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SEA SECRETS

by

Cornelia Frances Bedell

Illustrated by

Arno Wilbur Parsons

Under direction
of the Author.

NEW YORK
STEWART AND COMPANY

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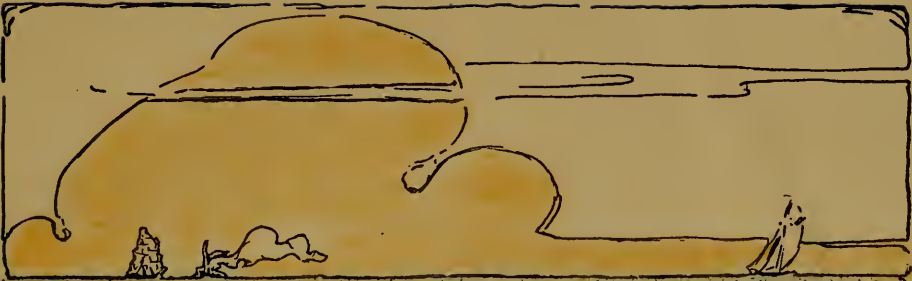
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SEA SECRETS

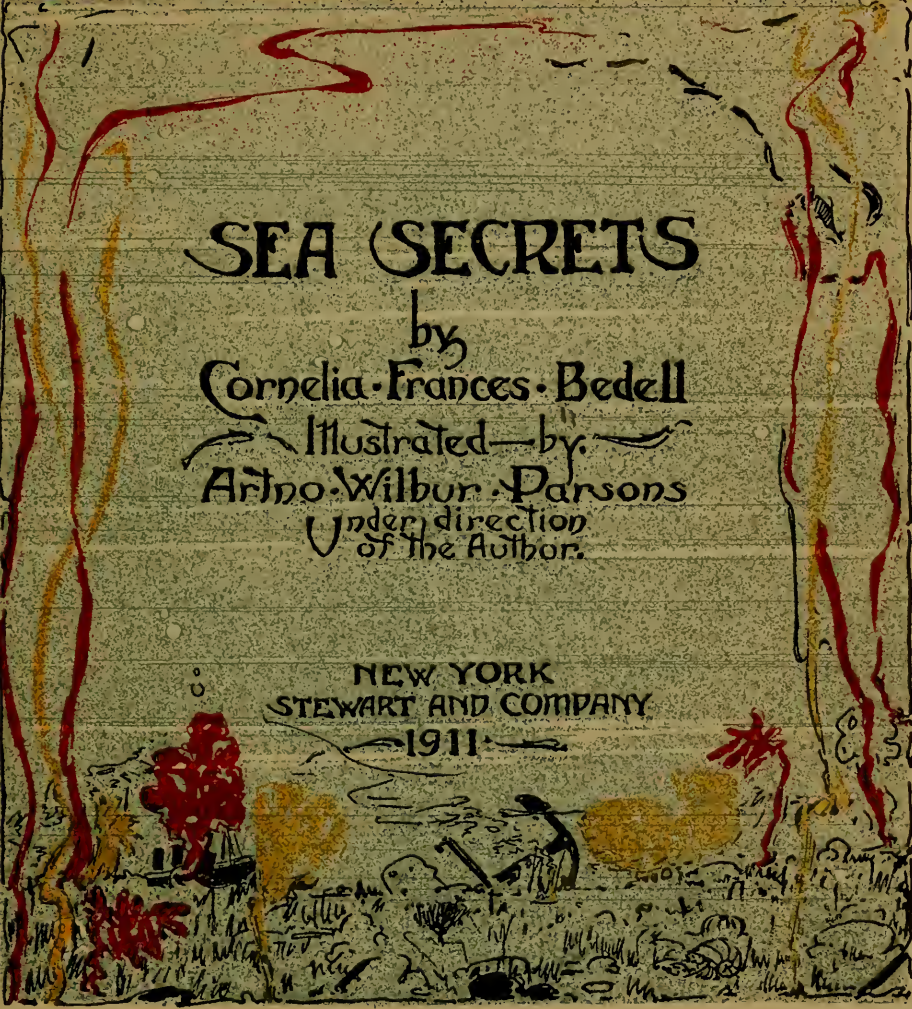


