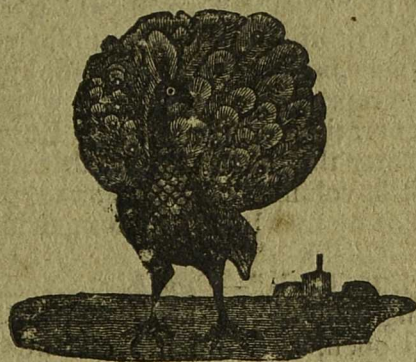


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THE
PEACOCK "AT HOME."
A
SEQUEL
TO THE
BUTTERFLY'S BALL,
—
WRITTEN BY A LADY.
AND
ILLUSTRATED WITH ELEGANT ENGRAVINGS.



LONDON:

Printed for J. HARRIS, Successor to E. NEWBERY,
at the Original Juvenile Library, the Corner
of St. Paul's Church Yard.

1807.

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OF THE

EDITION OF 1766

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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AS TO ITS AUTHORSHIP

BY

CHARLES WELSH

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FIELD & TUER, YE LEADENHALLE PRESSE, E.C.

MDCCCLXXXIII

INTRODUCTION.

EARLY in the present century John Harris—one of the successors to the business of “Honest John Newbery,” now carried on by Messrs Griffith & Farran at the old corner of St. Paul’s Churchyard—began the publication of a series of little books, which for many years were probably among the most famous of the productions of the House. Now, however, according to the fate which usually overtakes books for children, nearly all of them are forgotten or unknown.

The first book in this series which was known as *Harris’s Cabinet* was “The Butterfly’s Ball,” and was published in January 1807. This was followed in the same year by “The Peacock at Home” (a sequel to “The Butterfly’s Ball”), “The Elephant’s Ball,” and “The Lion’s Masquerade;” and then (prompted no doubt by the success of these, for we learn on the publisher’s authority that of the two first 40,000 copies were sold within twelve months) Mr Harris brought out a

torrent of little books of a like kind, of which the titles were : "The Lioness's Ball," "The Lobster's Voyage to the Brazils," "The Cat's Concert," "The Fishes' Grand Gala," "Madame Grimalkin's Party," "The Jackdaw's Home," "The Lion's Parliament," "The Water King's Levée;" and in 1809, by which time, naturally enough, the idea seems to have become quite threshed out and exhausted, the last of the Series was published; this was entitled, "The Three Wishes, or Think before you Speak."

Of this long list of books a few of the titles are still familiar, and one of them, "The Butterfly's Ball," may certainly claim to have become a Nursery Classic. It is still in regular demand; the edition now in sale being illustrated by Harrison Weir; it has been published in various forms, and has figured in most of the collections of prose and verse for the young that have been issued during this century. Probably to the minds of hundreds of people past middle age few lines are more familiar than the opening couplet—

"Come take up your hats, and away let us haste
To the Butterfly's Ball and Grasshopper's Feast"—

and many no doubt by a little effort of memory could repeat the whole poem.

Hardly less famous were the three books which next

followed in order of issue—"The Peacock at Home," "The Elephant's Ball," and "The Lion's Masquerade." Their original size was 5 by 4 inches, and they were issued in a simple printed paper wrapper. It is of these first four books that the reprint is here given, and in order to present both pictures and text with greater effect this reprint has been made upon considerably larger paper; the text and illustrations are fac-simile reproductions of originals from the celebrated Flaxman collection recently dispersed at a sale by Messrs Christie, Manson, & Woods, when Mr Tuer, to whom I am indebted for their loan, became their fortunate possessor. "The Butterfly's Ball" is not a reproduction of the first edition, which, as will be shown later on, would be considered by those who are familiar with the poem as incomplete. Moreover, the illustrations in the edition here presented are obviously by the same hand as that which embellished the other three books, and it was felt that for these reasons it would possess a greater interest.

