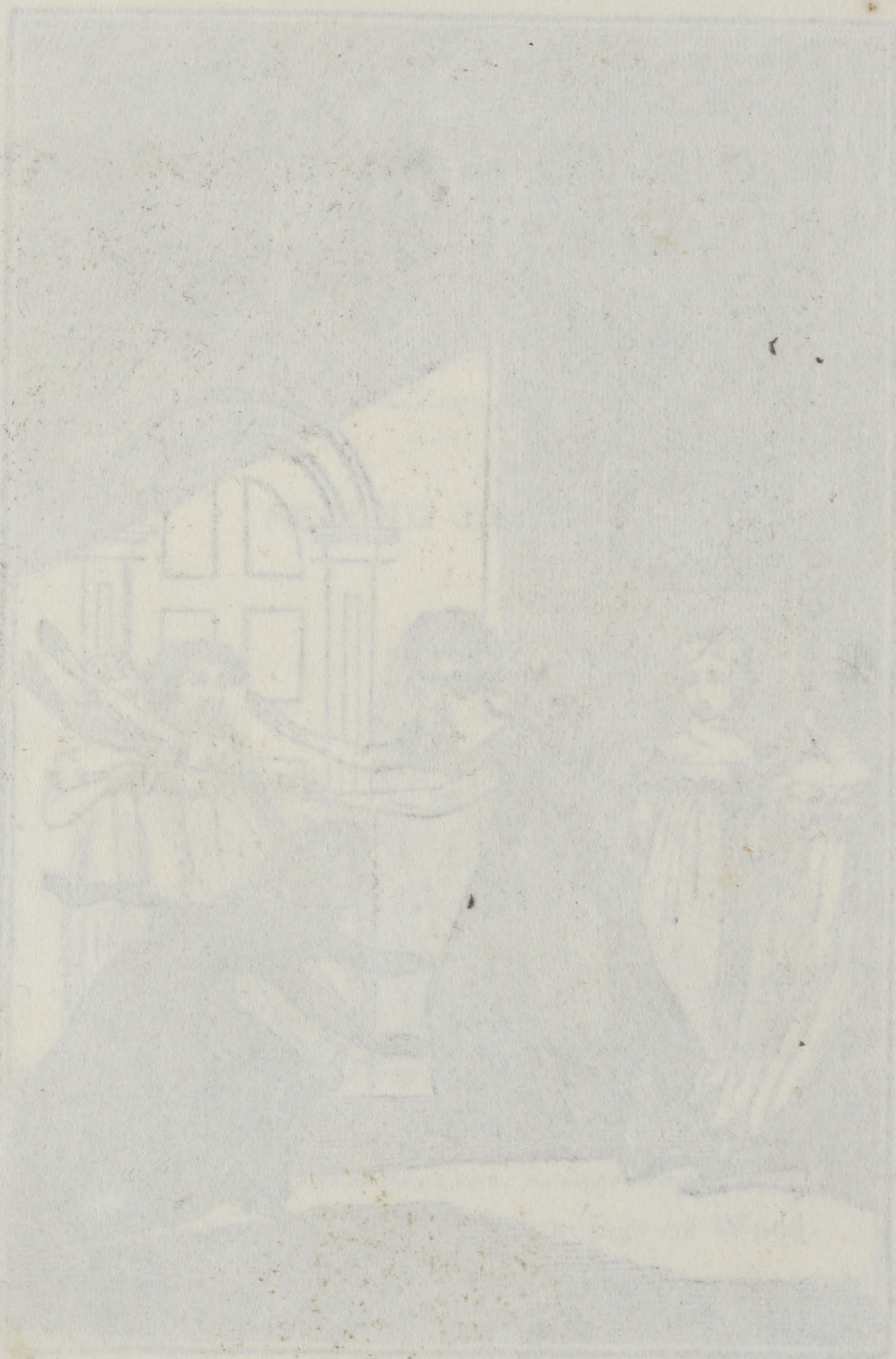
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It was evening. . . . A party of gay
 girls, full of health and spirit, were at
 blindman's-buff.



FRONTISPIECE.



“It was evening. * * * A party of gay little girls, full of health and spirits, were at play at blindman’s-buff.

Page 5.

THE
CORAL NECKLACE;

INTENDED FOR THE

Amusement of Children.

—o—
By the Author of "The Pearl Bracelet," &c.

—o—
SECOND EDITION.



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Embellished with neat Engravings on Wood.  
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THE