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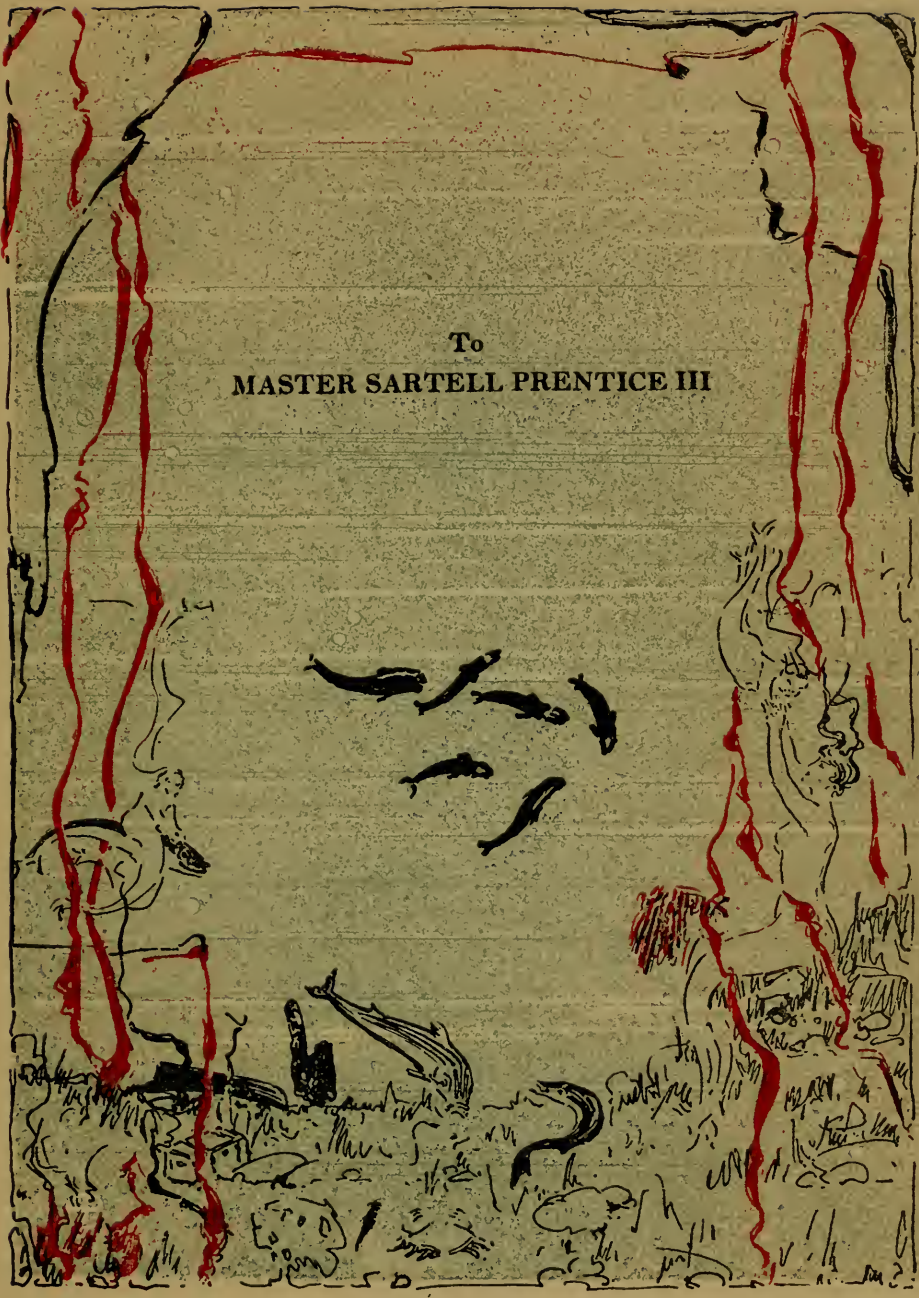
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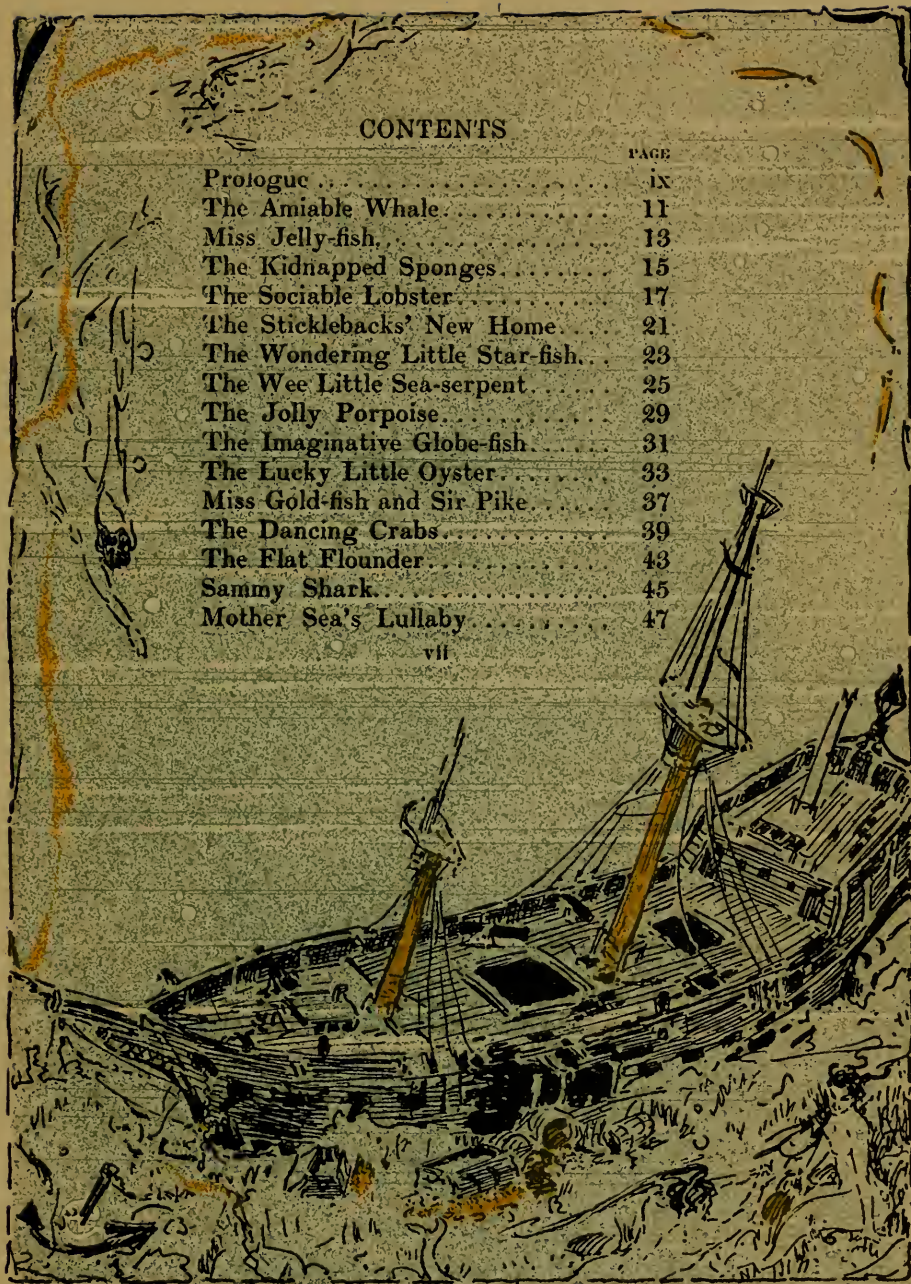
May, June, 26, 1912

To
MASTER SARTELL PRENTICE III



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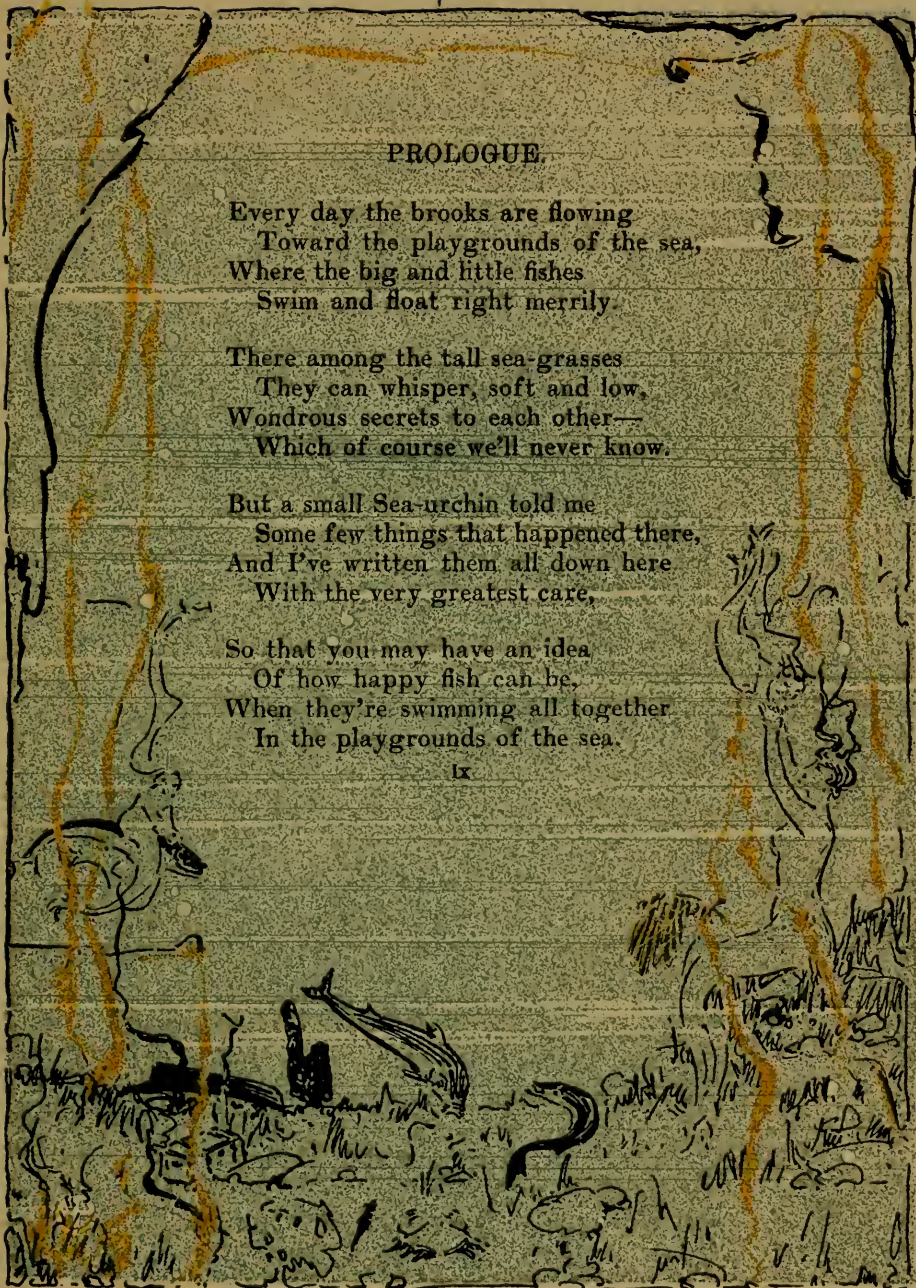
PROLOGUE

Every day the brooks are flowing
Toward the playgrounds of the sea,
Where the big and little fishes
Swim and float right merrily.