"The Butterfly's Ball" first appeared in the November number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, where it is said to have been written by William Roscoe—M.P. for Liverpool, the author of "The Life of Leo X.," and well known in the literary circles of his day—for the use of his children, and set to music by order of their Majesties for the Princess Mary.

When the verses were subsequently published in book form, the text and pictures were engraved together on copperplates. An edition, with pictures on separate pages, appeared early in the next year, which is the one here reproduced.

In this edition there are many variations from the previous one. The allusions to "little Robert"—evidently William Roscoe's son—do not occur in the former, and many slight improvements, tending to make the verses more rhythmical and flowing, are introduced. The whole passage, "Then close on his haunches" (p. 7) to "Chirp his own praises the rest of the night," &c. (p. 10), is an interpolation in this later edition. It is, I believe, certain that the verses were written by Roscoe for his children on the occasion of the birthday of his son Robert, who was nearly the youngest of his seven sons. No doubt when they were copied out for setting to music the allusions to his own family were omitted by the author. A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*—who is, I believe, a niece of the late Sir George Smart—says, in reference to the question of the setting of the verses to music, that—

"The MS., in Roscoe's own handwriting, as sent to Sir G. Smart for setting to music, is in a valuable collection of autographs bequeathed by the musician to his daughter. The glee was written for the three princesses—Elizabeth, Augusta, and Mary—daughters of George III. and pupils of Sir George, and was performed by them during one of their usual visits to Weymouth."

“The Peacock at Home” and “The Lion’s Masquerade” were, as the title-page puts it, written “by a Lady,” and we should most likely have remained in ignorance as to who the lady was if there had not been published in 1816 another little book of a somewhat similar character, entitled “The Peacock and Parrot on their Tour to discover the Author of ‘The Peacock at Home,’” which, the Preface tells us, was written immediately after the appearance of “The Peacock at Home,” but from various circumstances was laid aside. “In the opinion of the publishers,” the Preface goes on to say, “it is so nearly allied in point of merit to that celebrated trifle that it is introduced at this late period.”

The book relates in verse how the peacock and parrot—

“ . . . far as England extends
Then together did travel to visit their friends,
Endeavour to find out the name of our poet,
And ere we return ten to one that we know it.”

After long travelling—

“ A path strewed with flowers they gaily pursued,
And in fancy their long-sought Incognita viewed.
Till all their cares over in Dorset they found her,
And plucking a wreath of green bay-leaves they crowned her.”

In a footnote is added, “Mrs Dorset was the authoress of ‘The Peacock at Home.’”

Mrs Dorset, according to a note by Mr Dyce which appears on the fly-leaf of a copy of "The Peacock at Home," in the Dyce and Forster Collection at South Kensington, was sister to Charlotte Smith. Their maiden name was Turner.

The British Museum Catalogue says Mrs Dorset also wrote "The 'Three Wishes, or Think before you Speak," which is the last on the list of books in *Harris's Cabinet*. (See p. iv.)

It seems to be clear that the same lady wrote "The Lion's Masquerade" as "The Peacock at Home," for in "The Lioness's Ball" (a companion to "The Lion's Masquerade") the dedication begins thus—

" I do not, fair Dorset, I do not aspire,
With notes so unhallowed as mine,
To touch the sweet strings of thy beautiful lyre,
Or covet the praise that is thine."

I regret that I am unable to offer any conjecture here as to the "W. B." who wrote "The Elephant's Ball:" the same initials appear to an appendix to an edition of "Goody Two Shoes," published some time before 1780, but this may be a coincidence only.

Besides the interest and merit of these little books on literary grounds, these earlier editions are especially note-

worthy because they were illustrated by the painter William Mulready, and the drawings he made for them are amongst the earliest efforts of his genius : they were executed before he had reached man's estate. It is not a little curious to observe in this connection how many artists who have risen to eminence have at the outset of their career been employed in illustrating books for children ; it would indeed appear that until comparatively recent years the veriest tiro was considered capable of furnishing the necessary embellishments for books for the nursery — a state of things which, we need not say, happily does not obtain in the present day. Notwithstanding this, however, these and many other little books of a bygone time abound in instructive indications of the beginnings of genius which has subsequently delighted the world with its masterpieces.

