

FRONTISPIECE.

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London, Published Jan^y. 1808. by C. Chapple Pall Mall & B. Tabbart New Bond St^h.

THE
FISHES GRAND GALA.

A COMPANION

TO THE

“PEACOCK AT HOME,”

&c. &c.

BY MRS. COCKLE,

AUTHOR OF THE JUVENILE JOURNAL, &c.

PART I.

Thus the humble at all times will copy the great,
In matters of pleasure, as matters of state.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. CHAPPLE, PALL MALL; B. TABART, NEW BOND-STREET;
J. HARRIS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD; DARTON AND HARVEY,
GRACECHURCH-STREET; AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

1808.

Keynell, Printer, 21, Piccadilly.

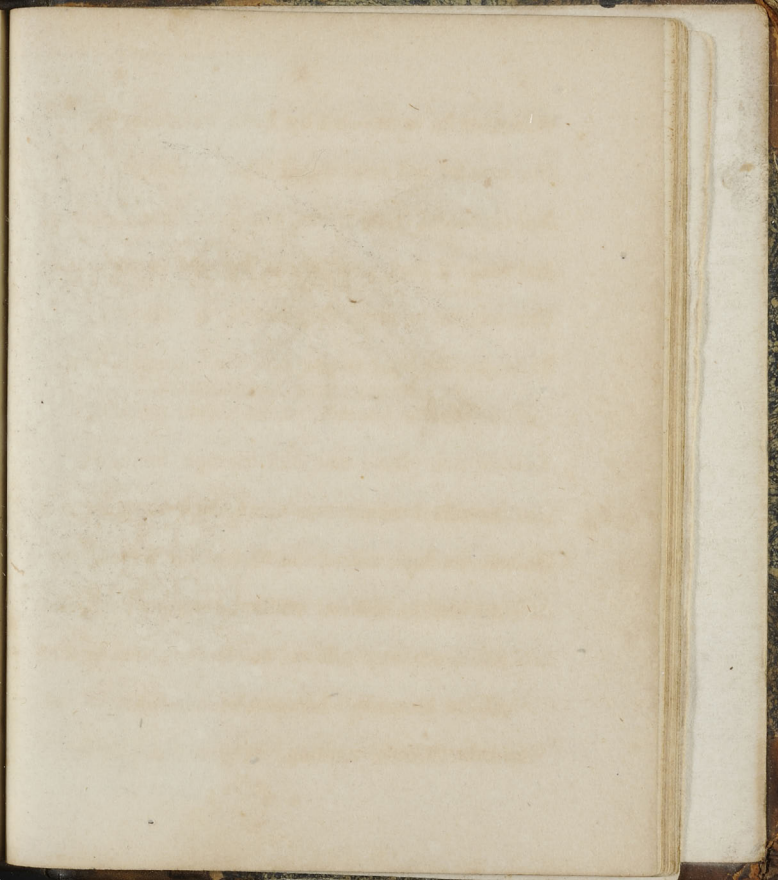
THE

FISHES GRAND GALA.

WHEN the poets, who make pretty tales for December,
Had told what all youngsters who read well remember,
How the Peacock assembled the Birds in her hall,
And the Insects all danced at the Butterfly's ball;
From the region of æther, ah! strange to unfold,
By young Zephyr, turn'd gossip, the story was told

Wherever he went,—till by Echo 'twas caught,
 (For scandal and news travel rapid as thought,)
 And convey'd to the Fishes, who gave themselves airs,
 And resolv'd they would do as they did ABOVE STAIRS;
 Thus excited to envy, they vow'd, in their turn,
 'To be gay like their neighbours, "to live and to learn."

E'en Neptune himself, on his trident reclin'd,
 Assisted their plans, and their triumph design'd;
 The Nereids were summon'd in haste from their caves
 To hear the high will of the God of the waves,
 And attended in silence, whilst the sea gently broke
 Into soft murm'ring billows, as Neptune thus spoke:
 " Shall the Butterfly's banquet be sounded by Fame,
 " And the Muses, exulting, its splendour proclaim?"