There among the tall sea-grasses
They can whisper, soft and low,
Wondrous secrets to each other—
Which of course we'll never know.

But a small Sea-urchin told me
Some few things that happened there,
And I've written them all down here
With the very greatest care,

So that you may have an idea
Of how happy fish can be,
When they're swimming all together
In the playgrounds of the sea.



THE AMIABLE WHALE.

Have you ever heard tell of the amiable
whale

Who was so very black he could never
turn pale?

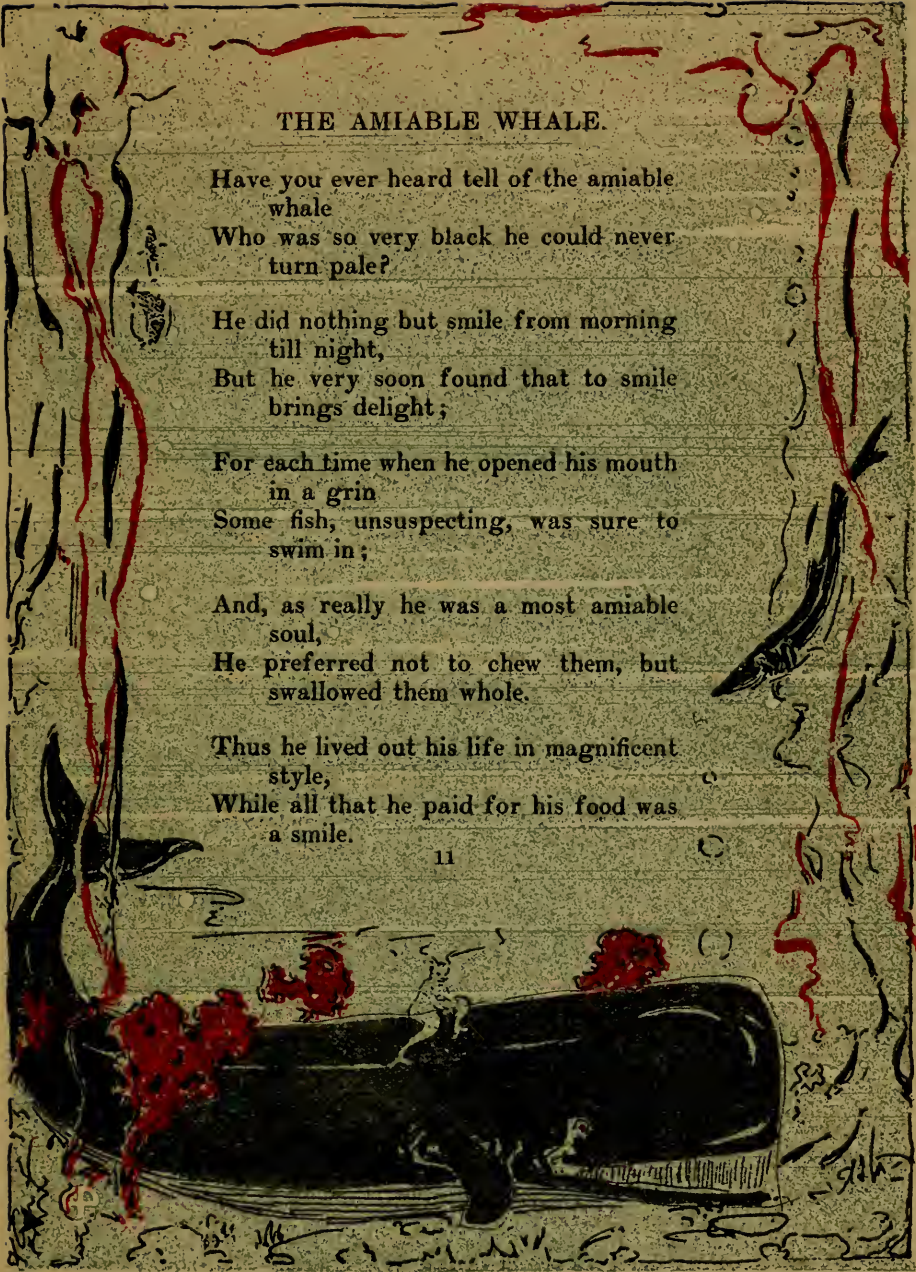
He did nothing but smile from morning
till night,
But he very soon found that to smile
brings delight;


For each time when he opened his mouth
in a grin
Some fish, unsuspecting, was sure to
swim in;

And, as really he was a most amiable
soul,

He preferred not to chew them, but
swallowed them whole.

Thus he lived out his life in magnificent
style,
While all that he paid for his food was
a smile.





MISS JELLY-FISH

Miss Jelly-fish was floating round quite
happily one day,
When she overheard a sentence that
filled her with dismay.

“One jelly-fish between perch scales,”
the first big sturgeon said,
“I’ve heard will make a sandwich on
which kings may well be fed.”

“This is great news,” his friend replied.
“I’m fond of dishes new.
Come, let us hunt these dainty sweets so
you may taste them too.”

Miss Jelly-fish grew stiff with fright,
and wonders to this day,
How she ever limbered up enough to
dive and swim away.