In connection with Mulready and children's books it may be interesting to note that in 1806 a little book called "The Looking Glass" was published, said to be written by William Godwin under the name of "Theophilus Markliffe." This work is the history and early adventures of a young artist, and it is known that it was compiled from a conversation with Mulready, who was then engaged in illustrating some juvenile books for the author, and the facts in it relate to the painter's early life. It contains illustrations of the talent of the subject

done at three, five, and six years old, which are presumed to be imitations of Mulready's own drawings at the same ages.

I cannot more fitly close these few words of Introduction than by quoting the quaint and curious announcement with which Mr Harris was wont to commend these little books to the public. "It is unnecessary," says he, "for the publisher to say anything more of these little productions than that they have been purchased with avidity and read with satisfaction by persons in all ranks of life." No doubt the public of to-day will be curious to see what manner of book it was that was so eagerly sought after by the children of the early days of the present century, and interested in comparing it with the more finished but often showy and sensational productions of our own time.

C. W.

LEYTONSTONE,

September 1883.

THE
PEACOCK "*AT HOME*:"

A
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TO THE
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WRITTEN
BY A LADY.

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1807.

Field & Tuer, Ye Leadenhalle Presse, London.

THE
PEACOCK “*AT HOME.*”

THE Butterfly's Ball, and the Grasshopper's Feasts,
Excited the spleen of the Birds and the Beasts :
For their mirth and good cheer—of the Bee was the theme,
And the Gnat blew his horn, as he danc'd in the beam.
'Twas humm'd by the Beetle, 'twas buzz'd by the Fly,
And sung by the myriads that sport 'neath the sky.

The Quadrupeds listen'd with sullen displeasure,
But the Tenants of Air were enrag'd beyond measure.

The PEACOCK display'd his bright plumes to the Sun,
And, addressing his Mates, thus indignant begun :

“ Shall we, like domestic, inelegant Fowls,

“ As unpolish'd as Geese, and as stupid as Owls,

“ Sit tamely at home, hum drum, with our Spouses,

“ While Crickets, and Butterflies, open their houses ?

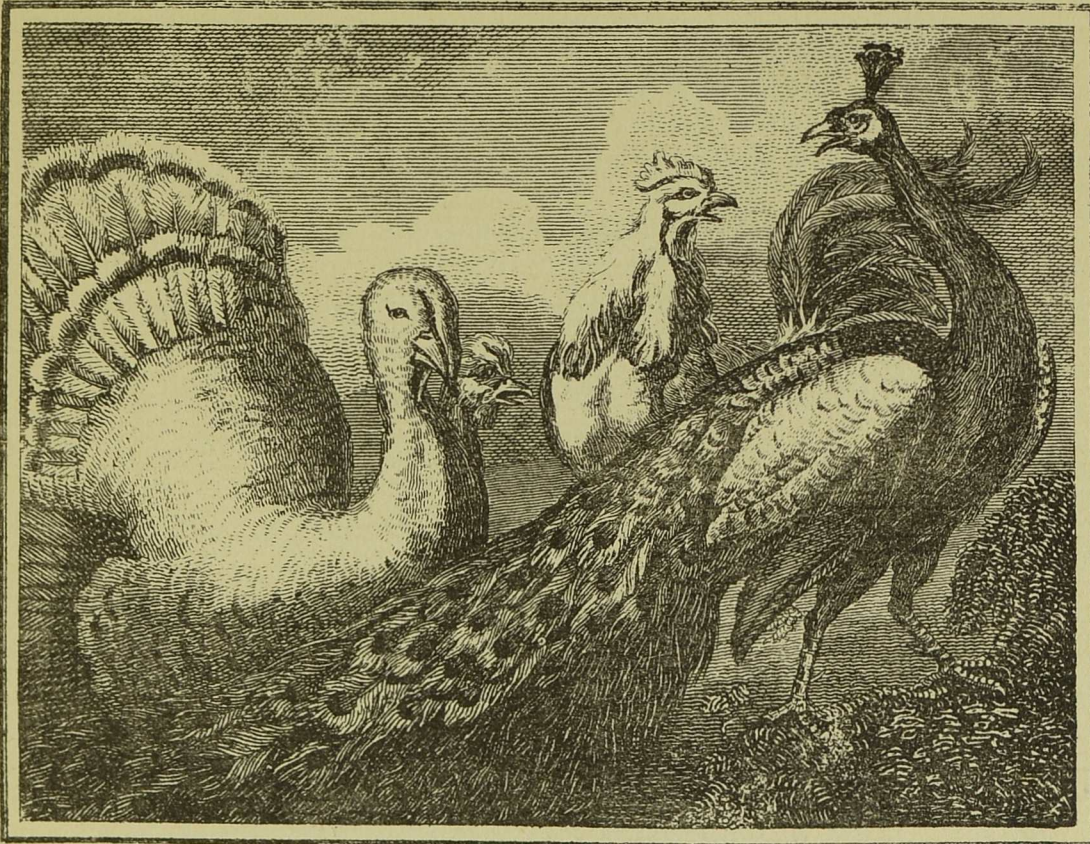
“ Shall such mean little Insects pretend to the fashion ?

