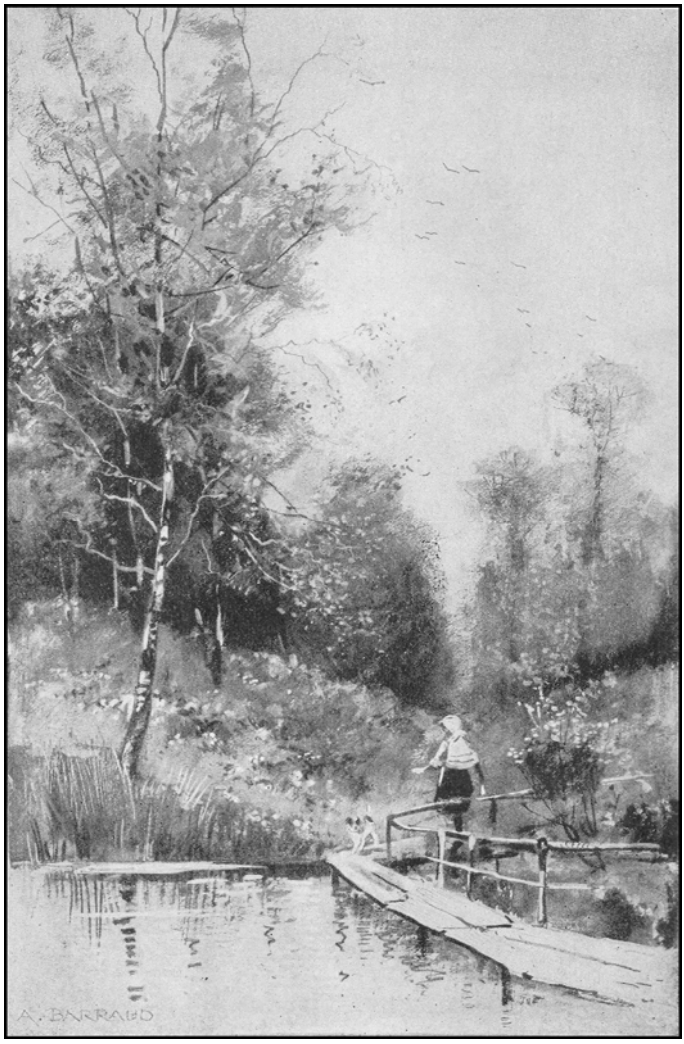
PARABLES FROM NATURE



"The book of Nature—that universal and public manuscript that lies expanded unto the eyes of all."—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

PARABLES
FROM
NATURE

BY

MARGARET S. GATTY

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

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PREFACE

"THERE are two books," says Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Religio Medici*, "from whence I collect my divinity; besides that written one of God, another of his servant, Nature—that universal and public manuscript that lies expanded unto the eyes of all: those that never saw Him in the one have discovered Him in the other." And afterwards, as if giving a particular direction to the above general statement, he adds: "Those strange and mystical transmigrations that I have observed in silkworms turned my philosophy into divinity. There is in these works of Nature, which seem to puzzle reason, something divine, and hath more in it than the eye of a common spectator doth discover."

Surely these two passages, from the works of the celebrated physician and philosopher, may justify an effort to gather moral lessons from some of the wonderful facts in God's creation: the more especially as St. Paul himself led the way to such a mode of instruction, in arguing the possibility of the

resurrection of the body from the resurrection of vegetable life out of a decayed seed: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die!" *Thou fool*—fool! not to be able, in thy disputatious wisdom, to read that book of "God's servant, Nature," out of which there are indeed far more actual lessons of analogy to be learned than we are apt to suppose, or can at once detect. Assuredly, the changes of the silkworm, and the renewal of life from vegetable seed, are not more remarkable than the soaring butterfly rising from the earth grub—a change which, were the caterpillar a reasonable being, capable of contemplating its own existence, it would reject as an impossible fiction.

It was not, however, Sir Thomas Browne's remarks which gave rise to these parables; for the first was written in an outburst of excessive admiration of Hans Andersen's *Fairy Tales*, coupled with a regret that, although he had, in several cases, shown his power of drawing admirable morals from his exquisite peeps into Nature, he had so often left his charming stories without an object or moral at all. Surely, was the thought, there either is, or may be devised, a moral in many more of the incidents of Nature than Hans Andersen has tried for; and on this view the "Lesson of Faith" was written—an old story; for the ancients, with deep meaning, made the butterfly an emblem of immortality—yet, to familiarise the young with so beautiful an idea seemed no unworthy aim.

"The Sedge Warbler" is open to the naturalist's objection, that female birds do not sing.

But it suited the moralist that they should do so in this particular case; and who would not err in such company as Spenser, Milton, Thomson, Beattie, and the immortal Isaak Walton?

"And in the violet-embroider'd vale,
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well."
Song of Comus—MILTON.

"And Philomele her song with teares doth steepe."
The Shepherd's Calendar, Nov.
SPENSER.

"But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet loud music out of her instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think that miracles had not ceased."
—WALTON'S *Angler.*

"All abandoned to despair, she sings
Her sorrows through the night; and on the bough
Sole sitting, still at every dying fall
Takes up again her lamentable strain."
THOMSON'S *Seasons—Spring.*

"And shrill lark carols clear from her aërial tour."
BEATTIE'S *Minstrel.*

An interesting account of the first discovery of the Sedge Warbler, of its habit of singing by night as well as by day, of its mocking notes, and of its

distinctive differences from the Reed Warbler, may be found in White's *History of Selborne.*

Nothing but the present growing taste for the use of the microscope, and the study of zoophytes, among other minute wonders of sea, earth, and sky, could justify the selection of so little popular a subject for a parable as will be found in "Knowledge not the Limit of Belief."

"The moon that shone in Paradise," was the exclamation of a very melancholy mind, which failed to recognise in the thought the hope it was calculated to convey, and which it has now been attempted to teach.

May the "Lesson of Faith" and the "Lesson of Hope" each work its appointed end, and may they combine to enforce on the mind of youth the value of that "still more excellent gift of charity," which "hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things!"

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A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

MARGARET SCOTT had a most unusual education, as is shown in the wide scope of her knowledge, and the depth of character and reflection in her writings. Her father was the Rev. A. J. Scott, D.D., who was a chaplain on board the *Victory* when Nelson was shot. He did not believe in school life, for girls at any rate, and educated his daughter himself at home. In Margaret's case the plan resulted in her acquiring a liking for many things that were not then usual for a girl to know, and led directly to the writing of this book of wisdom.

She also had considerable artistic ability, which showed itself in some beautiful illuminated handwritings. She was also skilled at etching, with which she illustrated some of her own writings. Though her literary ability began to show itself at an early age (at seventeen she was translating Dante) she was forty-one before she began to publish. This first book was *Joachim the Mimic*.

Other books of short tales with morals followed, and in 1851 appeared the first series of *Parables from Nature*. These stories were written after a long and careful study of natural history, both at first-hand and from books. Her collection of interesting natural objects was a continual inspiration. She had another inspiration too, and this arose from a wish that Hans Andersen had "pointed the moral" more often. She therefore determined to do what she could in this way herself. The outcome was the *Parables from Nature*, issued in five short series.

Margaret Scott married the Rev. Alfred Gatty, D.D., in 1839, who had his living at Ecclesfield, in Yorkshire. There Mrs. Gatty remained until her death. Her breadth of view and liberal-mindedness enabled her to help in the betterment of her husband's parish. When the use of chloroform to alleviate pain began, Mrs. Gatty became an enthusiastic disciple. She overcame the prejudices of the local doctor; she taught him how to use it; and then to encourage the ignorant and timid villagers, she took the first dose of the drug herself.

Incessantly writing, Mrs. Gatty published many books, among others *A Book of Emblems*, her last printed effort. Among the most popular of her works were *Aunt Judy's Tales* for children.

The Human Face Divine was published in 1859, and from then her pen was never still, and her name became a household word. In 1862 she finished *British Seaweeds*, with eighty-six coloured plates. As

editor of *Aunt Judy's Magazine* she was able to exert her wise influence over a wider area.

But she had worked too hard, and on October 4, 1873, she died of paralysis, which as "writer's cramp" and in other forms had been gradually bringing her to helplessness. She was a writer for all time, and will be revered for her moral qualities as well as for her delightful parabolic teachings. Her biography will probably never be written, for before her death Mrs. Gatty specially begged her friends not to attempt such a thing. Yet her beautiful nature is clearly revealed in her works, and he who reads her "Parables" soon perceives the warmly glowing soul of the writer as clearly as any biography could show him.

A LESSON OF FAITH

"If a man die, shall he live *again?* All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."

—JOB xiv. 14.