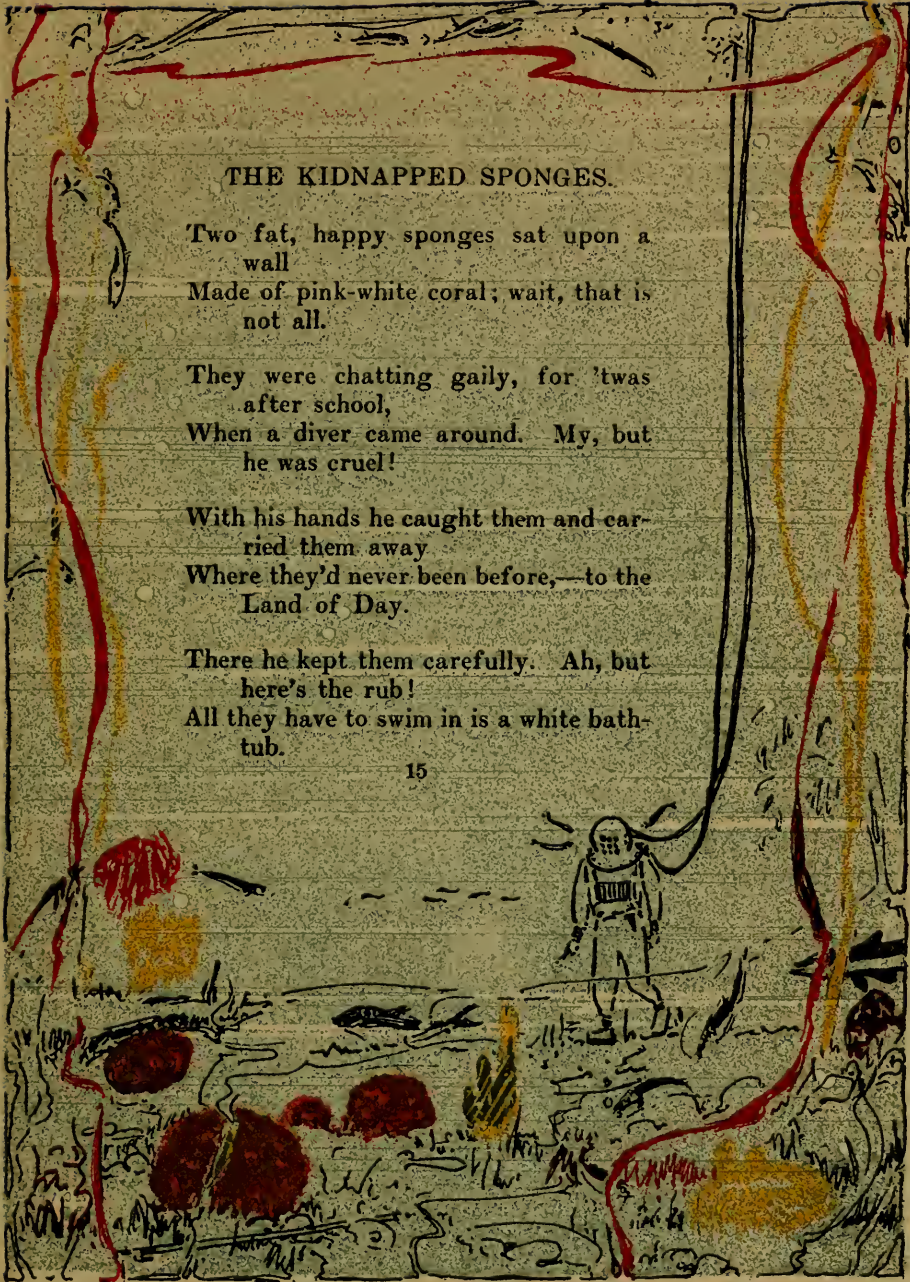
THE KIDNAPPED SPONGES.

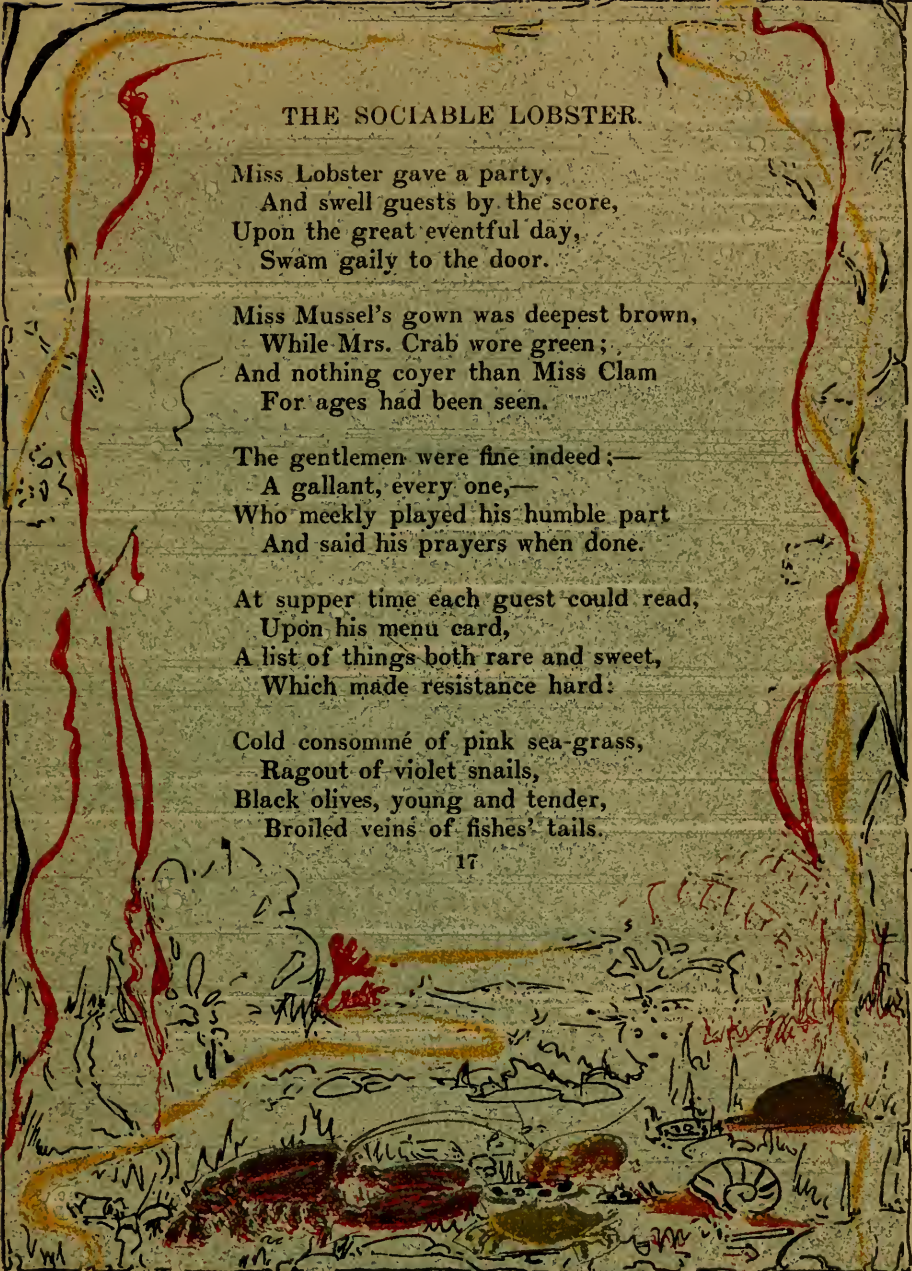
Two fat, happy sponges sat upon a
wall
Made of pink-white coral; wait, that is
not all.

They were chatting gaily, for 'twas
after school,
When a diver came around. My, but
he was cruel!

With his hands he caught them and car-
ried them away
Where they'd never been before,—to the
Land of Day.

There he kept them carefully. Ah, but
here's the rub!
All they have to swim in is a white bath-
tub.





THE SOCIABLE LOBSTER.

Miss Lobster gave a party,
And swell guests by the score,
Upon the great eventful day,
Swam gaily to the door.

Miss Mussel's gown was deepest brown,
While Mrs. Crab wore green;
And nothing coyer than Miss Clam
For ages had been seen.

The gentlemen were fine indeed;—
A gallant, every one,—
Who meekly played his humble part
And said his prayers when done.