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" For her Peacock whilst Juno new homage ensures,
 " Shall no song, oh! ye fishes, no honours be your's?
 " Forbid it, ye Fates! and ye Tritons, attend!
 " By you our commands to our subjects we send:
 " That our revels the masque's lighter charm should
 display,

" Let the cards be prepar'd, and appointed the day."

The point thus determin'd, imagine the bliss,

Ye lovers of fêtes, of a fête such as this!

Oh! picture the joys of so sweet a commotion,

As now heav'd every wave on the breast of old Ocean;

Whilst the Nautilus,* spreading his gossamer sails

To pleasure's light breeze (ah! how soft are her gales!)

* See note the first.

Thro' the billowy kingdom the mandate convey'd;
 From the lake's tranquil scene to the willow-fring'd shade
 Of the river's green margin,—inviting the fair,
 With beaux of all ages, the revel to share;
 And to regions more distant the Flying-fish brought
 The summons, with mirth and festivity fraught.*

The palace of Neptune prepar'd for the feast,
 To rival its splendour had beggar'd the East,
 On pillars of crystal and coralline rear'd,
 As by magical pow'r, the gay fabric appear'd;
 'Twas Pleasure's light dome, where in harmoniz'd rays
 Each varying gem its rich lustre displays,

* See note the second.

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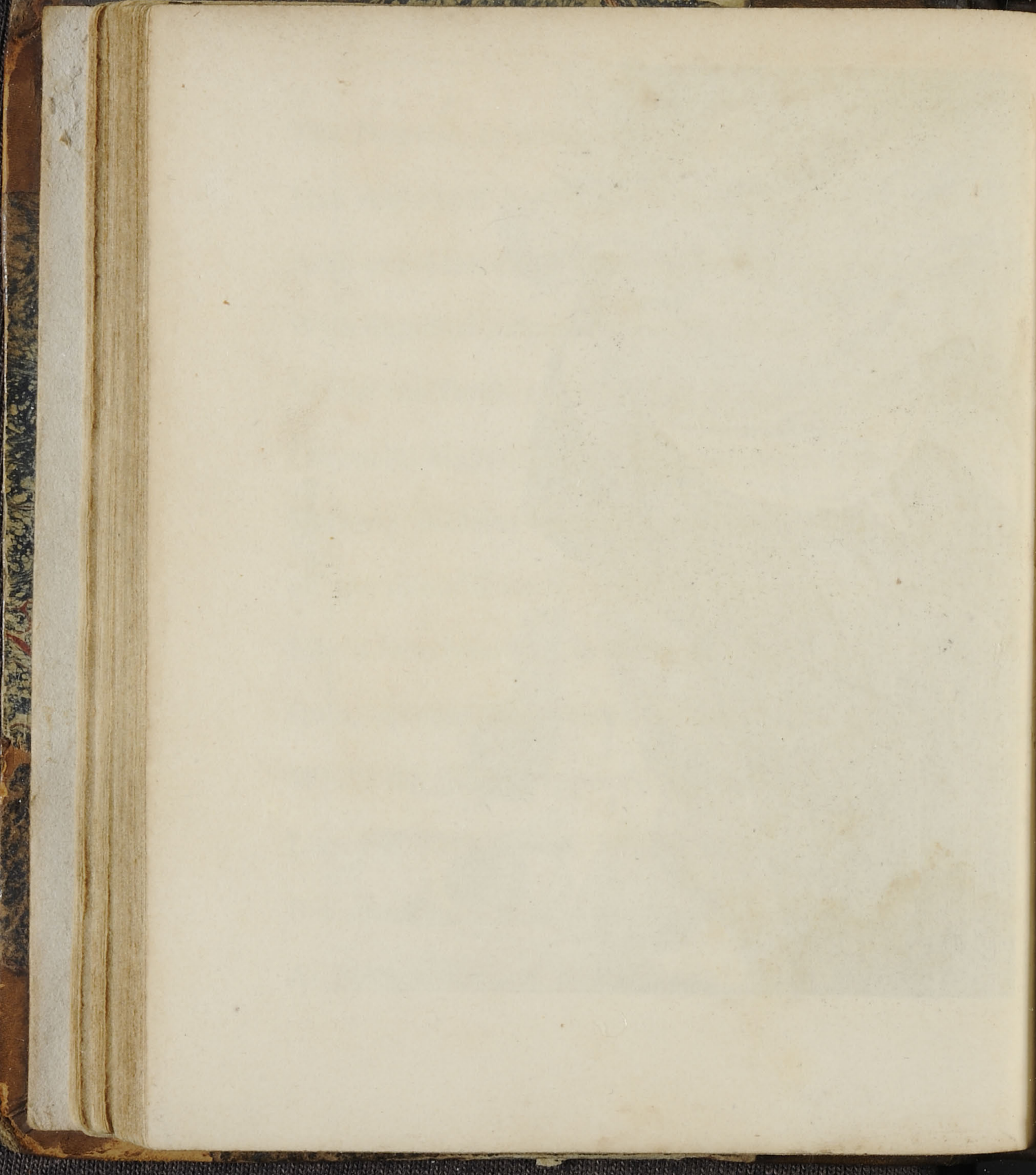
Contrasted with pearls from the sea nymph's chaste bed
Where beauty reposing had pillow'd her head ;
Whilst wreaths of dark sea-weed the columns entwin'd,
And with bands of bright shells was the foliage confin'd.
Here the Naiad's fair hands had unsparingly wove
Nymphæa as fair as the blossoms of love ;
These around their white vases they gracefully hung,
Anemonies* blending their beauties among.
For once their charm'd course e'en the billows delay'd,
And in cadence unrivall'd melodiously play'd
The heart's gentle music ;—but see where the throng,
In entering groupes, claim the rest of my song.