"LET me hire you as a nurse for my poor children," said a Butterfly to a quiet Caterpillar, who was strolling along a cabbage-leaf in her odd lumbering way. "See these little eggs," continued the Butterfly; "I don't know how long it will be before they come to life, and I feel very sick and poorly, and if I should die, who will take care of my baby butterflies when I am gone? Will *you,* kind, mild, green Caterpillar? But you must mind what you give them to eat, Caterpillar!—they cannot, of course, live on *your* rough food. You must give them early dew, and honey from the flowers; and you must let them fly about only a little way at first; for, of course, one can't expect them to use their wings properly all at once. Dear me! it is a sad pity you cannot fly yourself. But I have no time to look for another nurse now, so you will do your best, I hope. Dear! dear! I cannot think what made me come and lay my eggs on a cabbage-leaf! What a place for young butterflies to be born upon! Still you will be kind, will you not, to the poor little ones? Here, take this

gold-dust from my wings as a reward. Oh, how dizzy I am! Caterpillar! you will remember about the food——"

And with these words the Butterfly closed her eyes and died; and the green Caterpillar who had not had the opportunity of even saying Yes or No to the request, was left standing alone by the side of the Butterfly's eggs.

"A pretty nurse she has chosen, indeed, poor lady!" exclaimed she, "and a pretty business I have in hand! Why, her senses must have left her, or she never would have asked a poor crawling creature like me to bring up her dainty little ones! Much they'll mind me, truly, when they feel the gay wings on their backs, and can fly away out of my sight whenever they choose! Ah! how silly some people are, in spite of their painted clothes and the gold-dust on their wings!"

However, the poor Butterfly was dead, and there lay the eggs on the cabbage-leaf; and the green Caterpillar had a kind heart, so she resolved to do her best. But she got no sleep that night, she was so very anxious. She made her back quite ache with walking all night long round her little charges, for fear any harm should happen to them; and in the morning says she to herself—

"Two heads are better than one. I will consult some wise animal upon the matter, and get advice. How should a poor crawling creature like me know what to do without asking my betters?"

But still there was a difficulty—whom should the Caterpillar consult? There was the shaggy Dog who sometimes came into the garden. But he was so rough!—he would most likely whisk all the eggs off the cabbage-leaf with one brush of his tail, if she called him near to talk to her, and then she should never forgive herself. There was the Tom Cat, to be sure, who would sometimes sit at the foot of the apple-tree, basking himself and warming his fur in the sunshine; but he was so selfish and indifferent!—there was no hope of his giving himself the trouble to think about butterflies' eggs.

"I wonder which is the wisest of all the animals I know," sighed the Caterpillar, in great distress; and then she thought, and thought, till at last she thought of the Lark; and she fancied that because he went up so high, and nobody knew where he went to, he must be very clever, and know a great deal; for to go up very high (which *she* could never do) was the Caterpillar's idea of perfect glory.

Now, in the neighbouring corn-field there lived a Lark, and the Caterpillar sent a message to him, to beg him to come and talk to her; and when he came she told him all her difficulties, and asked him what she was to do, to feed and rear the little creatures so different from herself.

"Perhaps you will be able to inquire and hear something about it next time you go up high," observed the Caterpillar timidly.

The Lark said, "Perhaps he should;" but he did not satisfy her curiosity any further. Soon

afterwards, however, he went singing upwards into the bright, blue sky. By degrees his voice died away in the distance, till the green Caterpillar could not hear a sound.

It is nothing to say she could not see him; for, poor thing! she never could see far at any time and had a difficulty in looking upwards at all, even when she reared herself up most carefully, which she did now; but it was of no use, so she dropped upon her legs again, and resumed her walk round the Butterfly's eggs, nibbling a bit of the cabbage-leaf now and then as she moved along.

"What a time the Lark has been gone!" she cried, at last. "I wonder where he is just now! I would give all my legs to know! He must have flown up higher than usual this time, I do think! How I should like to know where it is that he goes to, and what he hears in that curious blue sky! He always sings in going up and coming down, but he never lets any secret out. He is very, very close!"

And the green Caterpillar took another turn round the Butterfly's eggs.

At last the Lark's voice began to be heard again. The Caterpillar almost jumped for joy and it was not long before she saw her friend descend with hushed note to the cabbage bed.

"New, news, glorious news, friend Caterpillar!" sang the Lark; "but the worst of it is, you won't believe me!"

"I believe everything I am told," observed the Caterpillar hastily.

"Well, then, first of all, I will tell you what these little creatures are to eat"—and the Lark nodded his beak towards the eggs. "What do you think it is to be? Guess!"

"Dew, and the honey out of flowers, I am afraid," sighed the Caterpillar.

"No such thing, old lady! Something simpler than that. Something that *you* can get at quite easily."

"I can get at nothing quite easily but cabbage-leaves," murmured the Caterpillar, in distress.

"Excellent! my good friend," cried the Lark exultingly; "you have found it out. You are to feed them with cabbage-leaves."

"Never!" said the Caterpillar indignantly. "It was their dying mother's last request that I should do no such thing."

"Their dying mother knew nothing about the matter," persisted the Lark; "but why do you ask me, and then disbelieve what I say? You have neither faith nor trust."

"Oh, I believe everything I am told," said the Caterpillar.

"Nay, but you do not," replied the Lark; "you won't believe me even about the food, and yet that is but a beginning of what I have to tell you. Why, Caterpillar, what do you think those little eggs will turn out to be?"

"Butterflies, to be sure," said the Caterpillar.

"Caterpillars!" sang the Lark; "and you'll find it out in time;" and the Lark flew away, for he did not want to stay and contest the point with his friend.

"I thought the Lark had been wise and kind," observed the mild green Caterpillar, once more beginning to walk round the eggs, "but I find that he is foolish and saucy instead. Perhaps he went up *too* high this time. Ah, it's a pity when people who soar so high are silly and rude nevertheless! Dear! I still wonder whom he sees, and what he does up yonder."

"I would tell you, if you would believe me," sang the Lark, descending once more.

"I believe everything I am told," reiterated the Caterpillar, with as grave a face as if it were a fact.

"Then I'll tell you something else," cried the Lark; "for the best of my news remains behind. *You will one day be a Butterfly yourself."*

"Wretched bird!" exclaimed the Caterpillar, "you jest with my inferiority—now you are cruel as well as foolish. Go away! I will ask your advice no more."

"I told you you would not believe me," cried the Lark, nettled in his turn.

"I believe everything that I am told," persisted the Caterpillar; "that is"—and she hesitated,—"everything that it is reasonable to believe. But to tell me that butterflies' eggs are caterpillars, and that

caterpillars leave off crawling and get wings, and become butterflies!—Lark! you are too wise to believe such nonsense yourself, for you know it is impossible."

"I know no such thing," said the Lark, warmly. "Whether I hover over the corn-fields of earth, or go up into the depths of the sky, I see so many wonderful things, I know no reason why there should not be more. Oh, Caterpillar! it is because you crawl, because you never get beyond your cabbage-leaf, that you call *any* thing *impossible."*

"Nonsense!" shouted the Caterpillar. "I know what's possible, and what's not possible, according to my experience and capacity, as well as you do. Look at my long green body and these endless legs, and then talk to me about having wings and a painted feathery coat! Fool!——"

"And fool you! you would-be-wise Caterpillar!" cried the indignant lark. "Fool, to attempt to reason about what you cannot understand! Do you not hear how my song swells with rejoicing as I soar upwards to the mysterious wonder-world above? Oh, Caterpillar! what comes to you from thence, receive, as *I* do, upon trust."

"That is what you call——"

"Faith," interrupted the Lark.

"How am I to learn Faith?" asked the Caterpillar.

At that moment she felt something at her side. She looked round—eight or ten little green

caterpillars were moving about, and had already made a show of a hole in the cabbage-leaf. They had broken from the Butterfly's eggs!

Shame and amazement filled our green friend's heart, but joy soon followed; for, as the first wonder was possible, the second might be so too. "Teach me your lesson, Lark!" she would say; and the Lark sang to her of the wonders of the earth below, and of the heaven above. And the Caterpillar talked all the rest of her life to her relations of the time when she should be a Butterfly.

But none of them believed her. She nevertheless had learnt the Lark's lesson of faith, and when she was going into her chrysalis grave, she said—"I shall be a Butterfly some day!"

But her relations thought her head was wandering, and they said, "Poor thing!"

And when she was a Butterfly, and was going to die again, she said—

"I have known many wonders—I have faith—I can trust even now for what shall come next!"

THE LAW OF AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

"Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?"—ACTS vii. 27.

A FINE young Working-bee left his hive, one lovely summer's morning, to gather honey from the flowers. The sun shone so brightly, and the air felt so warm, that he flew a long, long distance, till he came to some gardens that were very beautiful and gay; and there having roamed about, in and out of the flowers, buzzing in great delight, till he had so loaded himself with treasures that he could carry no more, he bethought himself of returning home. But, just as he was beginning his journey, he accidentally flew through the open window of a country-house, and found himself in a large dining-room.