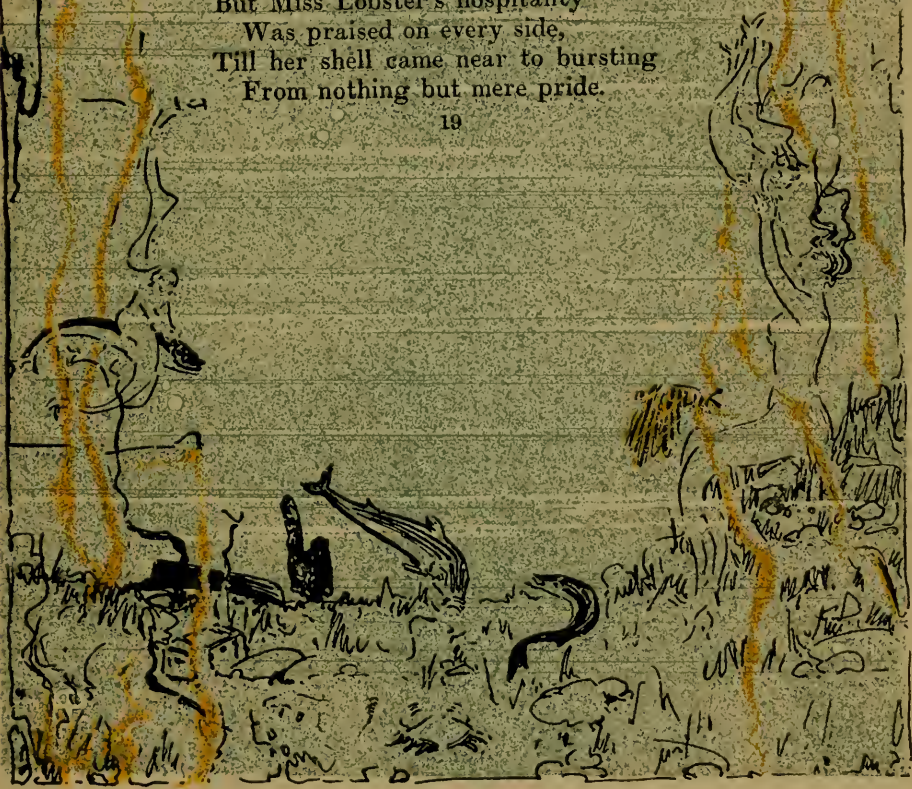
At supper time each guest could read,
Upon his menu card,
A list of things both rare and sweet,
Which made resistance hard:

Cold consommé of pink sea-grass,
Ragout of violet snails,
Black olives, young and tender,
Broiled veins of fishes' tails.

And many dishes more beside,
Whose names I can't repeat,
Because they were not meant to spell,
But only just to eat.

And when, at last, 'twas time to go,
Each guest rose with a sigh
Of happiness too great for words—
The rest we must pass by.

But Miss Lobster's hospitality
Was praised on every side,
Till her shell came near to bursting
From nothing but mere pride.



THE STICKELBACKS' NEW HOME.

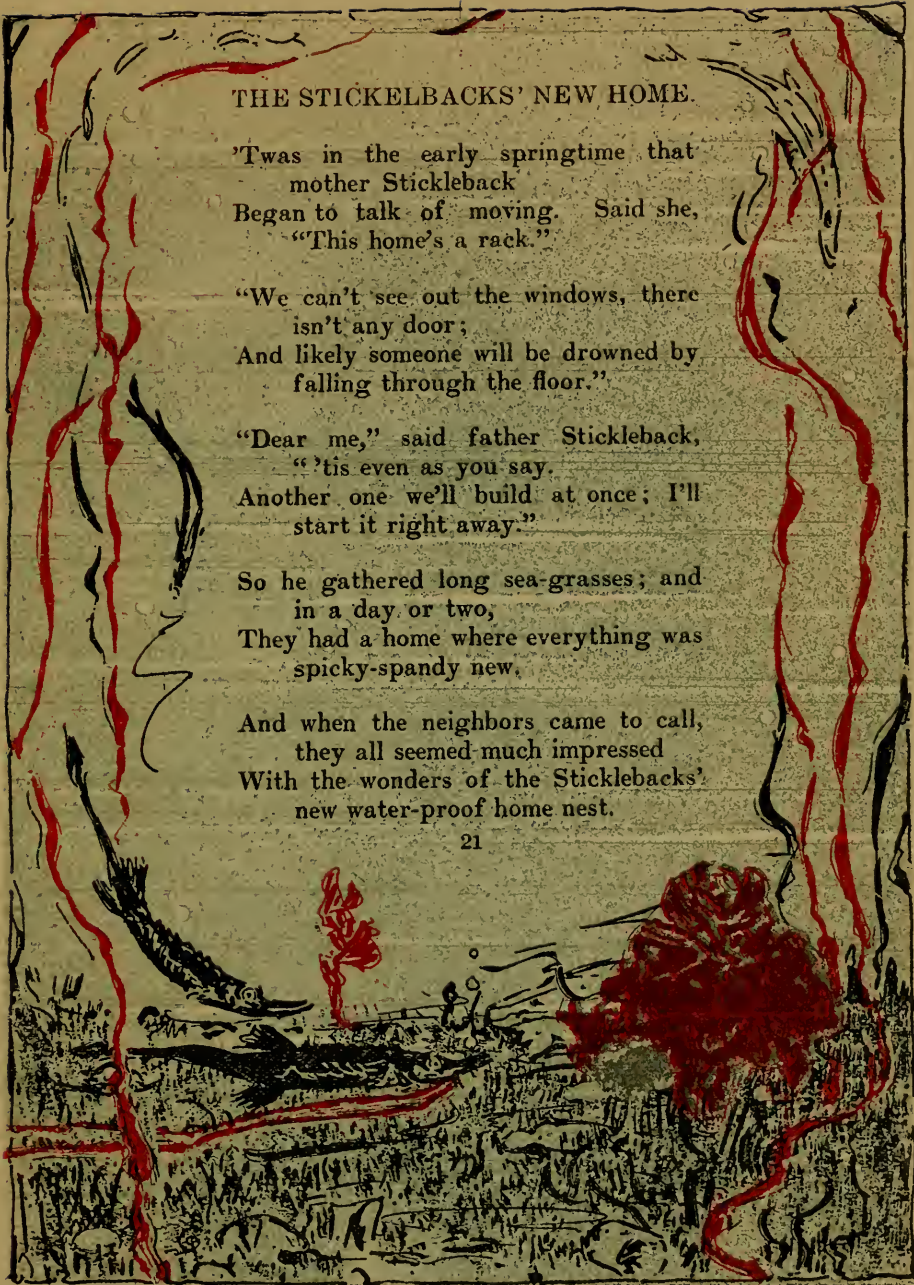
'Twas in the early springtime that
mother Stickleback
Began to talk of moving. Said she,
"This home's a rack."


"We can't see out the windows, there
isn't any door;
And likely someone will be drowned by
falling through the floor."

"Dear me," said father Stickleback,
"'tis even as you say.
Another one we'll build at once; I'll
start it right away."

So he gathered long sea-grasses; and
in a day or two,
They had a home where everything was
spicky-spandy new.

And when the neighbors came to call,
they all seemed much impressed
With the wonders of the Sticklebacks'
new water-proof home nest.





THE WONDERING LITTLE
STAR-FISH.

"As I float among the grasses in the
deep, deep sea,"

Said the wondering little Star-fish, "I
cannot help but be

Quite curious to know about my cousins
in the sky;

The mermaids say they only play at
night—I wonder why?

It must be very lonely in such fields and
fields of blue.