“ Cousin Turkey-cock, well may you be in a passion !

“ If I suffer such insolent airs to prevail,

“ May Juno pluck out all the eyes in my tail ;

Frontispiece.



The Peacock addressing his Mates.

Pub. Sep 1-1807 by J. Harris, corner St. Paul's Church Y^d.

P. 4.

“So a Fete I will give, and my taste I’ll display,
“And send out my cards for Saint Valentine’s Day.”
—This determin’d, six fleet Carrier-Pigeons went out,
To invite all the Birds to Sir Argus’s Rout.
The nest-loving TURTLE-DOVE sent an excuse ;
DAME PARTLET lay in, as did good Mrs GOOSE.
The TURKEY, poor soul ! was confin’d to the rip :
For all her young Brood had just fail’d with the pip.
And the PARTRIDGE was ask’d ; but a Neighbour hard by,
Had engag’d a snug party to meet in a Pye ;
The WHEAT-EAR declin’d, recollecting her Cousins,
Last year, to a Feast were invited by dozens.

But alas ! they return'd not ; and she had no taste
To appear in a costume of vine-leaves or paste.
The WOODCOCK prefer'd his lone haunt on the moor ;
And the Traveller, SWALLOW, was still on his tour.
The CUCKOO, who should have been one of the guests,
Was rambling on visits to other Bird's Nests.
But the rest, all accepted the kind invitation,
And much bustle it caus'd in the plumed creation :
Such ruffling of feathers, such pruning of coats
Such chirping, such whistling, such clearing of throats,
Such polishing bills, and such oiling of pinions !
Had never been known in the biped dominions.



"Such ruffling of feathers, such pruning of coats," &c.

Pub. Dec. 1850. by J. Harris, corner of Park Street, &c.

P. 6.

The TAYLOR BIRD offer'd to make up new clothes ;
For all the young Birdlings, who wish'd to be Beaux :
He made for the ROBIN a doublet of red,
And a new velvet cap for the GOLDFINCH'S head ;
He added a plume to the WREN'S golden crest,
And spangled with silver the GUINEA-FOWL'S breast ;
While the HALCYON bent over the streamlet to view,
How pretty she look'd in her boddice of blue !
Thus adorn'd, they set off for the Peacock's abode,
With the Guide INDICATOR,* who shew'd them the road :

* Cuculus Indicator, a Bird of Cuckow kind, found in the interior parts of Africa ; it has a shrill note, which the Natives answer by a soft whistle ; and the Birds repeating the note, the Natives are thereby conducted to the wild Bee-hives, which this Bird frequents.