There was a great deal of noise and confusion, for it was dinner-time, and the guests were talking rather loudly, so that the Bee got quite frightened. Still he tried to taste some rich sweetmeats that lay temptingly in a dish on the table, when all at once he heard a child exclaim with a shout, "Oh, there's a bee, let me catch him!" on which he rushed hastily back to (as he thought) the open air. But, alas! poor fellow, in another second he found that he had flung

himself against a hard transparent wall! In other words, he had flown against the glass panes of the window, being quite unable, in his alarm and confusion, to distinguish the glass from the opening by which he had entered.

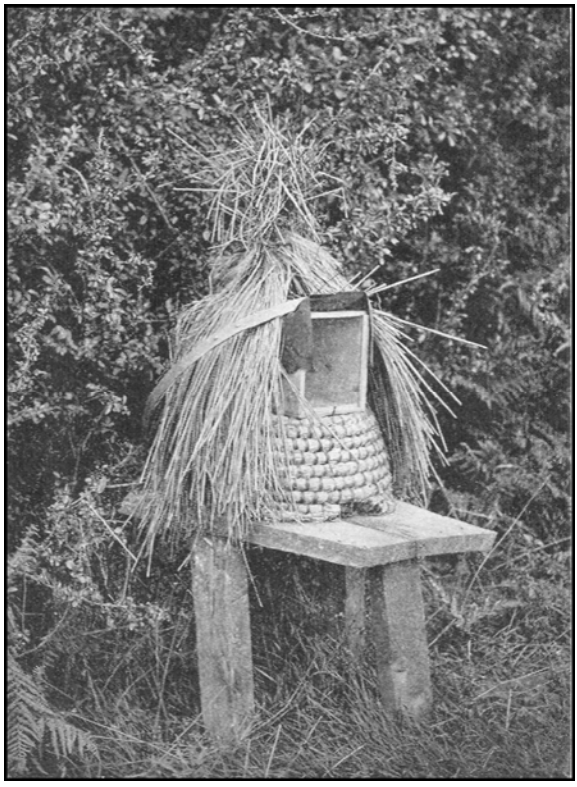
This unexpected blow annoyed him much; and having wearied himself in vain attempts to find the entrance, he began to walk slowly and quietly up and down the wooden frame at the bottom of the panes, hoping to recover both his strength and composure.

Presently, as he was walking along, his attention was attracted by hearing the soft half-whispering voices of two children, who were kneeling down and looking at him.

Said the one to the other, "This is a working-bee, Sister; I see the wax-bags under his thighs. Nice fellow! how busy he has been!"

"Does he make the wax and honey himself?" whispered the Girl.

"Yes, he gets them from the insides of the flowers. Don't you remember how we watched the bees once dodging in and out of the crocuses, how we laughed at them, they were so busy and fussy, and their dark coats looked so handsome against the yellow leaves? I wish I had seen this fellow loading himself to-day. But he does more than that. He builds the honeycomb, and does pretty nearly everything. He's a working-bee, poor wretch!"



At last he reached his home—the hive which he had left with such a happy heart in the morning—and began to unload the bags under his thighs of their precious contents.

"What is a working-bee? and why do you call him 'Poor wretch,' Brother?"

"Why, don't you know, Uncle Collins says, all people are poor wretches who work for other people who don't work for themselves? And that is just what this bee does. There is the queen-bee in the hive, who does nothing at all but sit at home, give orders, and coddle the little ones; and all the bees wait upon her, and obey her. Then there are the drones—lazy fellows, who lounge all their time away. And then there are the working-bees, like this one here, and they do all the work for everybody. How Uncle Collins would laugh at them, if he knew!"

"Doesn't Uncle Collins know about bees?"

"No, I think not. It was the gardener who told me. And, besides, I think Uncle Collins would never have done talking about them and quizzing them, if he once knew they couldn't do without a queen. I heard him say yesterday, that kings and queens were against Nature, for that Nature never makes one man a king and another a cobbler, but makes them all alike; and so he says, kings and queens are very unjust things."

"Bees have not the sense to know anything about that," observed the little Girl, softly.

"Of course not! Only fancy how angry these working fellows would be, if they knew what the gardener told me!"

"What was that?"

"Why, that the working-bees are just the same as the queen when they are first born, just exactly the same, and that it is only the food that is given them, and the shape of the house they live in, that makes the difference. The bee-nurses manage that; they give some one sort of food, and some another, and they make the cells different shapes, and so some turn out queens, and the rest working-bees. It's just what Uncle Collins says about kings and cobblers—Nature makes them all alike. But, look! the dinner's over—we must go."

"Wait till I let the Bee out, Brother," said the little Girl, taking him gently up in a soft handkerchief; and then she looked at him kindly and said, "Poor fellow! so you might have been a queen if they had only given you the right food, and put you into a right-shaped house! What a shame they didn't! As it is, my good friend," (and here her voice took a childish mocking tone)—"As it is, my good friend, you must go and drudge away all your life long, making honey and wax. Well, get along with you! Good luck to your labours!" And with these words she fluttered her handkerchief through the open window, and the Bee found himself once more floating in the air.

Oh, what a fine evening it was! But the liberated Bee did not think so. The sun still shone beautifully though lower in the sky, and though the light was softer, and the shadows were longer; and as to the flowers, they were more fragrant than ever; yet the poor Bee felt as if there were a dark heavy cloud over his own heart, for he had become

discontented and ambitious, and he rebelled against the authority under which he had been born.

At last he reached his home—the hive which he had left with such a happy heart in the morning—and, after dashing in, in a hurried and angry manner, he began to unload the bags under his thighs of their precious contents, and as he did so he exclaimed, "I am the most wretched of creatures!"

"What is the matter? what have you done?" cried an old Relation who was at work near him; "have you been eating the poisonous kalmia flowers, or have you discovered that the mischievous honey-moth has laid her eggs in our combs?"

"Oh, neither, neither!" answered the Bee, impatiently; "only I have travelled a long way, and have heard a great deal about myself that I never knew before, and I know now that we are a set of wretched creatures!"

"And, pray, what wise animal has been persuading you of that, against your own experience?" asked the old Relation.

"I have learnt *a truth,"* answered the Bee, in an indignant tone, "and it matters not who taught it me."

"Certainly not; but it matters very much that you should not fancy yourself wretched merely because some foolish creature has told you you are so; you know very well that you never *were* wretched till you were told you were so. I call that very silly; but I shall say no more to you." And the old

Relation turned himself round to his work, singing very pleasantly all the time.

But the Traveller-bee would not be laughed out of his wretchedness; so he collected some of his young companions around him, and told them what he had heard in the large dining-room of the country-house; and all were astonished, and most of them vexed. Then he grew so much pleased at finding himself able to create such excitement and interest, that he became sillier every minute, and made a long speech on the injustice of there being such things as queens, and talked of Nature making them all equal and alike, with an energy that would have delighted Uncle Collins himself.

When the Bee had finished his speech, there was first a silence and then a few buzzes of anger, and then a murmured expression of plans and wishes. It must be admitted, their ideas of how to remedy the evil now for the first time suggested to them, were very confused.

Some wished Uncle Collins would come and manage all the beehives in the country, for they were sure he would let *all* the bees be queens, and then what a jolly time they should have! And when the old Relation popped his head round the corner of the cell he was building, just to inquire, "What would be the fun of being queens, if there were no working-bees to wait on one?" the little coterie of rebels buzzed very loud, and told him he was a fool, for, of course, Uncle Collins would take care that the tyrant who had so long been queen, and the royal

children, now ripening in their nurse-cells, should be made to wait on them while they lasted.

"And when they are finished?" persisted the old Relation, with a laugh.

"Buzz, buzz," was the answer; and the old Relation held his tongue.

Then another Bee suggested that it would, after all, be very awkward for them all to be queens; for who would make the honey and wax, and build the honeycombs, and nurse the children? Would it not be best, therefore, that there should be no queens whatever, but that they should all be working-bees?

But then the tiresome old Relation popped his head round the corner again, and said, he did not quite see how that change would benefit them, for were they not all working-bees already?—on which an indignant buzz was poured into his ear, and he retreated again to his work.

It was well that night at last came on, and the time arrived when the labours of the day were over, and sleep and silence must reign in the hive. With the dawn of the morning, however, the troubled thoughts unluckily returned, and the Traveller-bee and his companions kept occasionally clustering together in little groups, to talk over their wrongs and a remedy.

Meantime, the rest of the hive were too busy to pay much attention to them, and so their idleness was not detected. But, at last, a few hot-headed

youngsters grew so violent in their different opinions, that they lost all self-control, and a noisy quarrel would have broken out, but that the Traveller-bee flew to them, and suggested that, as they were grown up now, and could not all be turned into queens, they had best sally forth and try the republican experiment of all being working-bees without any queen whatever.