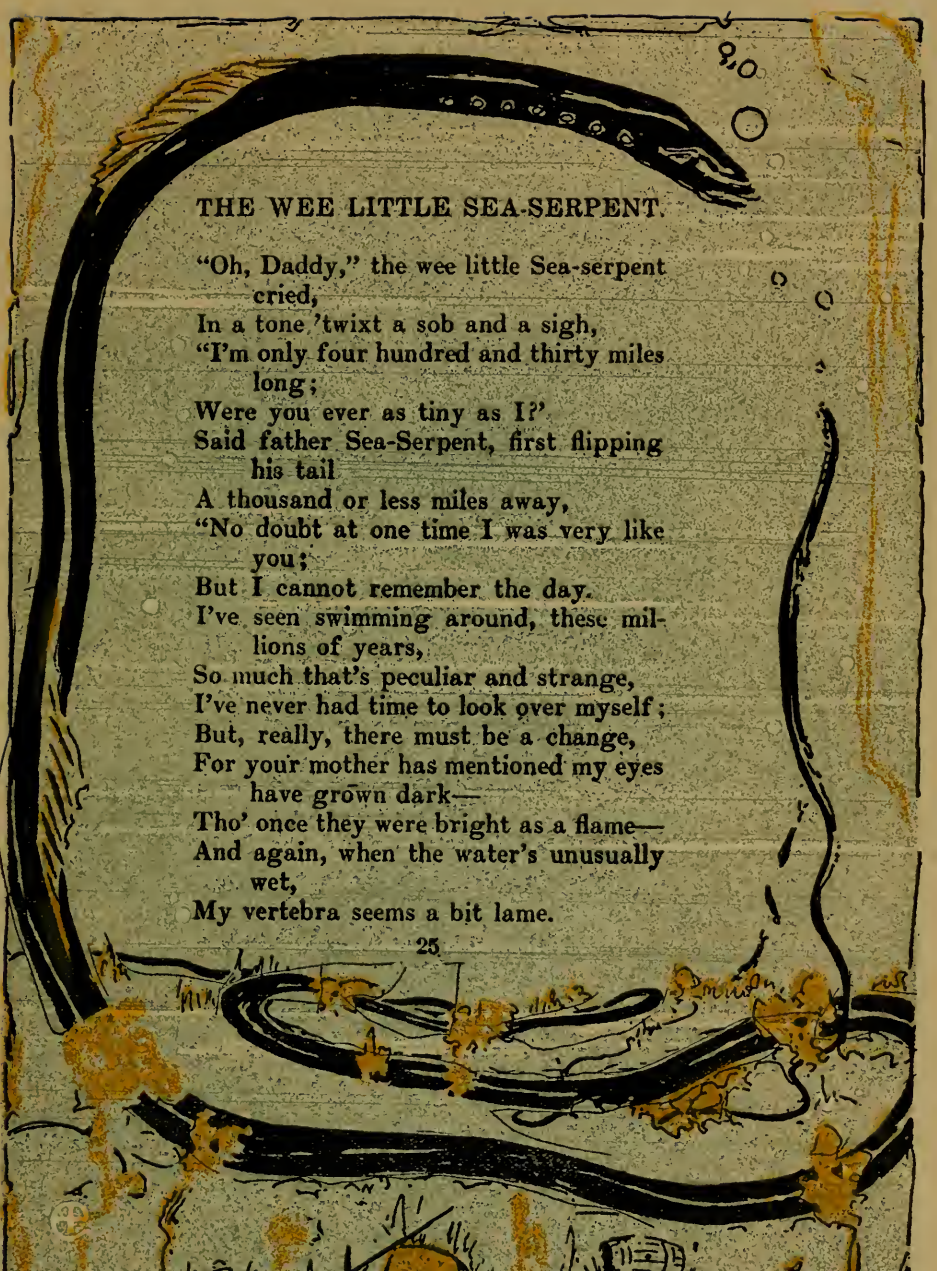
Do you suppose they lose their way?
I'm sure that's what I'd do.

I never long to go there, it seems so far
away,

But I'm hoping one will fall down here
and visit me some day.

Then I'll show him just how happy a
little star can be

When he's floating through the grasses
in the deep, deep sea.



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THE WEE LITTLE SEA-SERPENT.

"Oh, Daddy," the wee little Sea-serpent
cried,
In a tone 'twixt a sob and a sigh,
"I'm only four hundred and thirty miles
long;
Were you ever as tiny as I?"
Said father Sea-Serpent, first flipping
his tail
A thousand or less miles away,
"No doubt at one time I was very like
you;
But I cannot remember the day.
I've seen swimming around, these mil-
lions of years,
So much that's peculiar and strange,
I've never had time to look over myself;
But, really, there must be a change,
For your mother has mentioned my eyes
have grown dark—
Tho' once they were bright as a flame—
And again, when the water's unusually
wet,
My vertebra seems a bit lame.

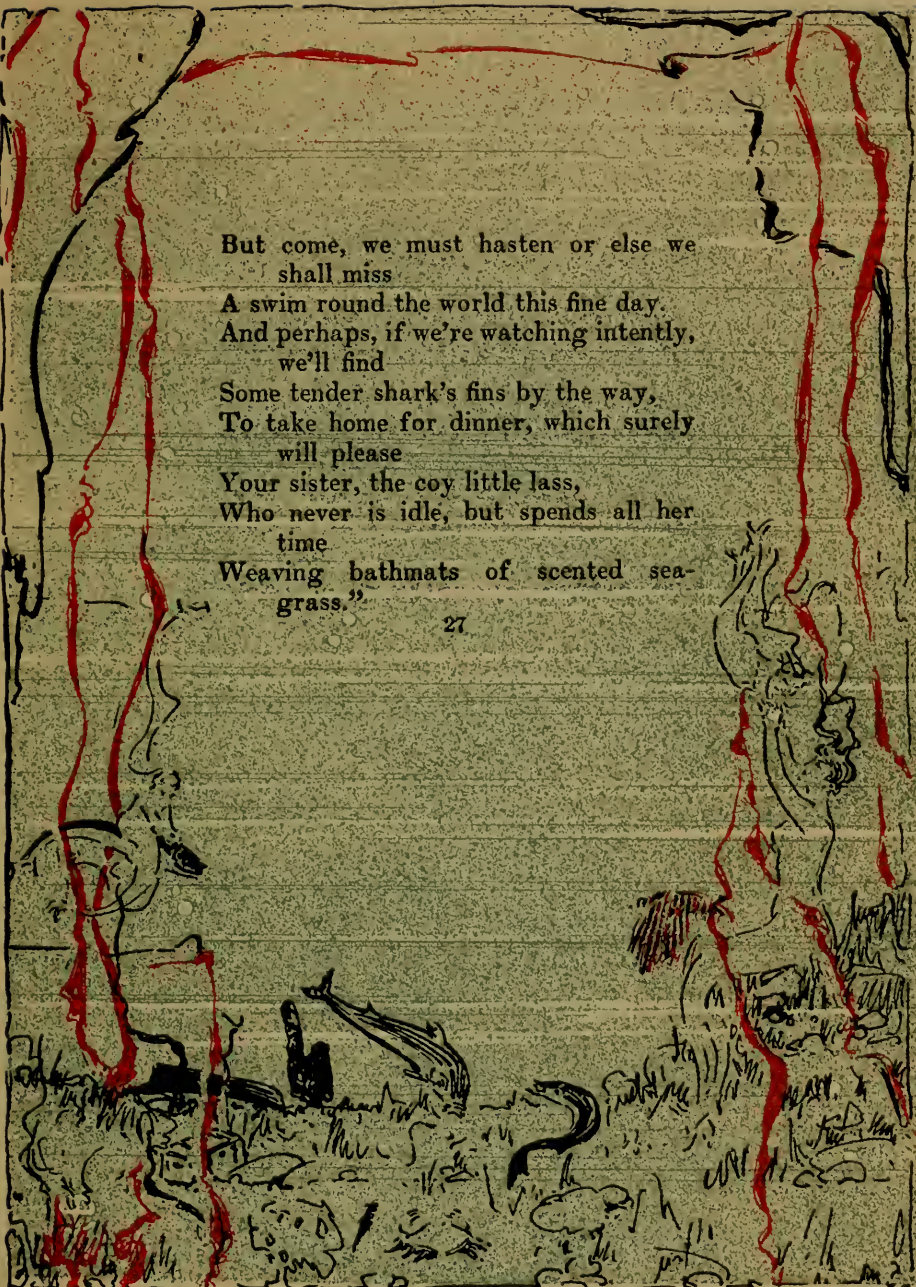
But come, we must hasten or else we
shall miss

A swim round the world this fine day,
And perhaps, if we're watching intently,
we'll find

Some tender shark's fins by the way,
To take home for dinner, which surely
will please

Your sister, the coy little lass,
Who never is idle, but spends all her
time

Weaving bathmats of scented sea-
grass."