From all points of the compass, came Birds of all feather ;
And the PARROT can tell who and who were together.
There came Lord CASSOWARY and General FLAMINGO,
And Don PEROQUETO, escap'd from Domingo ;
From his high rock-built eyrie the EAGLE came forth,
And the Duchess of PTARMIGAN flew from the North.
The GREBE and the EIDER DUCK came up by water,
With the SWAN, who brought out the young CYGNET, her
daughter.

From his woodland abode came the PHEASANT, to meet
Two kindred, arriv'd by the last India fleet :
The one, like a Nabob, in habit most splendid,
Where gold with each hue of the Rainbow was blended :

In silver and black, like a fair pensive Maid,
Who mourns for her love ! was the other array'd.
The CHOUGH came from Cornwall, and brought up his Wife ;
The GROUSE travell'd south, from his Lairdship in Fife ;
The BUNTING forsook her soft nest in the reeds ;
And the WIDOW-BIRD came, though she still wore her weeds ;
Sir John HERON, of the Lakes, strutted in a *grand pas*,
But no card had been sent to the pilfering DAW,
As the Peacock kept up his progenitors' quarrel,
Which Æsop relates, about cast-off apparel ;
For Birds are like Men in their contests together,
And, in questions of right, can dispute for a feather.

The PEACOCK, Imperial, the pride of his race,
Receiv'd all his guests with an infinite grace,
Wav'd high his blue neck, and his train he display'd,
Embroider'd with gold, and with em'ralds inlaid.
Then with all the gay troop to the shrubb'ry repair'd,
Where the musical Birds had a concert prepar'd ;
A holly bush form'd the Orchestra, and in it
Sat the Black-bird, the Thrush, the Lark, and the Linnet ;
A BULL-FINCH, a captive ! almost from the nest,
Now escap'd from his cage, and, with liberty blest,
In a sweet mellow tone, join'd the lessons of art
With the accents of nature, which flow'd from his heart.



"A Holly bush formed the Orchestra, and in it, &c.



"Baron Stork in a Waltz was allow'd to excel." &c.

Pub. Sep. 1-1807, by I. Harris, corner St. Paul's Church, Y^{ce}

E. 11.

The CANARY, a much-admir'd foreign musician,
Condescended to sing to the Fowls of condition.
While the NIGHTINGALE warbled, and quaver'd so fine,
That they all clapp'd their wings, and pronounc'd it divine !
The SKY LARK, in extacy, sang from a cloud,
And CHANTICLEER crow'd, and the YAFFIL laugh'd loud.
The dancing began, when the singing was over ;
A DOTTERELL first open'd the ball with the PLOVER ;
Baron STORK, in a waltz, was allow'd to excel,
With his beautiful partner, the fair DEMOISELLE.*

* The Numidian Crane, or Demoiselle, from the elegance of its appearance, and its singular carriage, is called the Demoiselle, which means the young Lady ; for this Bird walks very gracefully, and sometimes skips and leaps, as though it were trying to dance.

And a newly-fledg'd GOSLING, so spruce and genteel,

A minuet swam with young Mr TEAL.

A London-bred SPARROW—a pert forward Cit ;

Danc'd a reel with Miss WAGTAIL, and little TOM-TIT.

And the Sieur GUILLEMOT next perform'd a *pas seul*,

While the elderly Bipedes were playing a Pool.