With so charming an idea in view, he easily persuaded them to leave the hive; and a very nice swarm they looked as they emerged into the open air, and dispersed about the garden to enjoy the early breeze. But a swarm of bees, without a queen to lead them, proved only a helpless crowd, after all. The first thing they attempted, when they had recollected to consult, was, to fix on the sort of place in which they should settle for a home.

"A garden, of course," says one. "A field," says another. "There is nothing like a hollow tree," remarked a third. "The roof of a good outhouse is best protected from wet," thought a fourth. "The branch of a tree leaves us most at liberty," cried a fifth. "I won't give up to anybody," shouted all.

They were in a prosperous way to settle, were they not?

"I am very angry with you," cried the Traveller-bee, at last; "half the morning is gone already, and here we are as unsettled as when we left the hive!"

"One would think you were going to be queen over us, to hear you talk," exclaimed the

disputants. "If we choose to spend our time in quarrelling, what is that to you? Go and do as you please yourself!"

And he did; for he was ashamed and unhappy; and he flew to the further extremity of the garden to hide his vexation; where, seeing a clump of beautiful jonquils, he dived at once into a flower to soothe himself by honey-gathering. Oh, how he enjoyed it! He loved the flowers and the honey-gathering more than ever, and began his accustomed murmur of delight, and had serious thoughts of going back at once to the hive as usual, when as he was coming out of one of the golden cups, he met his old Relation coming out of another.

"Who would have thought to find you here alone?" said the old Relation. "Where are your companions?"

"I scarcely know; I left them outside the garden."

"What are they doing?"

". . . Quarrelling . . ." murmured the Traveller-bee.

"What about?"

"What they are to do."

"What a pleasant occupation for bees on a sunshiny morning!" said the old Relation, with a sly expression.

"Don't laugh at me, but tell me what to do," said the puzzled Traveller. "What Uncle Collins says

about Nature and our all being alike, sounds very true, and yet somehow we do nothing but quarrel when we try to be all alike and equal."

"How old are you?" asked the old Relation.

"Seven days," answered the Traveller, in all the sauciness of youth and strength.

"And how old am I?"

"Many months, I am afraid."

"You are right, I am an oldish bee. Now, my dear friend, let us fight!"

"Not for the world. I am the stronger, and should hurt you."

"I wonder what makes you ask advice of a creature so much weaker than yourself?"

"Oh, what can your weakness have to do with your wisdom, my good old Relation? I consult you because I know you are wise; and I am humbled myself, and feel that I am foolish."

"Old and young—strong and weak—wise and foolish—what has become of our being alike and equal? But never mind, we can manage. Now let us agree to live together."

"With all my heart. But where shall we live?"

"Tell me first which of us is to decide, if we differ in opinion?"

"You shall; for you are wise."

"Good! And who shall collect honey for food?"

"I will; for I am strong."

"Very well; and now you have made me a queen, and yourself a working-bee! Ah! you foolish fellow, won't the old home and the old queen do? Don't you see that if even *two* people live together, there must be a head to lead and hands to follow? How much more in the case of a multitude!"

Gay was the song of the Traveller-bee as he wheeled over the flowers, joyously assenting to the truth of what he heard.

"Now to my companions," he cried at last. And the two flew away together and sought the knot of discontented youngsters outside the garden wall.

They were still quarrelling, but no energy was left them. They were hungry and confused, and many had flown away to work and go home as usual.

And very soon afterwards a cluster of happy buzzing bees, headed by the old Relation and the Traveller, were seen returning with wax-laden thighs to their hive.

As they were going to enter, they were stopped by one of the little sentinels who watch the doorway.

"Wait," cried he; "a royal corpse is passing out!"

And so it was;—a dead queen soon appeared in sight, dragged along by working-bees on each side; who, having borne her to the edge of the hive-stand, threw her over for interment.

"How is this? what has happened?" asked the Traveller-bee, in a tone of deep anxiety and emotion: "Surely our queen is not dead?"

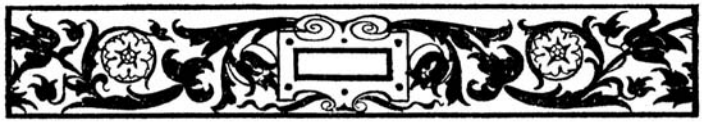
"Oh, no!" answered the sentinel; "but there has been some accidental confusion in the hive this morning. Some of the cell-keepers were unluckily absent, and a young queen-bee burst through her cell, which ought to have been blocked up for a few days longer. Of course the two queens fought till one was dead; and, of course, the weaker one was killed. We shall not be able to send off a swarm quite so soon as usual this year; but these accidents can't be helped."

"But this one might have been helped," thought the Traveller-bee to himself, as with a pang of remorse he remembered that he had been the cause of the mischievous confusion.

"You see," buzzed the old Relation, nudging up against him,—"You see even *queens are not equal!* and that there can be but one ruler at once!"

And the Traveller-bee murmured a heart-wrung "Yes."

And thus the instincts of Nature confirm the reasoning conclusions of man.



THE UNKNOWN LAND

"But now they desire a better country."—HEBREWS xi. 16.

IT mattered not to the Sedge Warbler whether it were night or day!

She built her nest down among the willows, and reeds, and long thick herbage that bordered the great river's side, and in her sheltered covert she sang songs of mirth and rejoicing both by night and day.

"Where does the great river go to?" asked the little ones, as they peered out of their nest one lovely summer night, and saw the moonbeams dancing on the waters as they hurried along.

Now, the Sedge Warbler could not tell her children where the great river went to; so she laughed, and said they must ask the Sparrow who chattered so fast, or the Swallow who travelled so far, next time one or other came to perch on the willow-tree to rest.

"And then," said she, "you will hear all such stories as these!"—and thereupon the Sedge Warbler tuned her voice to the Sparrow's note, and the little ones almost thought the Sparrow was there, the song was so like his—all about towns, and houses, and

gardens and fruit-trees, and cats, and guns; only the Sedge Warbler made the account quite confused, for she had never had the patience to sit and listen to the Sparrow, so as really to understand what he said about these matters.

But imperfect as the tale was, it amused the little ones very much, and they tried then to sing like it, and sang till they fell asleep; and when they awoke, they burst into singing again; for, behold! the eastern sky was red with the dawn, and they knew the warm sunbeams would soon send beautiful streaks of light in among the reeds and flags that sheltered their happy home.

Now, the Mother-bird would sometimes leave the little ones below, and go up into the willow-branches to sing alone; and as the season advanced she did this oftener and oftener; and her song was plaintive and tender then, for she used to sing to the tide of the river, as it swept along she knew not whither, and think that some day she and her husband and children should all be hurrying so onward as the river hurried,—she knew not whither also,—to the Unknown Land whence she had come. Yes! I may call it the Unknown Land; for only faint images remained upon her mind of the country whence she had flown.

At first she used to sing these ditties only when alone, but by degrees she began to let her little ones hear them now and then—for were they not going to accompany her? and was it not as well,

therefore, to accustom them gradually to think about it?

Then the little ones asked her where the Unknown Land was. But she smiled, and said she could not tell them, for she did not know.

"Perhaps the great river is travelling there all along," thought the eldest child. But he was wrong. The great river was rolling on hurriedly to a mighty city, where it was to stream through the arches of many bridges, and bear on its bosom the traffic of many nations; restless and crowded by day; gloomy, dark, and dangerous by night! Ah! what a contrast were the day and night of the mighty city to the day and night of the Sedge Warbler's home, where the twenty-four hours of changes God has appointed to Nature were but so many changes of beauty!

"Mother, why do you sing songs about another land?" asked a young tender-hearted fledgling one day. "Why should we leave the reed-beds and the willow-trees? Cannot we all build nests here, and live here always? Mother, do not let us go away anywhere else. I want no other land, and no other home but this. There are all the aits in the great river to choose from, where we shall each settle; there can be nothing in the Unknown Land more pleasant than the reed-beds and the willow-trees here. I am so happy!—Leave off those dreadful songs!"

Then the Mother's breast heaved with many a varied thought, and she made no reply. So the little one went on—

"Think of the red glow in the morning sky, Mother, and the soft haze—and then the beautiful rays of warm light across the waters! Think of the grand noonday glare, when the broad flags and reeds are all burnished over with heat. Think of these evenings, Mother, when we can sit about in the branches—here, there, anywhere—and watch the great sun go down behind the sky or fly to the aits of the great river, and sing in the long green herbage there, and then come home by moonlight and sing till we fall asleep; and wake singing again, if any noise disturb us, if a boat chance to paddle by, or some of those strange bright lights shoot up with a noise into the sky from distant gardens. Think, even when the rain comes down, how we enjoy ourselves, for then how sweet it is to huddle into the soft warm nest together, and listen to the drops pattering upon the flags and leaves overhead! Oh, I love this dear, dear home so much!—Sing those dreadful songs about another land no more!"