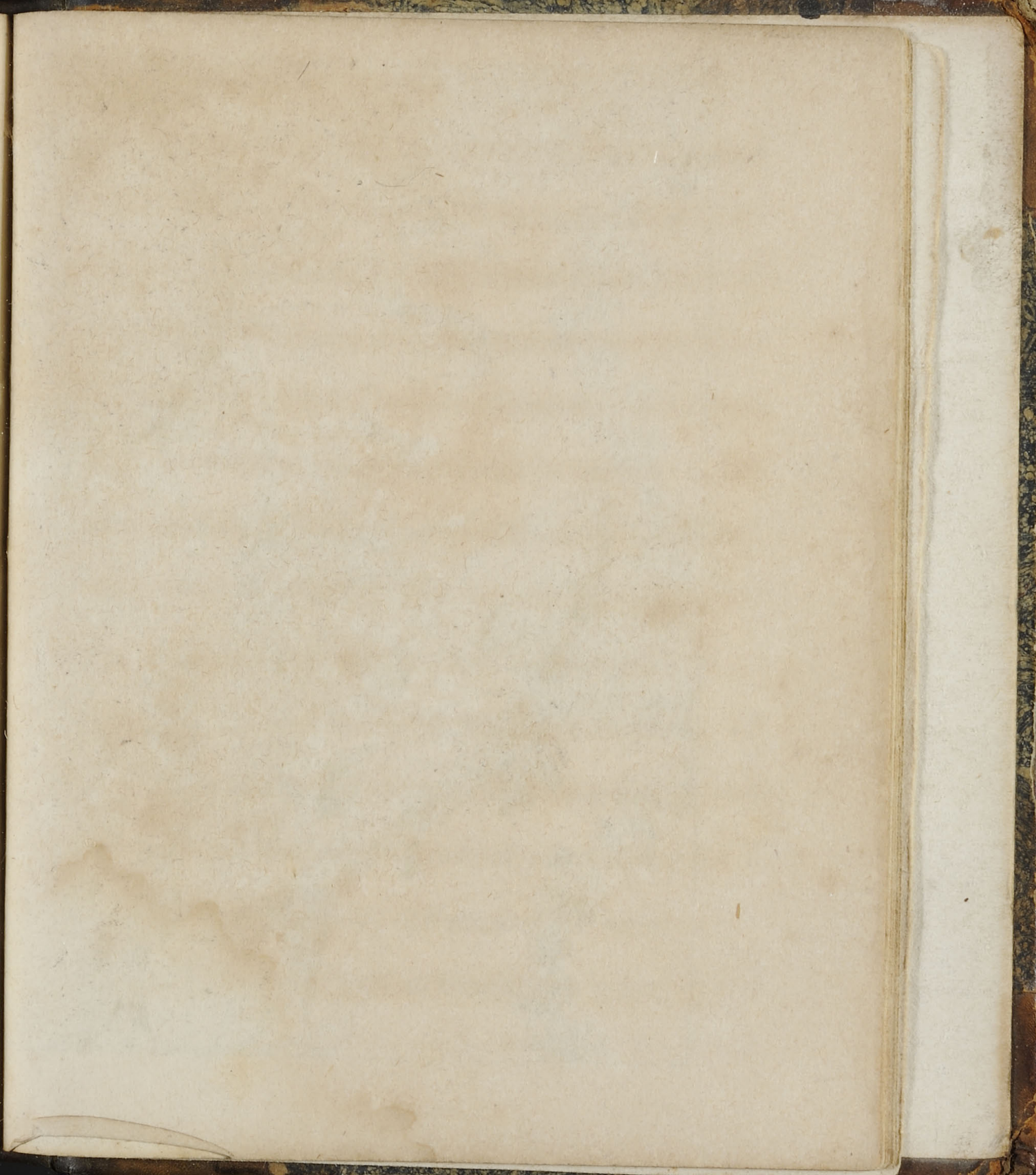
* See note the third.