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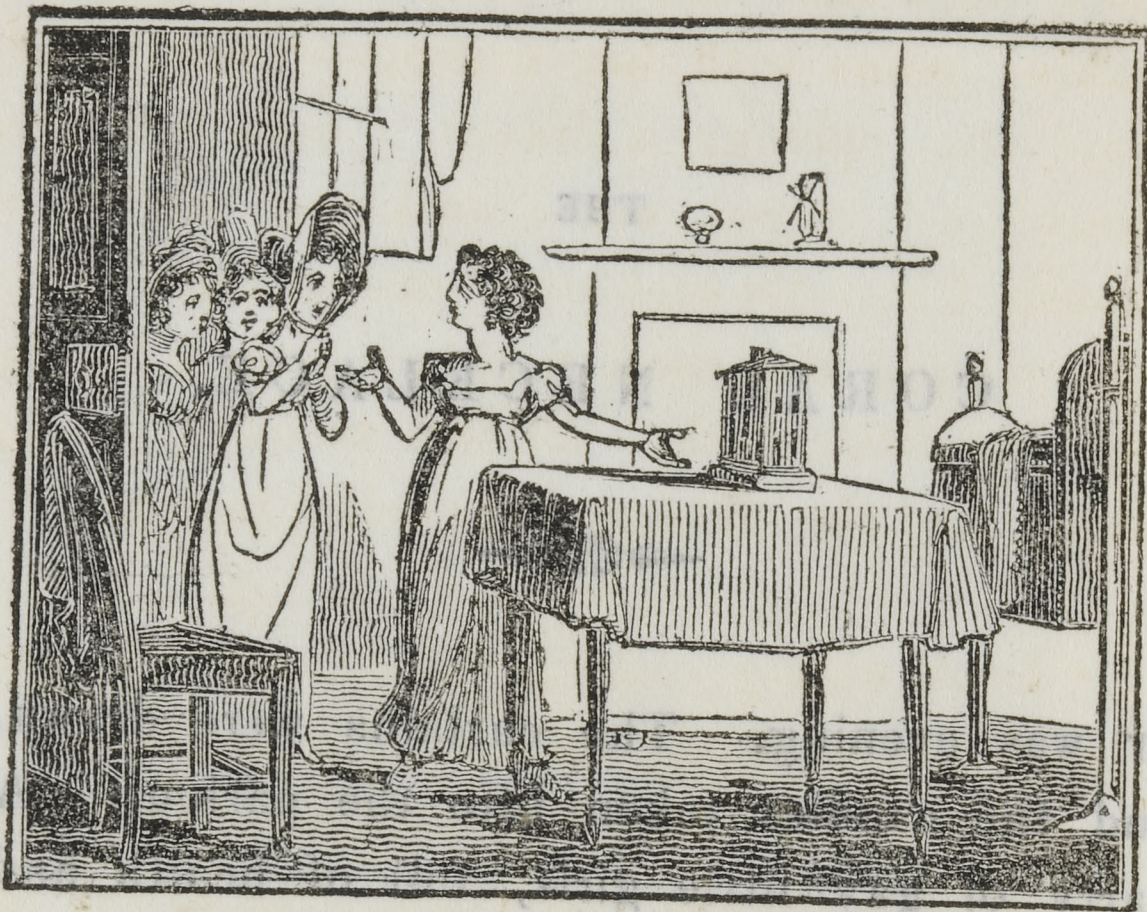
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Long Lane, West London.

THE
CORAL NECKLACE.



It was evening. The curtains were drawn, and the candles taken into the parlour. A party of gay little girls, full of health and spirits, were at play at blindman's-buff. It was Lucy's birth-day; and Lucy, like other children of her own age, had begged her Mamma to invite some of her young friends to tea. The favourite game of blindman's-buff lasted for some time; and at length, tired of running about, the happy group seated themselves upon the sofa to think of some new play. Many different ones were proposed, but none of them were fresh, and therefore none were fixed upon. The children, at Lucy's request,



went up into the nursery, to examine a baby-house, which had that very morning come from grandpapa's, as a birth-day present. This afforded great amusement to all parties. The chairs, tables, beds, and carpets, were taken out, and looked at again and again; the dining-room was arranged afresh, the dolls were dressed, and the little candles lit. Lucy felt very happy; she next reached the work-box which her father had given her, and then the

new book she had received as a reward for taking pains with her writing—"and here!" said she, opening a drawer, "here is a coral necklace! a red coral necklace, which my cousin Charlotte sent me!" and as Lucy spoke, she clasped the coral necklace round her fair and fat little neck.—At this moment the bell rung, and the children were called to tea.

"Look at my coral necklace, dear Mamma, (cried Lucy, as she entered the parlour). Is it not pretty? Don't you admire it?" continued she, drawing her chair close to the tea-table.

Her mother smiled, and said, "Would it not be of more value, if it were *useful* as well as *pretty*? For my own part, I like those things which are not merely intended for ornaments, but which will do us good also: for instance, I call your straw bonnet useful; it shelters you from the rain and sun when you go out—I call your shoes useful also; they prevent your feet from being hurt, when you run up and down

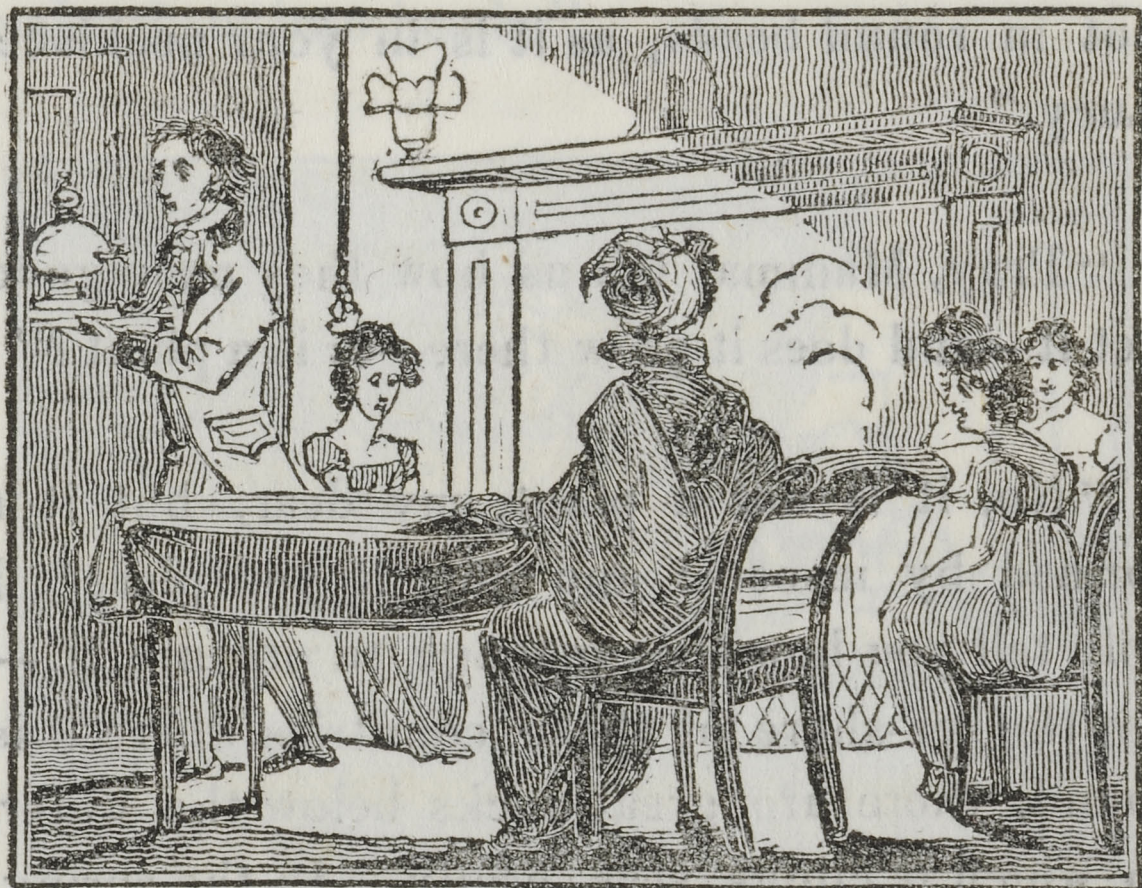
the gravel walk;—but I really do not see much use in a coral-necklace, pretty as it certainly is.”