Then the Mother said—

"Listen to me, my child, and I will sing you another song."

And the Sedge Warbler changed her note, and sang to her tender little one of her own young days, when she was as happy and as gay as now, though not here among the reed-beds; and how, after she had lived and rejoiced in her happiness many pleasant months, a voice seemed to rise within her that said—*"This is not your Rest!"* and how she wondered, and tried not to listen, and tried to stop

where she was, and be happy there still. But the voice came oftener and oftener, and louder and louder; and how the dear partner she had chosen heard and felt the same; and how at last they left their home together, and came and settled down among the reed-beds of the great river. And, oh, how happy she had been!

"And where is the place you came from, Mother?" asked the little one. "Is it anywhere near, that we may go and see it?"

"My child," answered the Sedge Warbler, "it is the Unknown Land! Far, far away, I know: but *where,* I do not know. Only the voice that called me thence is beginning to call again. And, as I was obedient and hopeful once, shall I be less obedient and hopeful now—now that I have been so happy? No, my little one, let us go forth to the Unknown Land, wherever it may be, in joyful trust."

"You will be with me;—so I will," murmured the little Sedge Warbler in reply; and before she went to sleep she joined her young voice with her mother's in the song of the Unknown Land.

One day afterwards, when the parent birds had gone off to the sedgy banks of a neighbouring stream, another of the young ones flew to the topmost branches of some willow-trees, and, delighted with his position, began to sing merrily, as he swung backwards and forwards on a bough. Many were the songs he tried, and well enough he succeeded for his age, and at last he tried the song of the Unknown Land.

Now the mother-bird would sometimes leave the little ones below, and go up into the branches to sing alone.

"A pretty tune, and a pretty voice, and a pretty singer!" remarked a Magpie, who unluckily was crossing the country at the time, and whose mischievous spirit made him stop to amuse himself, by showing off to the young one his superior wisdom, as he thought it.

"I have been in many places, and even once was domesticated about the house of a human creature, so that I am a pretty good judge of singing," continued Mr. Mag, with a cock of his tail, as he balanced himself on a branch near the Sedge Warbler; "but, upon my word, I have seldom heard a prettier song than yours—only I wish you would tell me what it is all about."

"It is about the Unknown Land," answered the young Warbler, with modest pleasure, and very innocently.

"Do I hear you right, my little friend?" inquired the Magpie with mock solemnity—"The *Unknown* Land, did you say? Dear, dear! to think of finding such abstruse philosophy among the marshes and ditches! It is quite a treat! And pray, now, what is there that you can tell an odd old fellow like me, who am always anxious to improve myself, about this Unknown Land?"

"I don't know, except that we are going there some day," answered the Sedge Warbler, rather confused by the Magpie's manner.

"Now, that is excellent!" returned the Magpie, chuckling with laughter. "How I love simplicity, and,

really, you are a choice specimen of it, Mr. Sedge Warbler. So you are thinking of a journey to this Unknown Land, always supposing, of course, my sweet little friend, that you can find the way to it, which, between you and me, I think there must naturally be some doubt about, under the circumstances of the place itself being unknown! Good evening to you, pretty Mr. Sedge Warbler. I wish you a pleasant journey!"

"Oh, stop, stop!" cried the young bird, now quite distressed by the Magpie's ridicule; "don't go just yet, pray. Tell me what you think yourself about the Unknown Land."

"Oh, you little wiseacre, are you laughing at me? Why, what can *any* body, even so clever a creature as yourself *think* about an *unknown* thing? You can *guess*, I admit, anything you please about it, and so could I, if I thought it worth while to waste my time so foolishly. But you will never get beyond *guessing* in such a case—at all events, I confess *my* poor abilities can't pretend to do anything more."

"Then you are not going there yourself?" murmured the overpowered youngster.

"Certainly not. In the first place, I am quite contented where I am; and, in the second place, I am not quite so easy of belief as you seem to be. How do I know there is such a place as this Unknown Land at all?"

"My father and mother told me that," answered the Sedge Warbler, with more confidence.

"Oh, your father and mother told you, did they?" sneered the Magpie, scornfully. "And you're a good little bird, and believe everything your father and mother tell you. And if they were to tell you you were going to live up in the moon, you would believe them, I suppose?"

"They never deceived me yet!" cried the young Sedge Warbler firmly, his feathers ruffling with indignation as he spoke.

"Hoity, toity! what's the matter now, my dainty little cock? Who said your father and mother *had* ever deceived you? But, without being a bit *deceitful,* I take the liberty to inform you that they may be extremely *ignorant*. And I shall leave you to decide which of the two, yourself; for, I declare, one gets nothing but annoyance by trying to be good-natured to you countrified young fellows. You are not fit to converse with a bird of any experience and wisdom. So, once for all, good-bye to you!"

And the Magpie flapped his wings, and was gone before the Sedge Warbler had half recovered from his fit of vexation.

There was a decided change in the weather that evening, for the summer was now far advanced, and a sudden storm had brought cooler breezes and more rain than usual, and the young birds wondered, and were sad, when they saw the dark sky, and the swollen river, and felt that there was no warm sunshine to dry the wet, as was usual after a mid-day shower.

"Why is the sky so cloudy and lowering, and why is the river so thick and gloomy, and why is there no sunshine, I wonder?" said one.

"The sun will shine again to-morrow, I dare say," was the Mother's answer; "but the days are shortening fast; and the storm has made this one very short; and the sun will not get through the clouds this evening. Never mind! the wet has not hurt the inside of our nest. Get into it, my dear ones, and keep warm, while I sing to you about our journey. Silly children, did you expect the sunshine to last here for ever?"

"I hoped it might, and thought it would, once, but lately I have seen a change," answered the young one who had talked to her mother so much before. "And I do not mind now, Mother. When the sunshine goes, and the wet comes, and the river looks dark and the sky black, I think about the Unknown Land."

Then the Mother was pleased, and, perched upon a tall flag outside the nest, she sang a hopeful song of the Unknown Land; and the father and children joined—all but *one!* He, poor fellow, would not, could not sing; but when the voices ceased, he murmured to his brothers and sisters in the nest—

"This would be all very pleasant and nice, if we could *know* anything about the Land we talk about."

"If we were to know too much, perhaps we should never be satisfied here," laughed the tender

little one, who had formerly been so much distressed about going.

"But we know *nothing,"* rejoined the other bird; "indeed, how do we know there is such a place as the Unknown Land at all?"

"We *feel* that there is, at any rate," answered the Sister-bird. *"I* have heard the call our mother tells about, and so must *you* have done."

"You fancy you have heard it, that is to say," cried the Brother; "because she told you. It is all fancy, all guess-work; no knowledge! I could fancy I heard it too, only I will not be so weak and silly; I will neither think about going, nor will I go."

"This is not your Rest," sang the Mother, in a loud clear voice, outside; and *"This is not your Rest,"* echoed the others in sweet unison; and *"This is not your Rest,"* sounded in the depths of the poor little Sedge Warbler's own heart.

"This is not our Rest!" repeated the Mother. "The river is rushing forward; the clouds are hurrying onward; the winds are sweeping past, because here is not their Rest. Ask the river, ask the clouds, ask the winds, where they go to:—Another Land! Ask the great sun, as he descends away out of sight, where he goes to:—Another Land! And when the appointed time shall come, let us also arise and go hence."

"Oh! Mother, Mother, would that I could believe you! Where is that other Land?" Thus cried the distressed doubter in the nest. And then he

opened his troubled heart, and told what the Magpie had said, and the parent birds listened in silence, and when he ceased—

"Listen to me, my son," exclaimed the Mother, "and I will sing you another song."

Whereupon she spoke once more of the land she had left before; but now the burden of her story was, that she had left it *without knowing why.* She "went out not knowing whither,"—in blind obedience, faith, and hope. As she traversed the wide waste of waters, there was no one to give her *reasons* for her flight, or tell her, "This and this will be your lot." Could the Magpie have told her, had he met her there? But had she been deceived? No! The secret voice which had called and led her forth, had been one of Kindness.

When she came to the reed-beds she knew all about it. For then arose the strong desire to settle. Then she and her dear partner lived together. And then came the thought that she must build a nest. Ah! had the Magpie seen her then, building a home for children yet unborn, how he would have mocked at her! What could she *know,* he would have asked, about the future? Was it not all *guess-work,* fancy, folly? But had she been deceived! No! It was that voice of Kindness that had told her what to do. For did she not become the happy mother of children? And was she not now able to comfort and advise her little ones in their troubles? For, let the Magpie say what he would, was it likely that the voice of Kindness would deceive them at last?