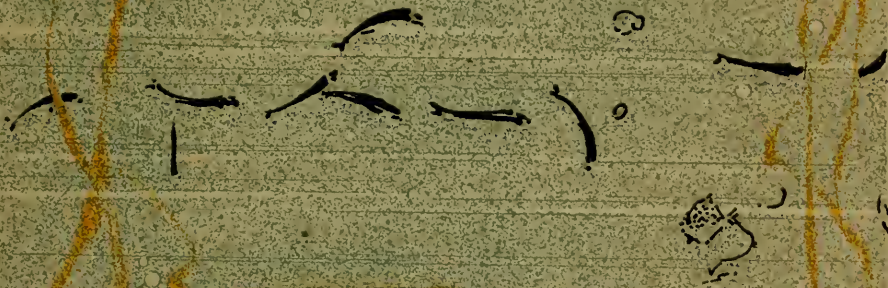


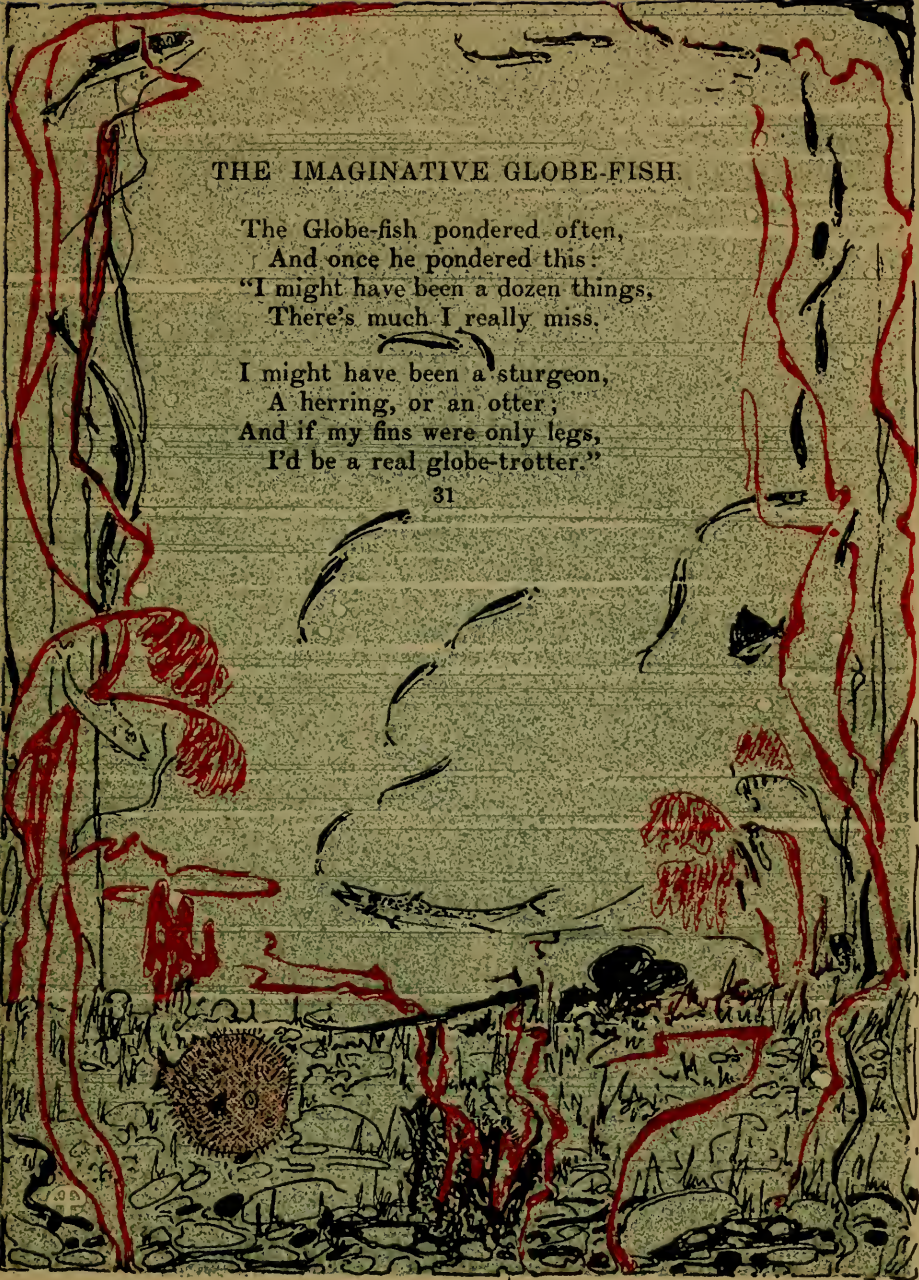


THE JOLLY PORPOISE

There once was a porpoise named Polly,
Who loved everything that was jolly;
She mended her faults,
And turned somersaults,
To drive away dread melancholy.

20





THE IMAGINATIVE GLOBE-FISH

The Globa-fish pondered often,
And once he pondered this:
"I might have been a dozen things,
There's much I really miss.

I might have been a sturgeon,
A herring, or an otter;
And if my fins were only legs,
I'd be a real globe-trotter."