Lucy looked grave, and twirled the red beads round and round between the finger and thumb. At length she exclaimed, “I have been thinking of a plan, Mamma, by which my necklace may become of use in one way at least. I do not know what coral is, and I believe neither Emma, nor Julia, nor Harriet know: and if you will tell us after tea, then my pretty coral necklace will be of some use. You must acknowledge that, Mamma.”

Mrs. Dent smiled, and her little daughter considered this as a sure sign of her consent. Tea was soon over, the hissing urn was taken away, and John, the footman, removed the tea things with more than usual dispatch.

The children soon arranged themselves around the cheerful fire, all smiling and happy.

What little girl has not been present at such a scene—what little girl has not glowed with delight in the full enjoyment of such an evening!



Lucy's mother began her account by asking the children if any of them could tell her what coral was.

One said China, another said the berry of some tree, and another said coloured glass.—None of them were right.

“Coral,” said Mrs. Dent, “is a *marine* production; that is to say, it is found in the sea; and any thing that is found in the sea, is called marine. Coral is found sticking to rocks, and in the form of little trees and bushes, not in round beads, as it is in your necklace, Lucy.”

“Pray, Mamma, tell us how they manage to get it—and does it grow there—is it a plant?”

“No, it is not a plant, my dear, but it is formed by insects: and now if you please, I will tell you how they manage to procure it.—On the sea-shore of those countries where it is found, there are great rocks below the water, to which it clings very firmly. In the spring, five or six men, called coral-fishers, go in a little open boat: one of them throws a great net, made of two pieces of wood, a leaden weight, and a great deal of hemp and strong cords twisted about the beams of wood, into the sea. When the coral is torn from the rocks and entangled in it, they draw it out by

a rope, which is sometimes very hard work, and requires much strength. These branches of coral are sometimes white, and sometimes red. Your necklace is made of *red* coral. Men are employed to polish the branches, and to make them into beads.”



“Thank you, Mamma!” said Lucy. —
“Charlotte’s present has been of some use to me, you see; for I am sure I did not know before what coral was.”

“And it may be of yet farther use,” said her mother; “for it is not made of coral *only*. Try if you cannot find out some other article which is employed.

“The clasp — the gold clasp! I know what you mean, Mamma. What is gold?—and the ribbon, the narrow blue ribbon upon which the beads are threaded, how is ribbon made?—I see I have a great deal to learn.”

“Let us begin with the clasp,” said Mrs. Dent. “Gold is a metal. All metals are dug out of the earth, mixed with other substances, and in this state are called *ores*: There are many different kinds of metals: I will tell you the names of some of them—gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin. These metals are separated from the minerals or substances with which they are mixed. The holes or pits made in the earth in order to procure them, are called *mines*.”

“Then is gold found in mines, Mamma?” said Lucy.

“Yes, very often,” said Mrs. Dent. “It is sometimes found in rivers also: little particles of it are mixed with the sand, and the poor black people in Africa separate it from the sand, and give the gold they find, in exchange for other things.”

“But how do they get up the gold from the bottom of the rivers?” said Emma.

“They put in long sloping troughs, lined at the bottom with coarse cloth or flannel,” said Mrs. Dent; “and the poor people who have to wash the sand, stir the water about with their hands, until the little bits of gold, about the size of peas, sink into the woolly part of the flannel; and these are afterwards washed out with great care, and brought to England. It is then melted in a fire, and made into different articles — watches, ear-rings, broaches, and clasps for coral necklaces.”

“Now,” said Lucy, we know what gold

is, and what coral is——now, for ribbon, dear Mamma.”

“Coral is made by insects,” said Mrs. Dent, “and ribbon is also formed by little insects, somewhat like caterpillars.”

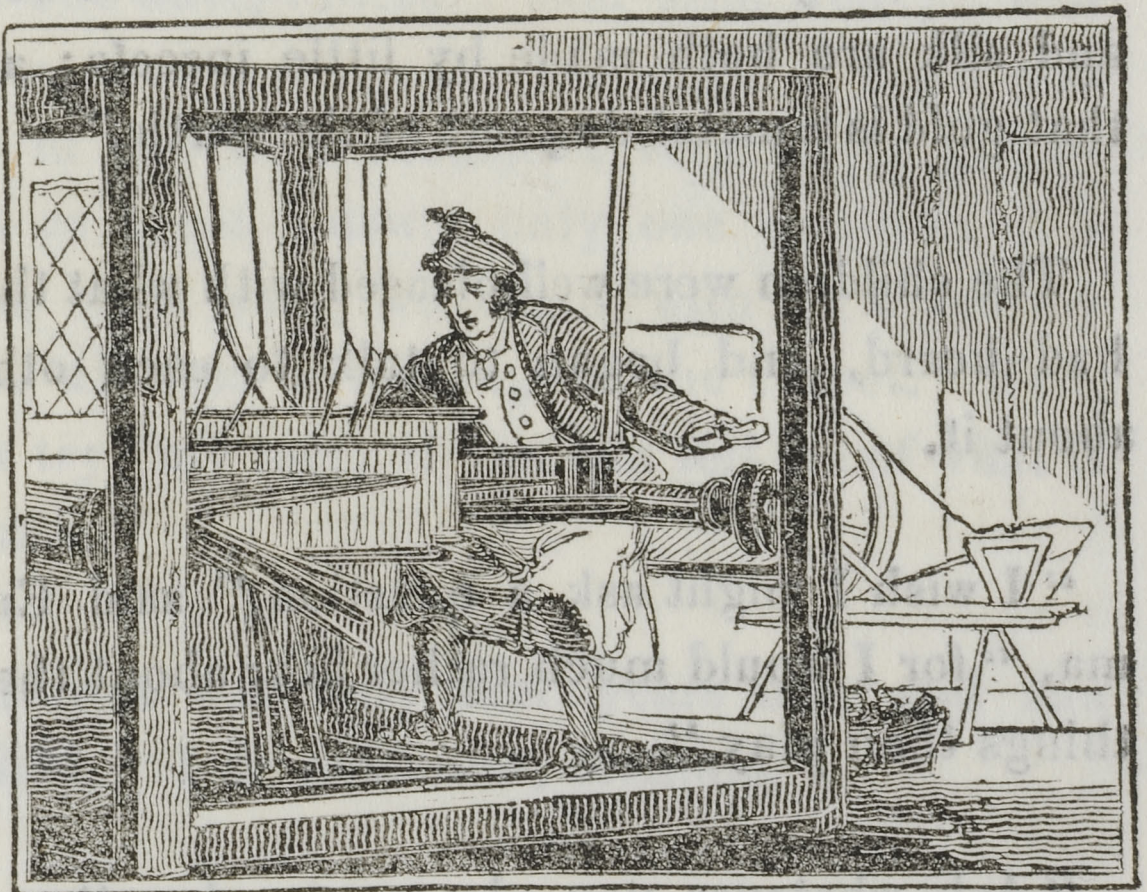
“Insects, Mamma! insects! are you quite sure that they can make ribbon?”