The *Porpoise*, in size as in consequence big,
 Had veil'd half his charms in a CHANCELLOR's wig,
 And, to aid the disguise, o'er his shoulders had thrown
 With dignified judgment the *Chancellor's* gown ;
 Whilst the *Turtle*, more humble, for *once* plainly drest,
 Conceal'd his rough shell in an alderman's vest :
 But envy declares he turn'd green at the sight
 Of the splendid attire of a rich city knight ;
 Like a hero renown'd in theatrical story,
 Quin, epicure Quin, came the famous John Dory ;
 Whilst the *Salmon* appear'd in a motley disguise,
 Like a *Harlequin* drest, he attracted all eyes ;
 But accustom'd to leap from a height as sublime
 As Bologna himself had e'er tried in his time,

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Over fish twice as big, and o'er heads twice as high,

With a harlequin's skill and a sorcerer's eye,

So nimbly he bounded, and vaulted so neat,

Not one of the party suspected the cheat.

The Lobster in vain, in his sable attire,

To the SEE of a bishop had dared to aspire,

So resolv'd to turn soldier, gay, gallant, well-bred,

He now charms all the ladies by dressing in RED.

But as fishes, like females, are frail and can feel,

Ah! hint not the fate of the elegant Eel:

In the dance's light mazes whilst gliding along

She fell, and excited the mirth of the throng;

The gay Lady Modish, the standard of taste,

So tonish her form, and so slender her waist,

None expected from her a false step at the ball :
 Take the lesson, ye fair, and be warn'd by her fall.
 The *Smelt* next appear'd, as a modest young bride,
 But a novice in fashion, her spouse at her side !
 In white and in silver, her bridal array,
 To this new scene of pleasure she ventur'd to stray ;
 But her husband, as all prudent husbands should do,
 Her charm'd ear from the low-whisper'd accents with-
 drew

Of a dapper *Anchovy*, a PICKLE confest ;
 A strange *saucy* dog ; yet so smart and well drest,
 What belle could be proof 'gainst a beau of such taste,
 With attractions so piquant thus happily grac'd ?
 The *Pike* in a LAWYER's disguise claim'd admission ;
 At his elbow the Cod-fish, a noted PHYSICIAN ;

Like the rest of his tribe he could swallow a FEE,
 So advis'd all his patients to come to the sea :
 E'en Fashion had own'd 'twas a cure for all ills,
 He but follow'd her dictates, and GILDED his pills.

The Pilchard was down in the *visiting list*,
 But (oh! sad omission) the *Pilchard* was miss'd,
 Or his ticket o'erlook'd or mislaid—at a ball
 Such disasters, we know, e'en the best may befall;
 Yet he heard of the fête, and determin'd to come,
 But on second thoughts fear'd 'twas a mere Cornish
 hum ;*

So sulking at home the poor Pilchard remain'd ;
 A sadder disaster the fates ne'er ordain'd.