The Dowager Lady TOUCAN first cut in,

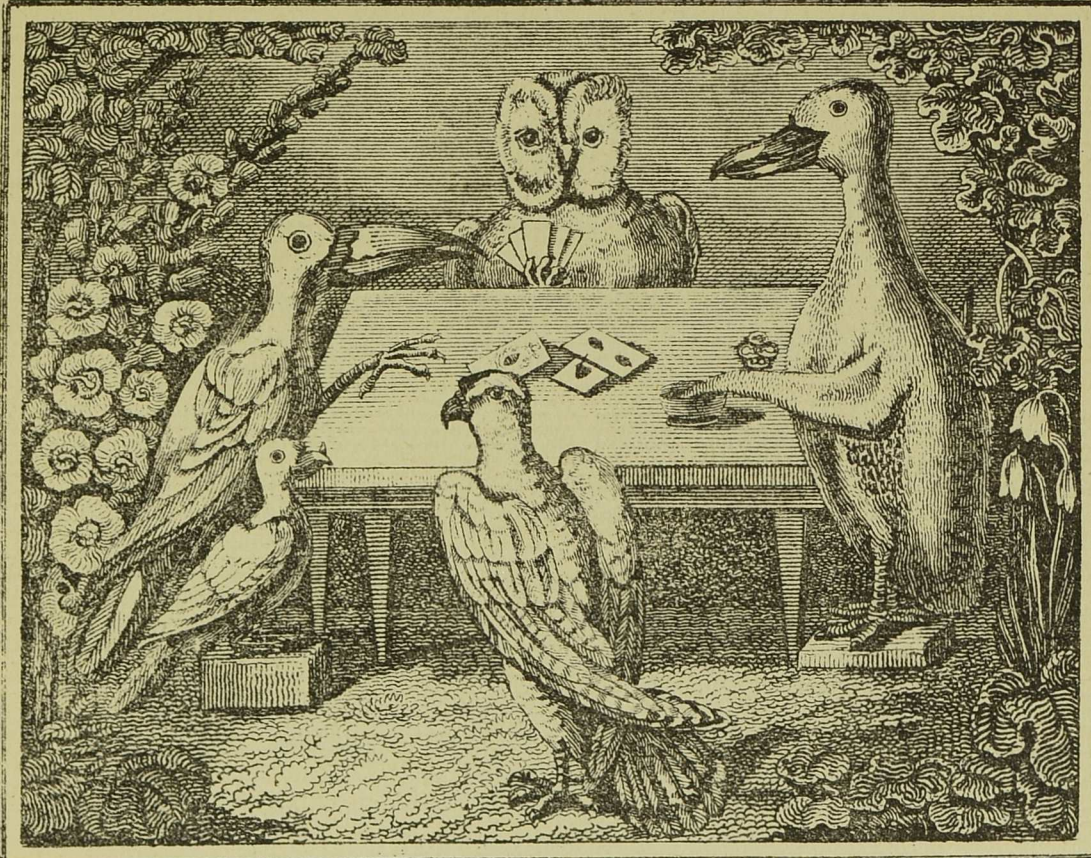
With old Doctor BUZZARD, and Adm'ral PENGUIN,

From Ivy-bush Tow'r came Dame OWLET the Wise,

And Counsellor CROSSBILL sat by to advise.

The Birds past their prime, o'er whose *heads* it was fated,

Should pass many St. Valentines—yet be unmated,



"The Dowager Lady Toucan, first cut in," &c.