“Yes, quite sure and quite certain,” replied her mother, “that they form the material of which ribbon is composed. But before I tell you any thing more, do you know what caterpillars are?”

“Oh yes, yes, we have often seen them upon the currant-trees in the garden.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Dent, “the insects or caterpillars which spin the silk (for ribbon, you know, is made of silk) are called *silk-worms*. They live upon mulberry trees in warm countries. They spin themselves up in little silky

bags of a yellow colour, which they fasten to the leaves of the trees, and which are called *cones*. These are collected together, and the silk is wound off with great care. They put the little golden balls into warm water, that the silk may be wound off more readily. And when a great deal is wound off, it is taken to a man called a *weaver*, who weaves it into silk or ribbon.”



“But you told us it was yellow when the little insect spun it, Mamma,” said Lucy.—
“How came it blue?”

“It is quite right to ask,” said Mrs. Dent. “I forgot to tell you, that before it is brought to the weaver, it is *bleached*, or made white, by being put in the sun, or left in the open air, and then dyed of different colours, red, green, or blue, whichever they please.

“And now, my dear little Lucy, I will agree with you, that your coral necklace has been of some use:—you have learned from it that coral and silk are both made by little insects; and that gold is a metal dug out of the earth.”

The children were well pleased with what they had heard, and began to talk to each other about it.

“I wish I might ask a question,” said Emma, “for I would much rather hear about these things than play.”

“Ask whatever you please, my dear,” said Mrs. Dent. “I shall be glad to tell you any thing you do not know.”

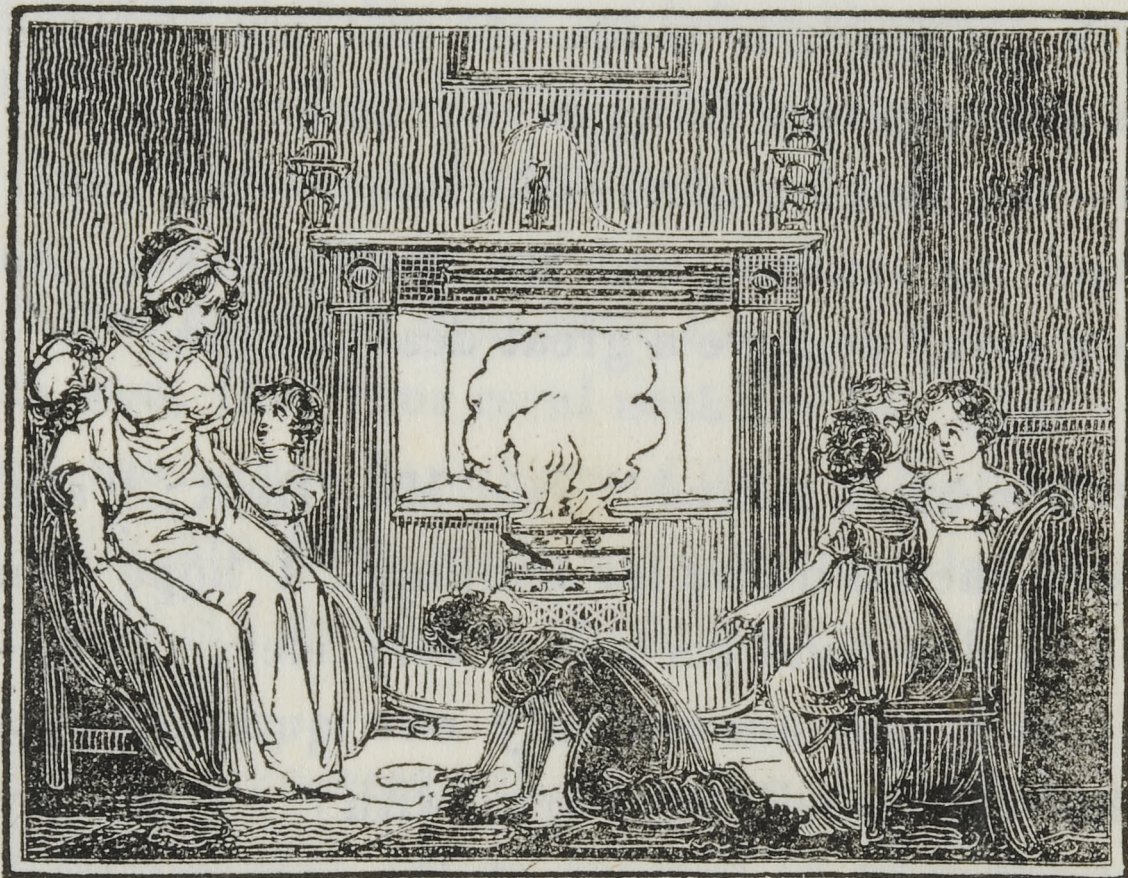
“ Well, Ma’am, since you have been talking to Lucy about her necklace, I have thought about many things ; I should like to know what my frock is made of—and my shoes—and almost every thing in the room :—the carpet—the looking-glass—the tables—the fender—and the candles, and the candlesticks. As Lucy says, we have a great deal to learn.”