* The Pilchard comes from the coast of Cornwall.

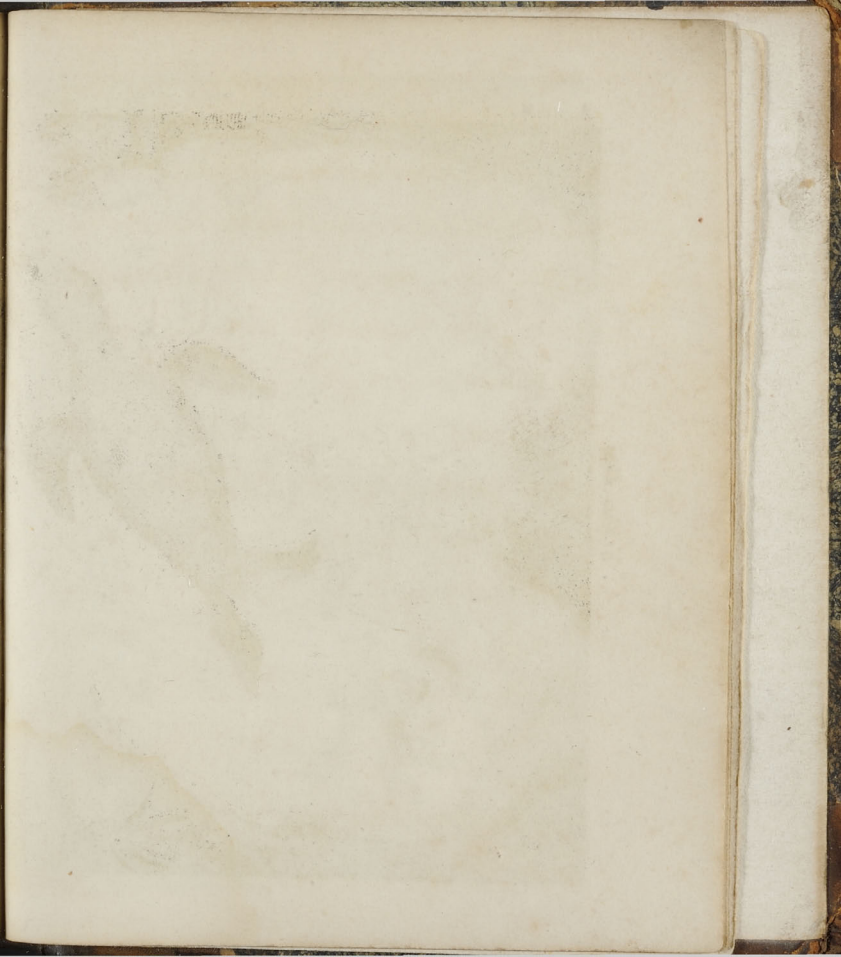
Accustom'd to migrate and wander of yore,
 The hoyden Miss Herrings, in shoals from the shore,
 Like a troop of young damsels escap'd from the net,
 Come gaping to catch every fly they could get ;
 But gossip Report brought the rumour from town,
 That their market was over, and most of them BLOWN.*

The fam'd Mrs. Codling, of dashing renown,
 Was woo'd by young Capelin,† a beau of the town ;
 But he found that her love was a masquerade sham,
 For she quitted poor Capelin, and snapped at Tom
 Clam.‡

* Herrings, when half salted, are called *Blown* Herrings.

† Capelin is a fish with which Cod is caught.

‡ Clam, a shell fish, also bait for Cod.