"No!" cried she; "in joyful trust let us obey the call, though now we know not why. When obedience and faith are made perfect, it may be that knowledge and explanation shall be given." So ended the Mother's strain, and no sad misgivings ever clouded the Sedge Warbler's home again.

Several weeks of changing autumn weather followed after this, and the chilly mornings and evenings caused the songs of departure to sound louder and more cheerily than ever in the reed-beds. They knew, they felt, they had confidence, that there was joy for them in the Unknown Land.

But one dark morning, when all were busy in various directions, a sudden loud sound startled the young ones from their sports, and in terror and confusion they hurried home. The old nest looked looser and more untidy than ever that day, for some water had oozed in through the half-worn bottom. But they huddled together into it, as of old, for safety. Soon, however, it was discovered that neither Father nor Mother were there; and after waiting in vain some time for their return, the frightened young ones flew off again to seek them.

Oh! weary, weary search for the missing ones we love! It may be doubted whether the sad reality, when they came upon it, exceeded the agony of that hour's suspense.

It ended, however, at last! On a patch of long rank herbage which covered a mud bank, so wet that the cruel sportsman could not follow to secure his prey, lay the stricken parent birds. One was already

dead, but the Mother still lived, and as her children's wail of sorrow sounded in her ear, she murmured out a last gentle strain of hope and comfort.

"Away, away, my darlings, to the Unknown Land. The voice that has called to all our race before, and never but for kindness, is calling to you now! Obey! Go forth in joyful trust! Quick! Quick! There's no time to be lost!"

"But my Father—you—oh, my Mother!" cried the young ones.

"Hush, sweet ones, hush! We cannot be with you *there*. But there may be some other Unknown Land which *this* may lead to;" and the Mother laid her head against her wounded side and died.

Long before the sunbeams could pierce the heavy haze of the next autumn morning, the young Sedge Warblers rose for the last time o'er their much loved reed-beds, and took flight—"they knew not whither."

Dim and undefined hope, perhaps, they had that they might find their parents again in the Unknown Land. And if one pang of grief struck them when these hopes ended, it was but for a moment, for, said the Brother-Bird—

"There *may* be some other Unknown Land, better even than this, to which they may be gone."

KNOWLEDGE NOT THE LIMIT OF BELIEF

"Canst thou by searching find out God?"—JOB xi. 7.

IT was but the banging of the door, blown to by a current of wind from the open window, that made that great noise, and shook the room so much!

The room was a Naturalist's library, and it was a pity that some folio books of specimens had been left so near the edge of the great table, for, when the door clapt to, they fell down, and many plants, sea-weeds, etc., were scattered on the floor.

And, "Do we meet once again?" said a zoophyte to a seaweed in whose company he had been thrown ashore,—"Do we meet once again? This is a real pleasure. What strange adventures we have gone through since the waves flung us on the sands together!"

"Ay, indeed," replied the Seaweed, "and what a queer place we have come to at last! Well, well—but let me first ask you how you are this morning, after all the washing, and drying, and squeezing, and gumming, we have undergone?"

Zoophyte. "Oh, pretty well in health, Seaweed, but very, very sad. You know there is a great difference between you and me. You have little or no cause to be sad. You are just the same now that you ever were, excepting that you can never grow any more. But *I!* ah, I am only the skeleton of what I once was! All the merry little creatures that inhabited me are dead and dried up. They died by hundreds at a time soon after I left the sea; and even if they had survived longer, the nasty fresh water we were soaked in by the horrid being who picked us up, would have killed them at once. What are you smiling at?"

Seaweed. "I am smiling at your calling our new master a horrid being, and also at your speaking so positively about the little creatures that inhabited you."

"And why may I not speak positively of what I know so well?" asked the other.

Seaweed. "Oh, of what you *know,* by all means! But I wonder what we *do* know! People get very obstinate over what they think they know, and then, lo and behold! it turns out to be a mistake."

Zoophyte. "What makes you say this?"

Seaweed. "I have learnt it from a very curious creature I have made acquaintance with here—a bookworm. He walks through all the books in this library just as he pleases, and picks up a quantity of information, and knows a great deal. And he's a mere nothing, he says, compared to the creature who picked us up—the 'horrid being,' as you call him.

Why, my dear friend, the Bookworm tells me that he who found us is a man, and that a man is the most wonderful creature in all the world; that there is nothing in the least like him. And this particular one here is a naturalist; that is, he knows all about living creatures, and plants, and stones, and I don't know what besides. Now, wouldn't you say that it was a great honour to belong to him, and to have made acquaintance with his friend the Bookworm?"

Zoophyte. "Of course I should, and do."

Seaweed. "Very well, I know you would; and yet I can tell you that this naturalist and his bookworm are just instances of what I have been saying. They fancy that betwixt them they know nearly everything, and get as obstinate as possible over the most ridiculous mistakes."

Zoophyte. "My good friend, are you a competent judge in such matters as these?"

"Oh, am I not!" the Seaweed rejoined. "Why now, for instance, what do you think the Bookworm and I have been quarrelling about half the morning? Actually as to whether *I* am an animal or a vegetable. He declares that I am an animal full of little living creatures like yours, and that there is a long account of all this written on the page opposite the one on which I am gummed!"

"Of all the nonsense I ever listened to!" began the Zoophyte, angrily, yet amused—but he was interrupted by the Seaweed—

"And as for *you*—I am almost ashamed to tell you—that you and all your family and connexions were, for generations and generations, considered as vegetables. It is only lately that these naturalists found out that you were an animal. May I not well say that people get very obstinate about what they think they know, and after all it turns out to be a mistake? As for me, I am quite confused with these blunders."

"O dear, how disappointed I am!" murmured the Zoophyte. "I thought we had really fallen into the hands of some very interesting creatures. I am very, very sorry! It seemed so nice that there should be wonderful, wise beings, who spend their time in finding out all about animals, and plants, and such things, and keep us all in these beautiful books so carefully. I liked it so much and now I find the wonderfully wise creatures are wonderfully stupid ones instead."

"Very much so," laughed the Seaweed, "though our learned friend, the Bookworm, would tell you quite otherwise; but he gets quite muddled when he talks about them, poor fellow!"

"It is very easy to ridicule your betters," said a strange voice; and the Bookworm, who had just then eaten his way through the back of Lord Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, appeared sitting outside, listening to the conversation. "I shall be very sorry that I have told you anything, if you make such a bad use of the little bit of knowledge you have acquired."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, dear friend!" cried the Seaweed. "I meant no harm. You see it is quite new to us to learn anything; and, really, if I laughed, you must excuse me. I meant no harm—only I *do* happen to know—really for a fact—that I never was alive with little creatures like my friend the Zoophyte; and he happens to know—really for a fact—that he never was a vegetable; and so you see it made us smile to think of your wonderful creature, man, making such wonderfully odd mistakes."

At this the Bookworm smiled; but he soon shook his head gravely, and said—"All the mistakes man makes, man can discover and correct—I mean, of course, all the mistakes he makes about creatures inferior to himself, whom he learns to know from his own observation. He may not observe quite carefully enough one day, but he may put all right when he looks next time. I never give up a statement when I know it is true: and so I tell you again—laugh as much as you please—that, in spite of all his mistakes, man is, without exception, the most wonderful and the most clever of all the creatures upon earth!"

"You will be a clever creature yourself if you can prove it!" cried both the Zoophyte and Seaweed at once.

"The idea of taking me with my hundreds of living inhabitants for a vegetable!" sneered the Zoophyte.

"And me with my vegetable inside, covered over with lime, for an animal!" smiled the Seaweed.

Bookworm. "Ah! have your laugh out, and then listen. But, my good friends, if you had worked your way through as many wise books as I have done, you would laugh less and know more."

Zoophyte. "Nay, don't be angry, Bookworm."

Bookworm. "Oh, I am not angry a bit. I know too well the cause of all the folly you are talking, so I excuse you. And I am now puzzling my head to find out how I am to prove what I have said about the superiority of man, so as to make you understand it."

Seaweed. "Then you admit there is a little difficulty in proving it? Even *you* confess it to be rather puzzling."

Bookworm. "I do; but the difficulty does not lie where you think it does. I am sorry to say it—but the only thing that prevents your *understanding* the superiority of man, is your own immeasurable inferiority to him! However many mistakes he may make about *you,* he can correct them all by a little closer or more patient observation. But no observation can make you understand what man is. *You* are quite within the grasp of *his* powers, but *he* is quite beyond the reach of *yours."*

Seaweed. "You are not over-civil, with all your learning, Mr. Bookworm."

Bookworm. "I do not mean to be rude, I assure you. You are both of you very beautiful creatures, and, I dare say, very useful too. But you should not fancy either that you *do* know everything, or that you are *able* to know everything. And, above all, you

should not dispute the superiority and powers of other creatures merely because you cannot understand them."