“ You have, indeed,” said Mrs. Dent ; “ and as you shew a desire for learning, I hope you will in due time become a very clever girl.—But as I can answer only one question at a time, what shall we begin with ? I see my little Harriet is looking at the carpet. Well, now try, my love, if you can tell me of what it is made.”

Harriet was only four years old, and she replied, “ I do not know, Mamma.”

“ Examine it,” said her mother. “ Feel it. Is it hard like the floor ?”

“Oh no, Mamma. It is soft, and it is prettier than the floor,” said Harriet, stooping down, and rubbing it with her hand.



“Its colours have nothing to do with the question,” said Mrs. Dent; “the carpet would be as good a carpet, though not so pretty a one, if it had never been dyed at all. Look at it again, and try if you can find out what it is made of.”

“I now see threads in it,” cried Harriet. “I believe it is made of big threads.”

“You are partly right; but are these threads made of the same materials as the thread with which I am now sewing? Come and look at it.”

“No,” said Harriet; “I see there is a difference: and the threads that make the carpet, are red, blue, and green.”

“Never mind the colours,” said Mrs. Dent; “they are of no consequence: let us not think of them at all. Let us examine a thread of the carpet without minding the colour; and see, here is one: compare it with mine, and tell me where you perceive a difference.”

“It is larger and softer, Mamma,” said the little rosy Harriet.

“The softness,” said her mother, “may lead you to guess of what it is made.”

“I believe it is wool—wool that grows upon the backs of Papa’s sheep.”

“Ah, you are right! Wool does grow upon the backs of sheep. It is clipped off every year with large scissars, called shears. The sheep are penned in a fold close to a barn, from whence they are fetched by the lads, one by one, as fast as the shearers are ready for them. After the sheep are shorn, the wool is washed and carded, and spun into yarn, which you call threads.”



“Well, Mamma,” said Harriet, “tell me something more.”

“It is then sent to the dyer,” said her mo-

ther, "who dyes one part yellow, another green, and so on. It then goes to the weaver, who puts it in a loom, and weaves it by a pattern as you see. And now you understand that the colour is mere matter of choice or fancy; but that it is not necessary, like the wool, or the spinning, or the weaving."

"Yes, I understand all this very well," said Harriet. "And when I see pretty sheep nibbling the green grass in the fields, I shall think of the carpet, and that it is made of wool."

"Ah, Mamma," cried Lucy, "Harriet would not have thought of the carpet if it had not been for my coral necklace."

"Now, Ma'am," said Emma, "will you be so good as to tell me of what my frock is made?"

"It is muslin," said Mrs. Dent, "and muslin is made of cotton."

"What is cotton?" said Emma. "Is cotton made by an insect as well as silk?"

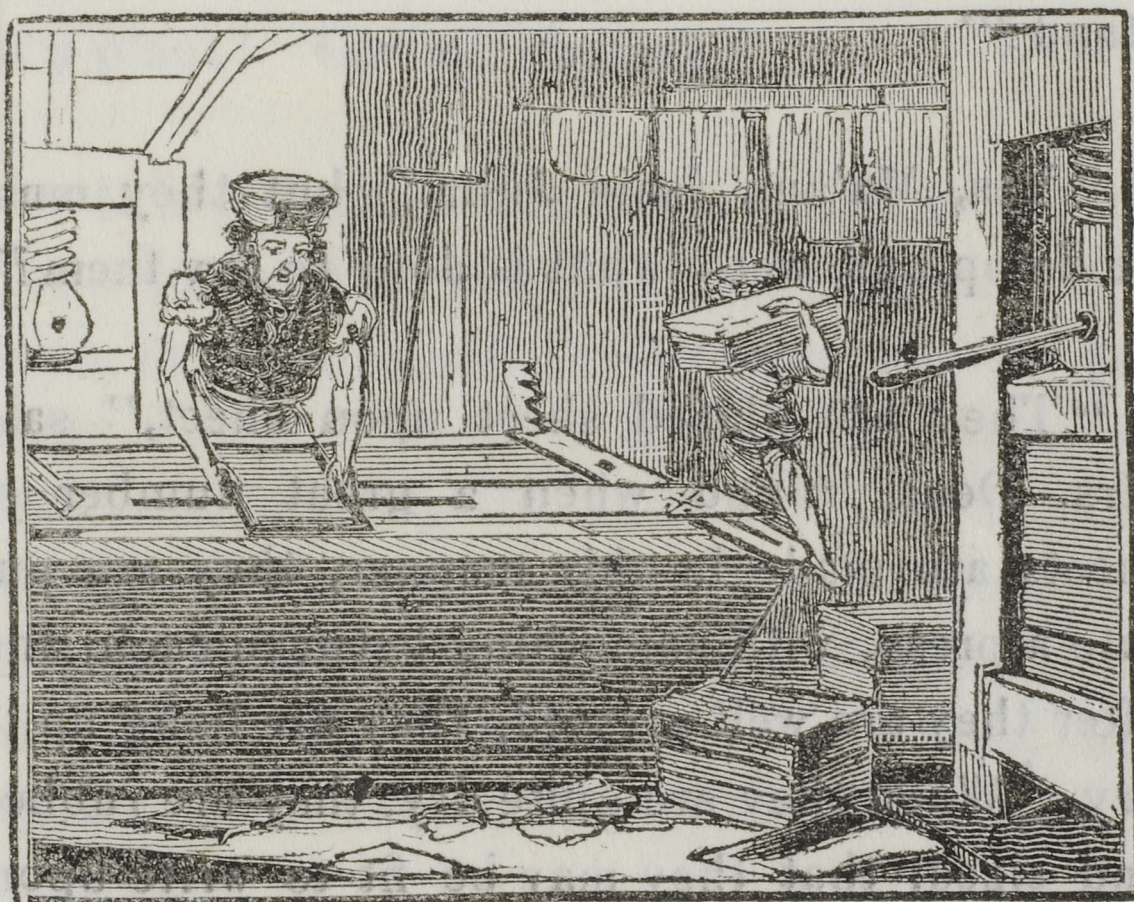
“No; cotton is procured from a tree called a cotton-tree, which grows only in warm countries. It is thick like a bushy shrub, and bears very beautiful flowers, which produces fruit almost as large as walnuts. This fruit, or pods as they are called, are full of soft down; this down is separated from the husk or outside, by means of a mill, and it is then spun and sent to the weaver, who weaves it in his useful loom into various articles of clothing:—muslin is one of them.”