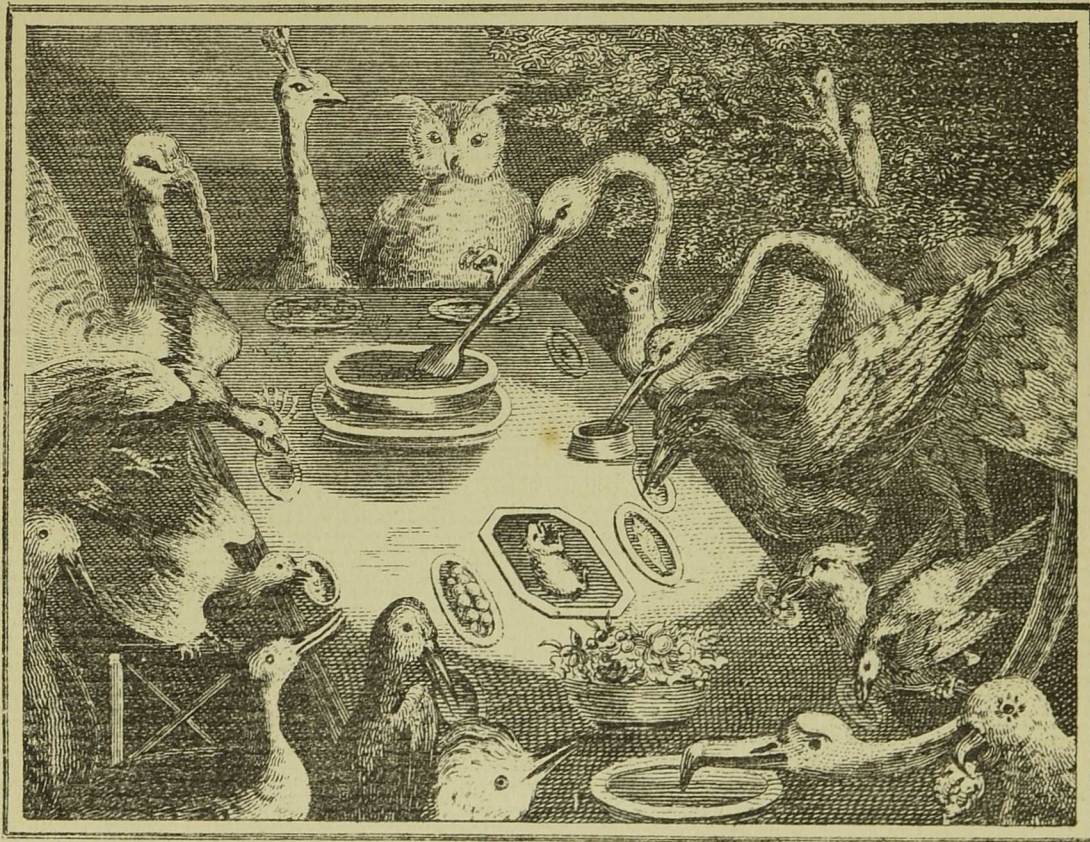
P. 12.

Pub. Sep 7-1807, by J. Harris, corner of St. Paul's Church Y^d.

Look'd on, and remark'd, that the prudent and sage,
Were quite overlook'd in this frivolous age,
When Birds, scarce pen-feather'd, were brought to a rout,
Forward Chits ! from the egg-shell but newly come out ;
That in their youthful days, they ne'er witness'd such frisking,
And how wrong ! in the GREENFINCH to flirt with the SISKIN.
So thought Lady MACKAW, and her Friend COCKATOO,
And the RAVEN foretold that "no good could ensue !"
They censur'd the BANTAM for strutting and crowing,
In those vile pantaloons, which he fancied look'd knowing.
And a want of decorum caus'd many demurs,
Against the GAME CHICKEN, for coming in spurs.

Old Alderman CORM'RANT, for supper impatient,
At the Eating-room door, for an hour had been station'd,
Till a MAGPIE, at length, the banquet announcing,
Gave the signal, long wish'd for, of clamouring and pouncing.
At the well-furnish'd board all were eager to perch ;
But the little Miss CREEPERS were left in the lurch.

Description must fail ; and the pen is unable
To describe all the lux'ries which cover'd the table.
Each delicate viand that taste could denote,
Wasps *a la sauce piquante*, and Flies *en compôte* ;
Worms and Frogs *en friture*, for the web-footed Fowl,
And a barebecued Mouse was prepar'd for the Owl ;



"The Razor-bill cared for the famishing group," &c.

Nuts, grains, fruit, and fish, to regale ev'ry palate,
And groundsel and chick-weed serv'd up in a sallad.
The RAZOR-BILL carv'd for the famishing group,
And the SPOON-BILL obligingly ladled the soup ;
So they fill'd all their crops with the dainties before 'em,
And the tables were clear'd with the utmost decorum.
When they gaily had caroll'd till peep of the dawn,
The Lark gently hinted, 'twas time to be gone ;
And his clarion, so shrill, gave the company warning,
That Chanticleer scented the gales of the morning.
So they chirp'd, in full chorus, a friendly adieu ;
And, with hearts quite as light as the plumage that grew }
On their merry-thought bosoms, away they all flew..... }

Then long live the PEACOCK, in splendour unmatched,
Whose Ball shall be talk'd of, by Birds yet unhatch'd;
His praise let the Trumpeter* loudly proclaim,
And the Goose lend her quill to transmit it to Fame.