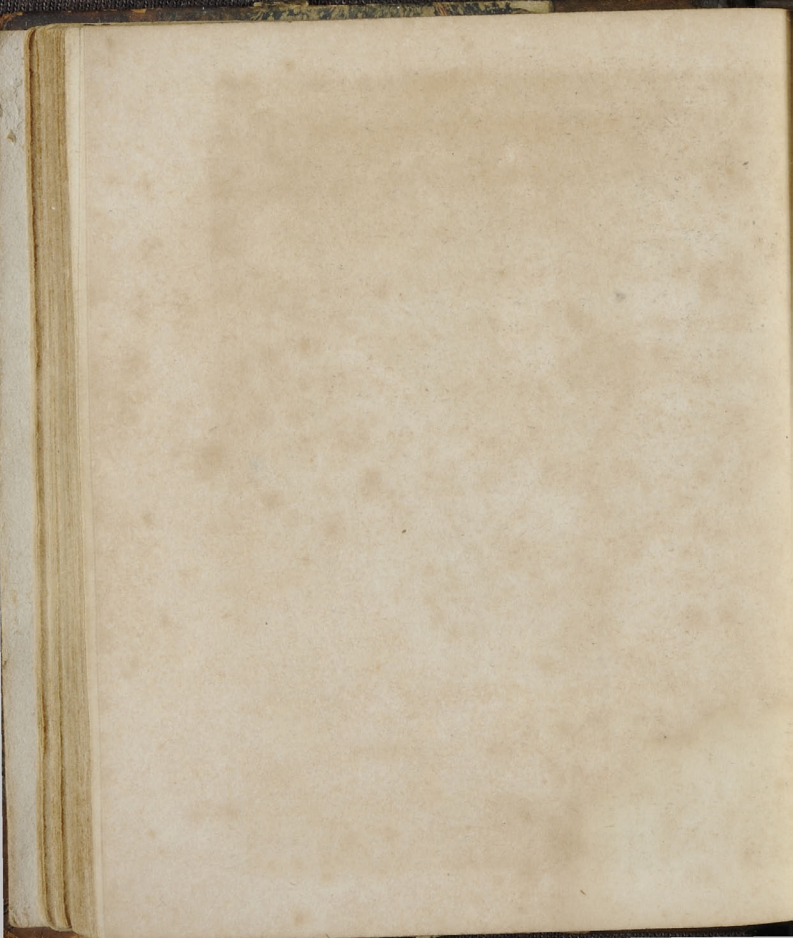


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O fie, fickle fair! quit thy insolent look,
 Thou thyself shalt be conquer'd by *hook* or by *crook*.

The *Seal* with his ticket appear'd in the crowd,
 And, presenting it, call'd for the porter aloud,
 Announcing at once both his name and condition;
 Which the porter on hearing denied him admission,
 And shutting most rudely the door in his face,
 Declar'd for such gentry he ne'er found a place;
 Such amphibious creatures, the claim altogether
 Of both elements, yet not belonging to either.

The Flounder presumptuous, and quite out of place,
 Had borrow'd the jewels and clothes of her *Grace*,
 Of a dowager duchess: so rumour declar'd,
 But the arrow oft misses when shot 'midst the herd.

But the Muse for a while begs to turn from the scene,
To mark the mild lustre of night's lovely queen,
And court her assistance in aid of the song,
When she'll venture to picture the rest of the throng.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

NOTES.

NOTE FIRST.

ARGONAUTA ARGO, OR PAPER NAUTILUS.

Among the principal miracles of Nature, is the animal called Nautilus or Pompilus. It ascends to the surface of the sea in a supine posture, and gradually raising itself up, forces out, by means of its tube, all the water from the shell, in order that it may swim the more readily; then throwing back the two foremost arms, it displays between them a membrane of wonderful thinness, which acts as a sail, while with the remaining arms it rows itself along, the tail in the middle acting as a helm to direct its course: and thus pursues its voyage like a little ship, and if alarmed by any appearance of danger, takes in the water and descends.—*See Plate II. page 6.*

NOTE II.

THE FLYING FISH.