“What!” cried Emma, in surprise, “my clear white muslin frock is produced from the down contained in pods no larger than walnuts. How wonderful!—But I shall no longer wonder at any thing you tell us now, Ma’am—though, to be sure, I should never have thought that my muslin frock once grew upon a tree. I think it is Julia’s turn to ask a question; and I like this play very much.”

Julia laughed, and looked around her.—
“There are so many things in the room, that

really, Emma, I do not know what to fix upon," said she. "However, here is a book; let us hear how paper is made. If I were to guess all night, I believe I could not find out."

"Paper is made of rags," said Mrs. Dent. "The rags are collected together and taken to a mill, and put into an engine placed in a



great trough filled with water. The engine has long spikes of iron in it, and by moving round with great swiftness, it soon tears the rags every way, and turns them into a soft pulp."

“ Well, Mamma, (said Lucy,) go on.”

“ A mould, or frame, is then used, the size of a sheet of paper, which is dipped in this pulp, and shaken about, till it forms a thin layer, as the workmen wish it to do ; then it is turned out, and the mould is dipped in again, and then again, and so on. Do you understand ?”

“ Yes, Ma’am, (said Julia ;) but they must be damp and wet—what is done to dry them ?”

“ They are placed sheet upon sheet,” said Mrs. Dent, “ and when a great number of sheets are made in this manner, they are put into a press, with something between each, and after they are well pressed, they are hung up to dry. When they are quite dry, they are rubbed and sized, that they may be fit to write upon. And now, my dear little girl, you know how paper is made.”

“ Thanks to Lucy’s necklace !” said Julia.

“Now let us know how rags are made, as paper is made from them.”

“Linen rags are made of flax. Perhaps you do not know what I mean by flax.”

“I think it is a plant,” said Lucy; “but who ever thought that linen cloth could be made of a plant! Go on, Mamma.”

“It is a plant at all events,” said Mrs. Dent, “and it bears a pretty blue blossom. It is sown in the ground, in the same way as any other seeds. When it is time to gather it, they collect it together in bundles, and spread it out in the field to dry. When it is dry, it is combed with a thing called a *ripple*, so as to pull off the blossoms and the leaves, and leave only the stalks, of which linen is made.”

“But the stalks are green,” said Emma, “and linen is commonly white: but I suppose the cloth will have to be bleached, as you said silk had. But before you go on, will you

please to tell us whether any other part of the plant is of use?"

"Yes; an oil is extracted, or drawn from it, called linseed oil, and its seed is called *linseed*."

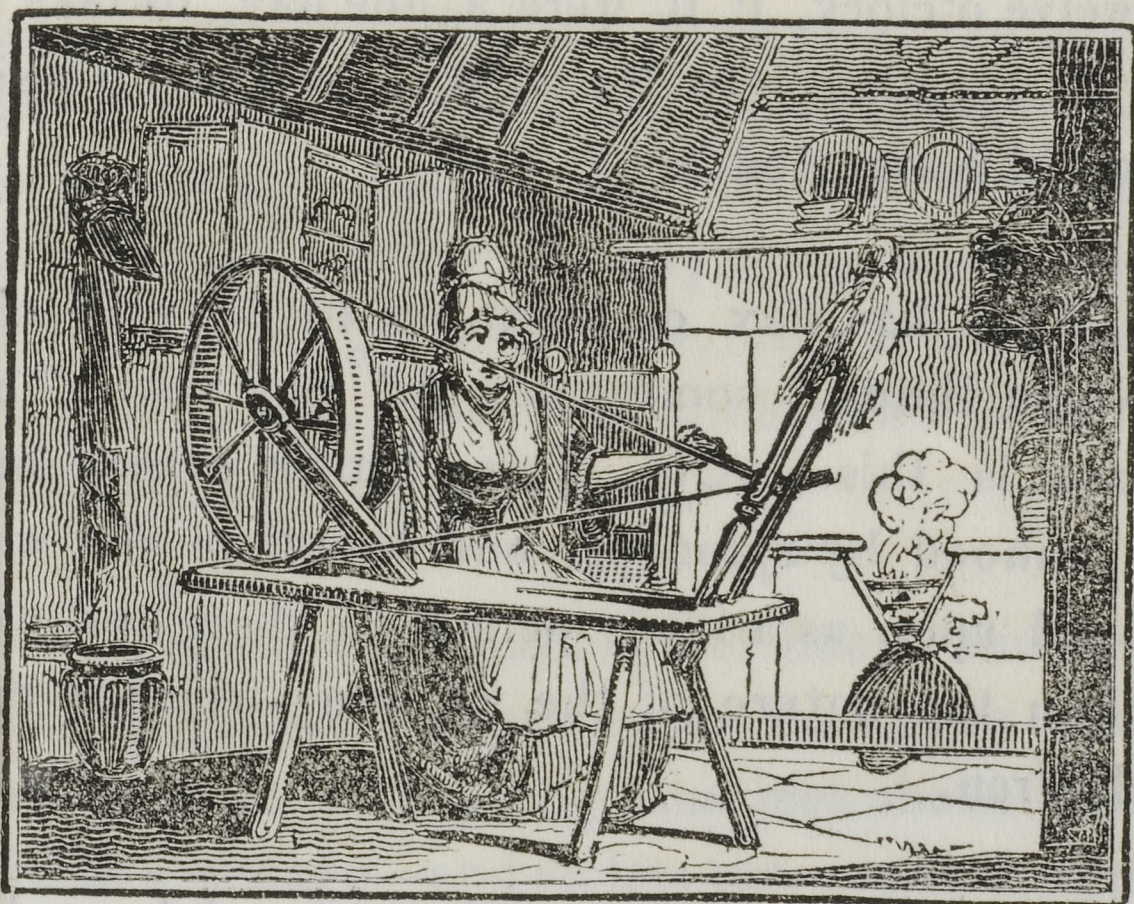
"Oh, then, it is useful, (said Emma,) for my little birds are fed with linseed every morning. I never knew before what linseed was—and I shall remember that it is the seed of flax."