* The Agami, or Trumpeter, a native of America, remarkable for a singular noise, resembling the instrument from which it takes its name.

THE END.

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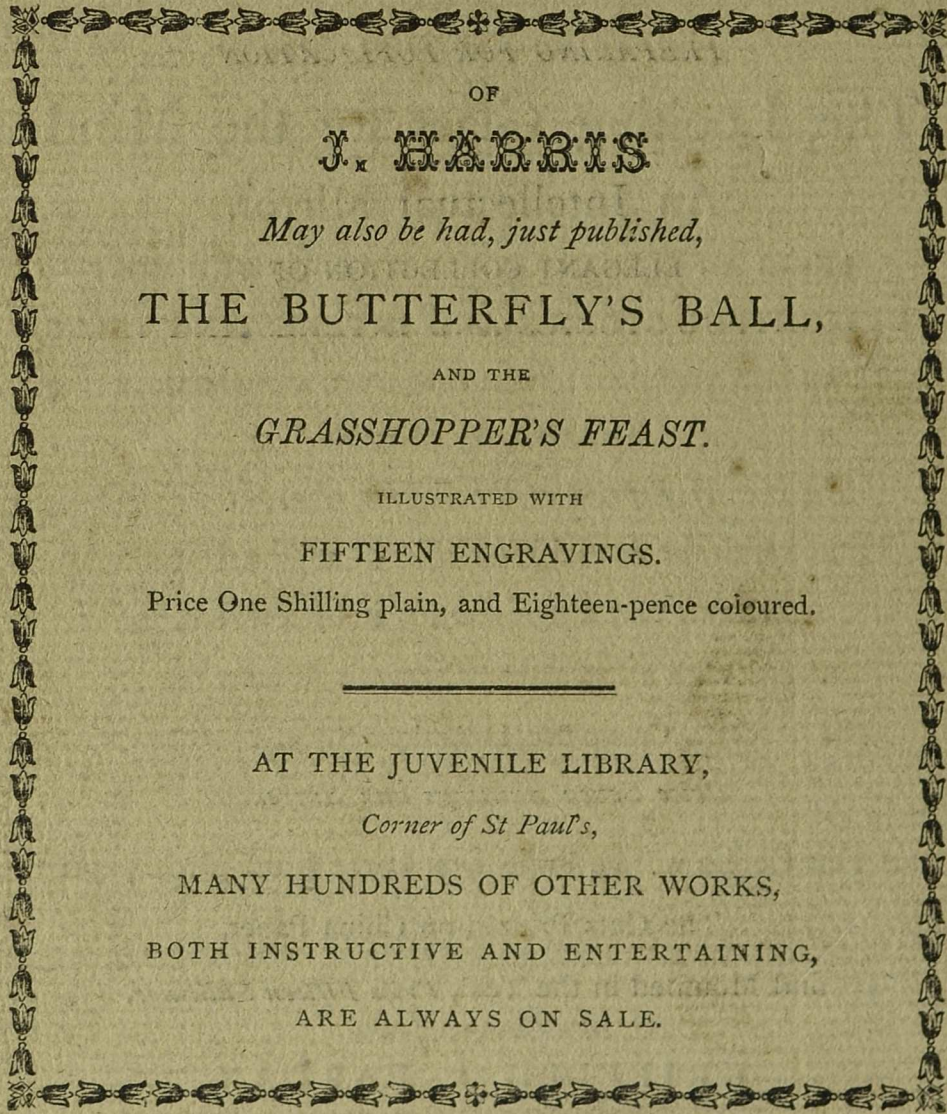
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