Seaweed. "And am I then to believe all the long stories anybody may choose to come and tell me about the wonderful powers of other creatures?—and, when I inquire what those wonderful powers are, am I to be told that I can't understand them, but am to believe them all the same as if I did?"

Bookworm. "Certainly not, unless the wonderful powers are proved by wonderful results; but if they are, I advise you to believe in them, whether you understand them or not."

Seaweed. "I should like to know how I am to believe what I don't understand."

Bookworm. "Very well, then, don't! and remain an ignorant fool all your life. Of course, you can't *really* understand anything but what is within the narrow limits of your own powers; so, if you choose to make those powers the limits of your belief, I wish you joy, for you certainly won't be overburdened with knowledge."

Seaweed. "I will retort upon you that it is very easy to be contemptuous to your inferiors, Mr. Bookworm. You would do much better to try and explain to me those wonderful powers themselves, and so remove all the difficulties that stand in the way of my belief."

Bookworm. "If I were to try ever so much, I should not succeed. You can't understand even *my* superiority."

Seaweed. "Oh, Bookworm! now you are growing conceited."

Bookworm. "Indeed I am not; but you shall judge for yourself. I can do many things you can't do; among others, I can *see."*

Seaweed. "What is that?"

Bookworm. "There, now! I knew I should puzzle you directly! Why, seeing is something that I do with a very curious machine in my head, called an eye. But as you have not got an eye, and therefore cannot see, how am I to make you understand what seeing is?"

Seaweed. "Why, you can tell us, to be sure."

Bookworm. "Tell you what? I can tell you I see. I can say, *Now I see, now I see*, as I walk over you and see the little bits of you that fall under my small eye. Indeed, I can also tell you *what* I see; but how will that teach you what seeing is? You have got no eye, and therefore you can't see, and therefore also you can never know what seeing is."

Zoophyte. "Then why need we believe there is such a thing as seeing?"

Bookworm. "Oh, pray, don't believe it! I don't know why you should, I am sure! There's no harm at all in being ignorant and narrow-minded. I am sure I had much rather you took no further trouble in the matter; for you are, both of you, very testy and

tiresome. It is from nothing but pride and vanity, too, after all. You want to be in a higher place in creation than you are put in, and no good ever comes of that. If you'd be content to learn wonderful things in the only way that is open to you, I should have a great deal of pleasure in telling you more."

Zoophyte. "And pray what way is that?"

Bookworm. "Why, from the effects produced by them. As I said before, even where you cannot *understand* the wonderful powers themselves, you may have the grace to believe in their existence, from their wonderful results."

Seaweed. "And the results of what you call 'seeing' are—"

"In man," interrupted the Bookworm, "that he gets to know everything about you, and all the creatures, and plants, and stones he looks at; so that he knows your shape, and growth, and colour, and all about the cells of the little creatures that live in you—how many feelers they have, what they live upon, how they catch their food, how the eggs come out of the egg-cells, where you live, where you are to be found, what other zoophytes are related to you, which are most like you—in short, the most minute particulars;—so that he puts you into his collections, not among strange creatures, but near to those you are nearest related to; and he describes you, and makes pictures of you, and gives you a name so that you are known for the same creature, wherever you are found, all over the world. And now, I'm quite

out of breath with telling you all these wonderful results of seeing."

"But he once took me for a vegetable," mused the Zoophyte.

"Yes; as I said before, he had not observed quite close enough, nor had he then invented a curious instrument which enables his great big eye to see such little fellows as your inhabitants are. But when he made that instrument, and looked very carefully, he saw all about you."

"Ay, but he still calls me an animal," observed the Seaweed.

"I know he does, but I am certain he will not do so long! If you are a vegetable, I will warrant him to find it out when he examines you a little more."

"You expect us to believe strange things, Bookworm," observed the Zoophyte.

"To be sure, because there is no end of strange things for you to believe! And what you can't find out for yourself, you must take upon trust from your betters," laughed the Bookworm. "It's the only plan. *Observation and Revelation are the sole means of acquiring knowledge."*

Just at that moment the door opened, and two gentlemen entered the room.

"Ah, my new specimens on the floor!" observed the Naturalist; "but never mind," added he, as he picked them up; "here is the very one we wanted; it will serve admirably for our purpose. I shall only sacrifice a small branch of it, though."

And the Naturalist cut off a little piece of the Seaweed and laid it in a saucer, and poured upon it some liquid from a bottle, and an effervescence began to take place forthwith, and the Seaweed's limy coat began to give way; and the two gentlemen sat watching the result.

"Now," whispered the Bookworm to the Zoophyte, "those two men are looking closely at your Seaweed friend, and trying what they call experiments, that they may find out what he is; and if they do not succeed, I will give up all my arguments in despair."

But they *did* succeed!

The gentlemen watched on till all the lime was dissolved, and there was nothing left in the saucer but a delicate red branch with little round things upon it, that looked like tiny apples.

"This is the fruit decidedly," remarked the Naturalist; "and now we will proceed to examine it through the microscope."

And they did so.

And an hour or more passed, and a sort of sleepy forgetfulness came over the Bookworm and his two friends; for they had waited till they were tired for further remarks from the Naturalist. And, therefore, it was with a start they were aroused at last by hearing him exclaim, "It is impossible to entertain the slightest doubt. If I ever had any, I have none now; and the *Corallinas* must be removed back once more to their position among vegetables!"

The Naturalist laughed as he loosened the gum from the specimen, which he placed on a fresh paper, and classed among Red Seaweeds. And soon after, the two gentlemen left the room once more.

"So he has really found our friend out!" cried the Zoophyte; "and he was right about the fruit, too! Oh, Bookworm, Bookworm! would that I could know what *seeing* is!"

"Oh, Zoophyte, Zoophyte! I wish you would not waste your time in struggling after the unattainable! You know what feeling is. Well, I would tell you that *seeing* is something of the same sort as feeling, only that it is quite different. Will that do?"

"It sounds like nonsense."

"It *is* nonsense. There can be no answer but nonsense, if you want to understand 'really for a fact,' as you call it, powers that are above you. Explain to the rock on which you grow, what *feeling* is!"

"How could I?" said the Zoophyte; "it has no sensation."

"No more than you have sight," rejoined the Bookworm.

"That is true indeed," cried the Zoophyte. "Bookworm! I am satisfied—humbled, I must confess, but satisfied. And now I will rejoice in our position here, glory in our new master, and admire his wonderful powers, even while I cannot understand them."

"I am proud of my disciple," returned the Bookworm kindly.

"I also am one of them," murmured the Seaweed; "but tell me now, are there any other strange powers in man?"

"Several," was the Bookworm's answer; "but to be really known they must be possessed. A lower power cannot compass the full understanding of a higher. But to limit one's belief to the bounds of one's own small powers, would be to tie oneself down to the foot of a tree, and deny the existence of its upper branches."

"There are no powers beyond those that man possesses, I suppose," mused the Zoophyte.

"I am far from saying that," replied the Bookworm; "on the contrary—"

But what he would have said further no one knows, for once more the door opened, and the Naturalist, who now returned alone, spent his evening in putting by the specimens in their separate volumes on the shelves. And it was a long, long time before the Bookworm saw them again; for the volumes in which they were kept were bound in Russia leather, to the smell of which he had a particular dislike, so that he could never make his way to them for a friendly chat again.

TRAINING AND RESTRAINING

"Train up a child in the way he should go."—PROVERBS. xxii. 6.

"WHAT a fuss is made about you, my dear little friends!" murmured the Wind, one day, to the flowers in a pretty villa garden. "I am really quite surprised at your submitting so patiently and meekly to all the troublesome things that are done to you! I have been watching your friend the Gardener for some time to-day; and now that he is gone at last, I am quite curious to hear what you think and feel about your unnatural bringing up."

"Is it unnatural?" inquired a beautiful Convolvulus Major, from the top of a tapering fir-pole, up which she had crept, and from which her velvet flowers hung suspended like purple gems.

"I smile at your question," was the answer of the Wind. "You surely cannot suppose that in a natural state you would be forced to climb regularly up one tall bare stick such as I see you upon now. Oh dear, no! Your cousin, the wild Convolvulus, whom I left in the fields this morning, does no such thing, I assure you. She runs along and climbs about, just as the whim takes her. Sometimes she takes a turn upon the ground; sometimes she enters a hedge, and plays at bo-peep with the birds in the thorn and

nut-trees—twisting here, curling there, and at last, perhaps coming out at the top, and overhanging the hedge with a canopy of green leaves and pretty white flowers. A very different sort of life from yours, with a Gardener always after you, trimming you in one place, fastening up a stray tendril in another, and fidgeting you all along—a sort of perpetual 'mustn't go here'—'mustn't go there.' Poor thing! I quite feel for you! Still I must say you make me smile; for you look so proud and self-conscious of beauty all the time, that one would think you did not know in what a ridiculous and dependent position you are placed."