"We were just talking about combing the flax with a ripple," said Mrs. Dent: "when this is done, they put the stalks into a ditch or pond of water, where they remain for some time until the bark, or outside part of the stalks, becomes soft, when they are taken out. They then beat off the bark by means of a tool called a *brake*, which is something like a flail. I suppose you know what a flail is."

"I do," said Julia: "when I went a walk with my Papa one day, we passed by a barn,

where a man was thrashing corn. He beat it with a great tool made of wood, which separated the grain from the ear; and this, my Papa said, was a flail."

"Very well," said Mrs. Dent. "The bark is beaten off the stalks of the flax with a brake, and has then to be cleaned and combed again,



and afterwards spun into thread; this is thread which I am at work with. Have you ever seen a spinning wheel?"

One little girl said no, and another said yes, and it was at last discovered that only Emma had seen one. The children all wished to see one, that they might know how flax is spun into thread, as well as the state it is in before it is spun; and it was therefore agreed for Lucy, Emma, Julia, and all the rest of their young friends, to meet the next morning at twelve o'clock, if it were a fine day, to take a walk together into the village, and pay a visit to old Nurse Smith.

What has flax or spinning to do with old Nurse Smith? some little girl may ask. The case is this. Old Nurse Smith earned her livelihood by spinning, and therefore she was fixed upon as a likely person to show and explain the nature of the spinning-wheel to the children.

When this arrangement had been duly made Mrs. Dent went on with her account of flax. "The thread, (said she) is taken to the weaver who weaves it into cloth. He is a very useful

person. If I walk with you to-morrow, when we have paid a visit to old Nurse, and have seen her spinning-wheel, we will go up the lane to the weaver's cottage at the other end of the village, and there you can see the whole process of weaving thread into cloth. All cloth is made of threads placed across and across each other, you know. The weaver calls the threads that are placed lengthwise, the *warp*, and those that are crosswise, the *woof*, and he passeth the woof backwards and forwards by means of a *shuttle*, which is a sort of needle. But I need not tell you any thing more about it; for if we go to-morrow, as we at present intend to do, you will understand it better than by any thing I can say."

"I hope it will be fine, (said Lucy) and then we can gather the primroses that grow upon the bank in that pretty lane just above Nurse Smith's cottage—and violets too—and cowslips.—Do you know my Mamma means to make cowslip wine this spring? She says it is good for poor people to take when they are ill. Will

you tell us how wine can be made from cowslip pips, dear Mamma? It seems almost as wonderful as for cloth to be made from a plant."

"Not just now," said Mrs. Dent. "I think you have heard enough for one evening. If you will remind me of it when we are walking to-morrow, I will tell you how it is done; for even this knowledge may sometimes be of use to you. All kinds of knowledge are useful in some way or other."

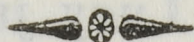
"And my coral necklace has been of great use," exclaimed Lucy. "If it had not been for it, I do not think we should have heard about gold, and coral, and ribbon, and carpets, and paper, and linen, and a great many more things that we did not know before. Thanks to my coral necklace! and thanks to you, dear Mamma, for having amused us so nicely."

It was now getting late; first a knock came at the door for one little girl, and then a loud peal at the bell for another. At length Lucy

and Harriet weré left alone with their mother. They soon retired to rest, for it was later than usual. Early the next morning, and almost before it was light, Lucy jumped out of bed, and peeped between the window-curtains, exclaiming, "Oh, it is a fine day—we shall walk with Mamma to Nurse Smith's, and see her spinning-wheel, and hear about cowslip wine."



Alfred and the Thorn-bushes.



MR. THOMSON and his son Alfred were one evening, in the month of May, sitting at the foot of a delightful hill, and surveying the beautiful works of nature that surrounded them. The declining sun, now sinking into the west, seemed to clothe every thing with a purple robe. The cheerful song of a shepherd called off their attention from their meditations on those delightful prospects. This shepherd was driving home his flock from the adjacent fields.

Thorn-bushes grew on each side of the road, and every sheep that approached the thorns was sure to be robbed of some part of its wool, which much displeased little Alfred. "Only see, Papa," said he, "how the sheep are deprived of their wool by those bushes! You have often told me that God makes nothing in vain; but these briars seem only made for

mischievous : people should therefore join to destroy them root and branch. Were the poor sheep to come often this way, they would be robbed of all their clothing. But that shall not be the case, for I will rise with the sun tomorrow morning, and with my little bill-hook and snip-snap, I will level all these briars with the ground. You may come with me, Papa, if you please, and bring with you an axe. Before breakfast, we shall be able to destroy them all."

Mr. Thomson replied, "We must not go about this business in too great a hurry, but take a little time to consider of it; perhaps there may not be so much cause for being angry with these bushes, as you at present seem to imagine. Have you not seen the shepherds about Lammas with great sheers in their hands, take from the trembling sheep all their wool, not being contented with a few locks only?"

Alfred allowed that was true; but they did it in order to make clothes; whereas the hedges robbed the sheep without having the least occasion for their wool, and evidently for no useful purpose.

Mr. Thomson allowed the arguments of little Alfred to be just; for nature has given to every beast a clothing, and we are obliged from them to borrow our own, otherwise we should be forced to go naked, and exposed to the inclemency of the elements.