We can produce but a single instance of this fish being taken on the British coast. The ancients assert, it quitted the water,

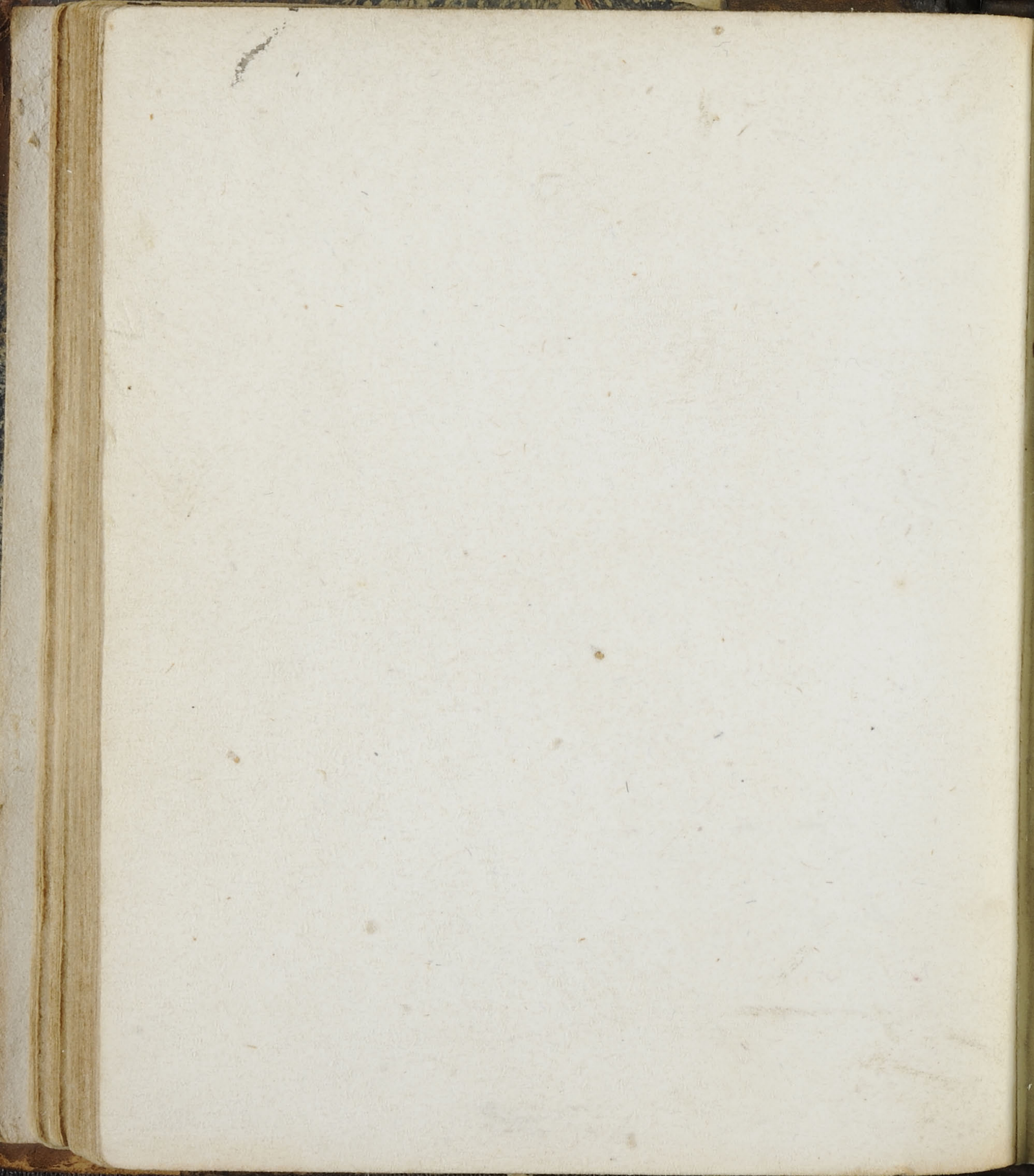
and slept on the rocks, from whence it tumbled with precipitation when disturbed by the unfriendly birds. On these accounts it has been named the flying-fish.—See *Plate II. p. 6.*

NOTE III.

NYMPHÆA ALBA, or WHITE WATER LILY.

India may boast her palm-trees, and America her magnolia; but the latter scarcely exceeds our Nymphæa in magnificence, and the most noble and celebrated of all Indian productions is in fact a water lily, Nymphæa Nelumbo. That, however, does not more excel the other vegetables of its country, than this every British plant besides. It has altogether the air of a tropical production. Though far less common than the yellow water lily, yet this kind is not rare in several parts of England.
—See *Frontispiece.*

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