Now the Convolvulus was quite abashed by the words of the Wind, for she was conscious of feeling very conceited that morning, in consequence of having heard the Gardener say something very flattering about her beauty; so she hung down her rich bellflowers rather lower than usual, and made no reply.

But the Carnation put in her word: "What you say about the Convolvulus may be true enough, but it cannot apply to *me*. I am not aware that I have any poor relations in this country, and I myself certainly require all the care that is bestowed upon me. This climate is both too cold and too damp for me. My young plants require heat, or they would not live; and the pots we are kept in protect us from those cruel wire-worms who delight to destroy our roots."

"Oh!" cried the Wind, "our friend the Carnation is quite profound and learned in her remarks, and I admit the justice of all she says about

damp and cold, and wire-worms; but,"—and here the Wind gave a low-toned whistle as he took a turn round the flower-bed—"but what I maintain, my dear, is that when you are once strong enough and old enough to be placed in the soil, those gardeners ought to let you grow and flourish as Nature prompts, and as you would do were you left alone. But no! forsooth, they must always be clipping, and trimming, and twisting up every leaf that strays aside out of the trim pattern they have chosen for you to grow in. Why not allow your silver tufts to luxuriate in a natural manner? Why must every single flower be tied up by its delicate neck to a stick, the moment it begins to open? Really, with your natural grace and beauty, I think you might be trusted to yourself a little more!"

And the Carnation began to think so too; and her colour turned deeper as a feeling of indignation arose within her at the childish treatment to which she had been subjected. "With my natural grace and beauty," repeated she to herself, "they might certainly trust me to myself a little more!"

Still the Rose-tree stood out that there must be some great advantages in a Gardener's care; for she could not pretend to be ignorant of her own superiority to all her wild relations in the woods. What a difference in size, in colour, and in fragrance!

Then the Wind assured the Rose he never meant to dispute the advantage of her living in a rich-soiled garden; only there was a natural way of growing, even in a garden; and he thought it a great

shame for the gardeners to force the Rose-tree into an *un*natural way, curtailing all the energies of her nature. What could be more outrageous, for example, than to see one rose growing in the shape of a bush on the top of the stem of another?

"Think of all the pruning necessary," cried he, "to keep the poor thing in the round shape so much admired. And what is the matter with the beautiful straggling branches, that they are to be cut off as fast as they appear? Why not allow the healthy Rose-tree its free and glorious growth? Why thwart its graceful droopings or its high aspirings? Can it be *too* large or *too* luxuriant? Can its flowers be *too* numerous? Oh, Rose-tree, you know your own surpassing merits too well to make you think this possible!"

And so she did, and a new light seemed to dawn upon her as she recollected the spring and autumnal prunings she regularly underwent, and the quantities of little branches that were yearly cut from her sides, and carried away in a wheel-barrow. "It is a cruel and a monstrous system, I fear," said she.

Then the Wind took another frolic round the garden, and made up to the large white Lily, into whose refined ear he whispered a doubt as to the necessity or advantage of her thick powerful stem being propped up against a stupid, ugly stick! He really grieved to see it! Did that lovely creature suppose that Nature, who had done so much for her that the fame of her beauty extended throughout the world, had yet left her so weak and feeble that she

could not support herself in the position most calculated to give her ease and pleasure?

"Always this tying up and restraint!" pursued the Wind, with an angry puff. "Perhaps I am prejudiced; but as to be deprived of freedom would be to me absolute death, so my soul revolts from every shape and phase of slavery!"

"Not more than mine does!" cried the proud white Lily, leaning as heavily as she could against the strip of matting that tied her to her stick. But it was of no use—she could not get free; and the Wind only shook his sides and laughed spitefully as he left her, and then rambled away to talk the same shallow philosophy to the Honeysuckle that was trained up against a wall.

Indeed, not a flower escaped his mischievous suggestions. He murmured among them all—laughed the trim-cut Box-edges to scorn—maliciously hoped the Sweet-peas enjoyed growing in a circle, and running up a quantity of crooked sticks—and told the flowers, generally, that he should report their unheard-of submission and meek obedience wherever he went.

Then the white Lily called out to him in great wrath, and told him he mistook their characters altogether. They only submitted to these degrading restraints because they could not help themselves; but if he would lend them his powerful aid, they might free themselves from at least a part of the unnatural bonds which enthralled them.

To which the wicked Wind, seeing that his temptations had succeeded, replied, in great glee, that he would do his best; and so he went away, chuckling at the discontent he had caused.

All that night the pretty silly flowers bewailed their slavish condition, and longed for release and freedom; and at last they began to be afraid that the Wind had only been jesting with them, and that he would never come to help them, as he had promised. However, they were mistaken; for, at the edge of the dawn, there began to be a sighing and a moaning in the distant woods, and by the time the sun was up, the clouds were driving fast along the sky, and the trees were bending about in all directions; for the Wind had returned—only now he had come in his roughest and wildest mood—knocking over everything before him.

"Now is your time, pretty flowers!" shouted he, as he approached the garden; and "Now is our time!" echoed the flowers tremulously, as, with a sort of fearful pleasure, they awaited his approach.

He managed the affair very cleverly, it must be confessed. Making a sort of eddying circuit round the garden, he knocked over the Convolvulus-pole, tore the strips of bast from the stick that held up the white Lily, loosed all the Carnation flowers from their fastenings, broke the Rose-tree down, and levelled the Sweet-peas to the ground. In short, in one half-hour he desolated the pretty garden; and when his work was accomplished, he flew off to rave about his deed of destruction in other countries.

Meanwhile, how fared it with the flowers? The Wind was scarcely gone before a sudden and heavy rain followed, so that all was confusion for some time. But towards the evening the weather cleared up, and our friends began to look around them.

The white Lily still stood somewhat upright, though no friendly pole supported her juicy stem; but, alas! it was only by a painful effort she could hold herself in that position. The Wind and the weight of rain had bent her forward once, beyond her strength, and there was a slight crack in one part of the stalk, which told that she must soon double over and trail upon the ground.

The Convolvulus fared still worse. The garden-beds sloped towards the south; and when our friend was laid on the earth—her pole having fallen—her lovely flowers were choked up by the wet soil which drained towards her. She felt the muddy weight as it soaked into her beautiful velvet bells, and could have cried for grief: she could never free herself from this nuisance. O that she were once more climbing up the friendly fir-pole!

The Honeysuckle escaped no better; and the Carnation was ready to die of vexation, at finding that her coveted freedom had levelled her to the dirt.

Before the day closed, the Gardener came whistling from his farm work, to look over his pretty charges. He expected to see a few drooping flowers, and to find that one or two fastenings had given way. But for the sight that awaited him he was not

prepared at all. Struck dumb with astonishment, he never spoke at first, but kept lifting up the heads of the trailing, dirtied flowers in succession. Then at last he broke out into words of absolute sorrow:—

"And to think of my mistress and the young lady coming home so soon, and that nothing can be done to these poor things for a fortnight, because of the corn harvest! It's all over with them, I fear;" and the Gardener went his way.

Alas! what he said was true; and before many days had passed, the shattered Carnations were rotted with lying in the wet and dirt on the ground. The white Lily was languishing discoloured on its broken stalk; the Convolvulus flowers could no longer be recognised, they were so coated over with mud stains; the Honeysuckle was trailing along among battered Sweet-peas, who never could succeed in shaking the soil from their fragrant heads; and though the Rose-tree had sent out a few straggling branches, she soon discovered that they were far too weak to bear flowers—nay, almost to support themselves—so that they added neither to her beauty nor her comfort. Weeds meanwhile sprang up, and a dreary confusion reigned in the once orderly and brilliant little garden.

At length, one day before the fortnight was over, the house-dog was heard to bark his noisy welcome, and servants bustled to and fro. The mistress had returned; and the young lady was with her, and hurried at once to her favourite garden. She came bounding towards the well-known spot with a

song of joyous delight; but, on reaching it, suddenly stopped short, and in a minute after burst into a flood of tears! Presently, with sorrowing steps, she bent her way round the flower-beds, weeping afresh at every one she looked at; and then she sat down upon the lawn, and hid her face in her hands. In this position she remained, until a gentle hand was laid upon her shoulder.

"This is a sad spectacle, indeed, my darling," said her mother's voice.

"Never mind about the garden, mamma," replied the young girl, lifting up her tearful face; "we can plant new flowers, and tie up even some of these afresh. But what I have been thinking is, that now, at last, I quite understand what you have so often said about the necessity of training, and restraint, and culture, for us as well as for flowers, in a fallen world. The wind has torn away these poor things from their fastenings, and they are growing wild whichever way they please. I know I should once have argued that if it were their *natural* mode of growing it must therefore be the best. But I cannot say so, now that I see the result. They are doing whatever they like, unrestrained and the end is, that my beautiful GARDEN is turned into a WILDERNESS."