“Very well, Papa,” said Alfred, “though they want clothing, yet these bushes want none: they rob us of what we have need, and therefore down they shall all come with to-morrow morning’s rising sun. And, I dare say, Papa, you will come along with me, and assist me.”

Mr. Thomson could not but consent, and little Alfred thought himself nothing less than Alexander, merely from the expectation of destroying at once this formidable band of robbers. He could hardly sleep, being so much taken up with the idea of his victories, to which the morrow’s sun was to be witness.

The cheerful lark had hardly begun to proclaim the approach of morning, when Alfred got up, and ran to awaken his Papa. Although Mr. Thomson was very indifferent concerning the fate of the thorn-bushes, yet he was not

displeased with having the opportunity of shewing to his son Alfred the beauties of the rising sun. They dressed themselves immediately, took the necessary instruments, and set out on this important expedition.

When they came near to the bushes, they observed a multitude of little birds flying in and out of them, and fluttering their wings from branch to branch. On seeing this, Mr. Thomson stopped his son, and desired him to suspend his vengeance a little time, that they might not disturb those innocent birds. With this view they retired to the foot of the hill where they had sat the preceding evening, and from thence examined more particularly what had occasioned this apparent bustle among the birds. From hence they plainly saw, that they were employed in carrying away those bits of wool in their beaks, which the bushes had torn from the sheep the evening before. There came a multitude of different sorts of birds, who loaded themselves with the plunder.

Alfred was quite astonished at this sight, and asked his father what could be the meaning

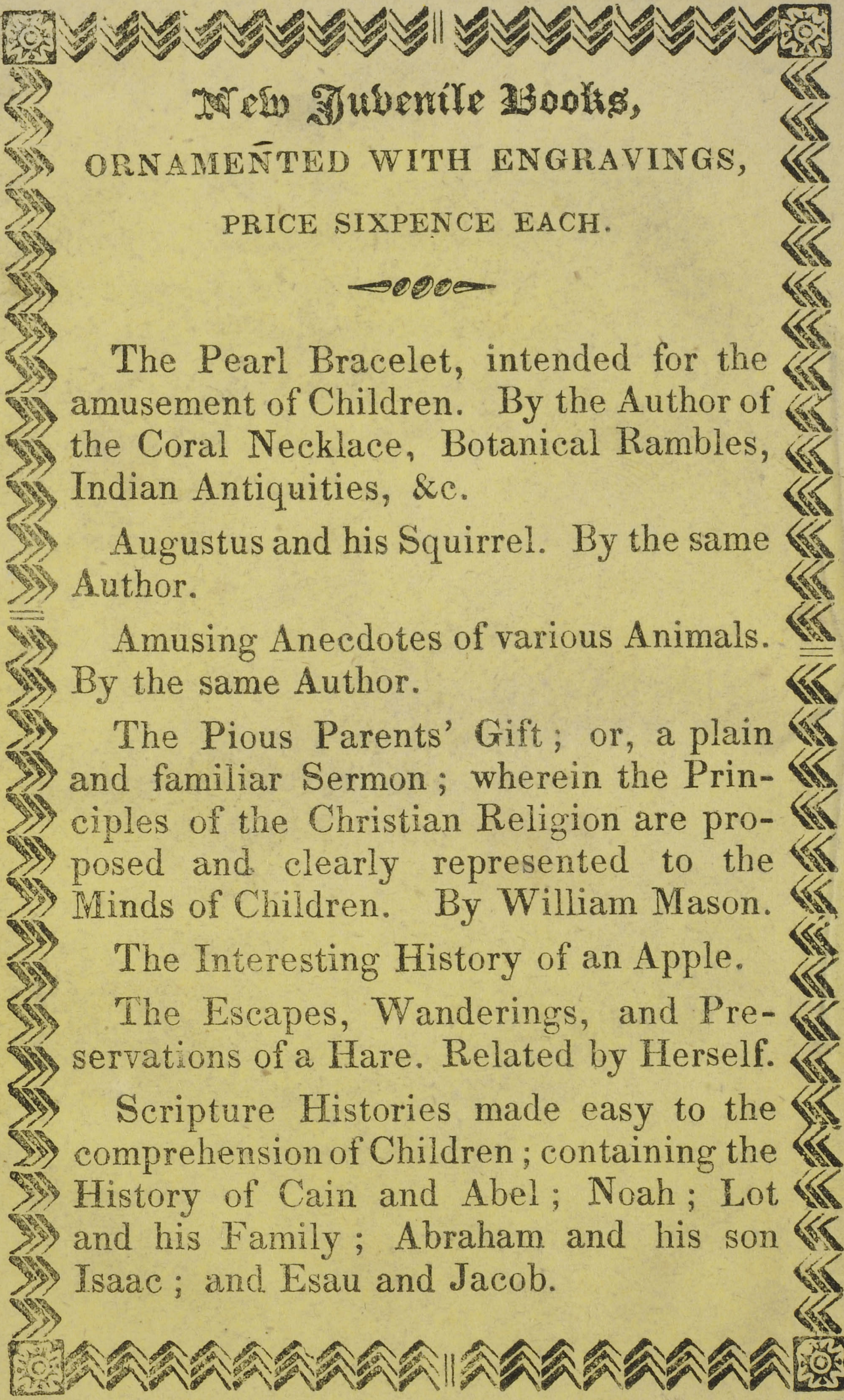
of it. "You by this plainly see," replied Mr. Thomson, "that Providence provides for creatures of every class, and furnishes them with all things necessary for their convenience and preservation. Here, you see, the poor birds find what is necessary for their habitations, wherein they are to nurse and rear their young, and with this they make a comfortable bed for themselves and their little progeny. The innocent thorn-bush, against which you yesterday so loudly exclaimed, is of infinite service to the inhabitants of the air; it takes from those that are rich only what they can very well spare, in order to satisfy the wants of the poor. Have you now any wish to cut those bushes down?"

Alfred shook his head, and said he would not cut the bushes down for the world. Mr. Thomson applauded his son for so saying; and, after enjoying the sweets of the morning, they retired home to breakfast, leaving the bushes to flourish in peace.

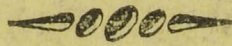


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