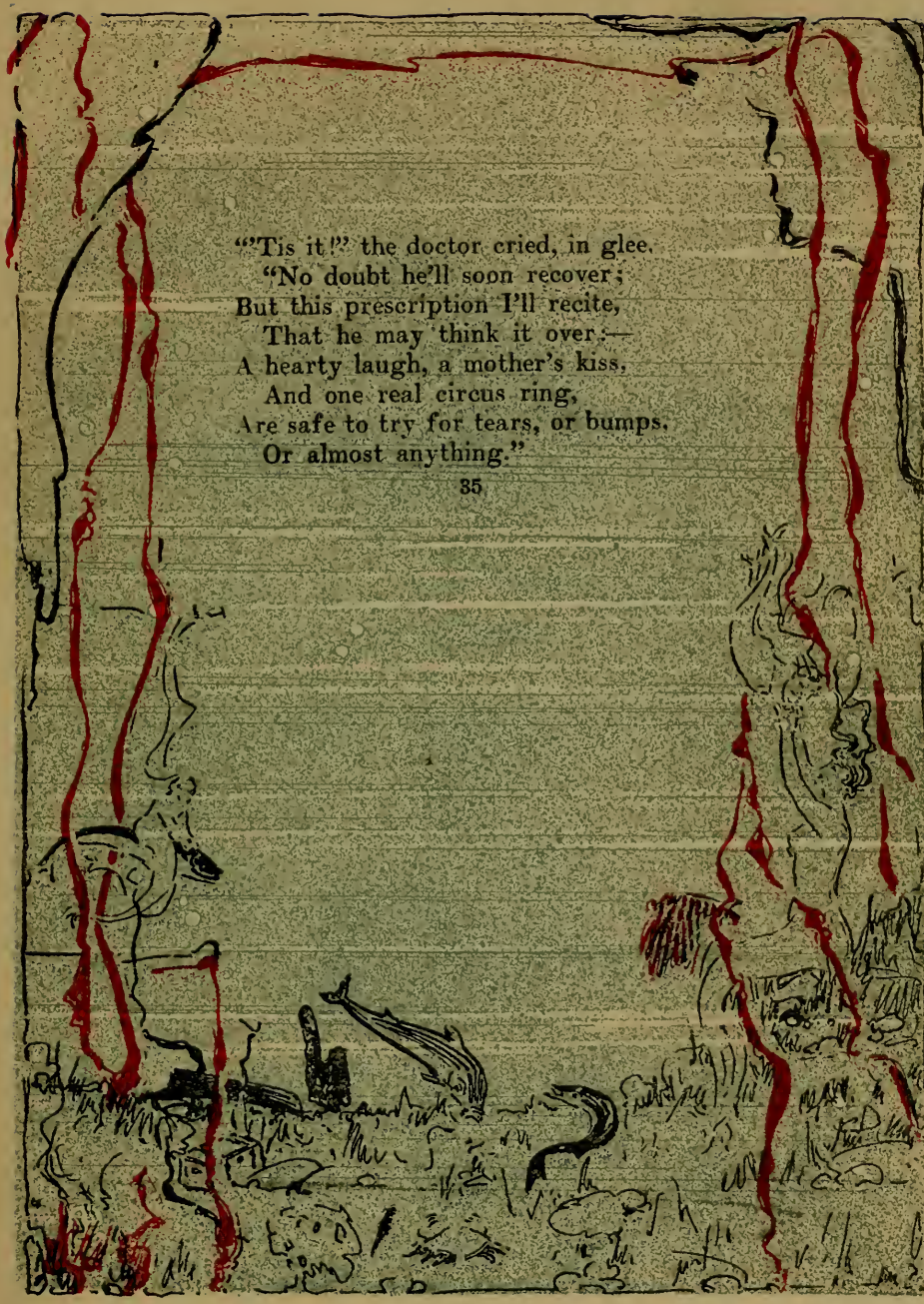
THE LUCKY LITTLE OYSTER.

There lived a little oyster
Who cried for 'most a year,
And during all that awful time
He never shed a tear.
But then, of course, how could he,
When he hadn't any eyes?
For they're the place where teardrops
grow,
So much to our surprise.

'Twas at this time he felt a pain
Within his shell's right side:
"Ah! 'tis appendicitis,"
The family quickly cried.
And so old Doctor Saw-fish
Was called to operate.
He came at once, oft murmuring—
"I hope 'tis not too late."

He laid poor little oyster
On a bed of mosses green,
And gently sawed within his shell
To find what was unseen.
Of course you may imagine how
Their minds were in a whirl,
When suddenly before them lay
A monstrous snow-white pearl.





“Tis it!” the doctor cried, in glee.
“No doubt he’ll soon recover;
But this prescription I’ll recite,
That he may think it over:—
A hearty laugh, a mother’s kiss,
And one real circus ring,
Are safe to try for tears, or bumps.
Or almost anything.”

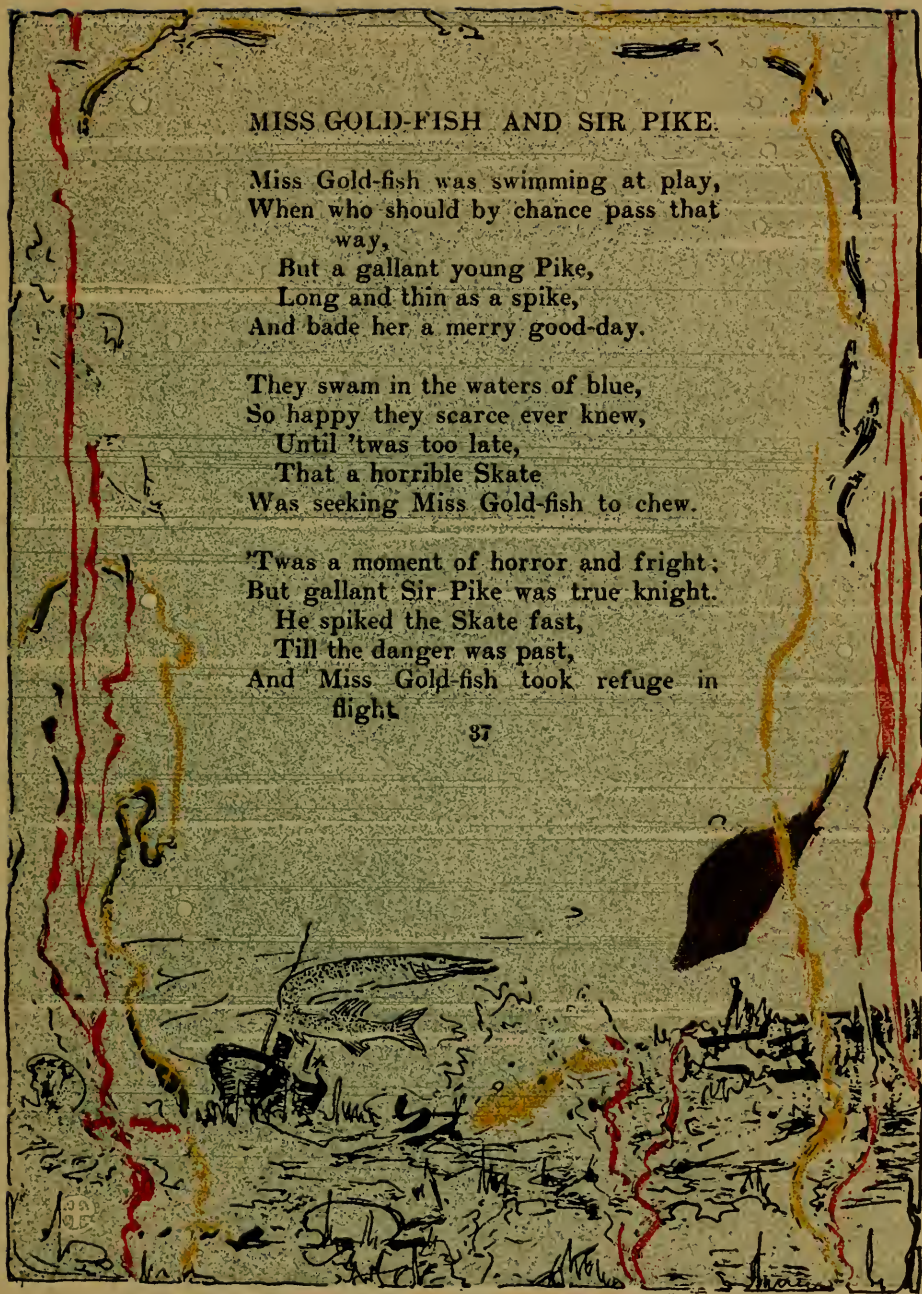
MISS GOLD-FISH AND SIR PIKE.

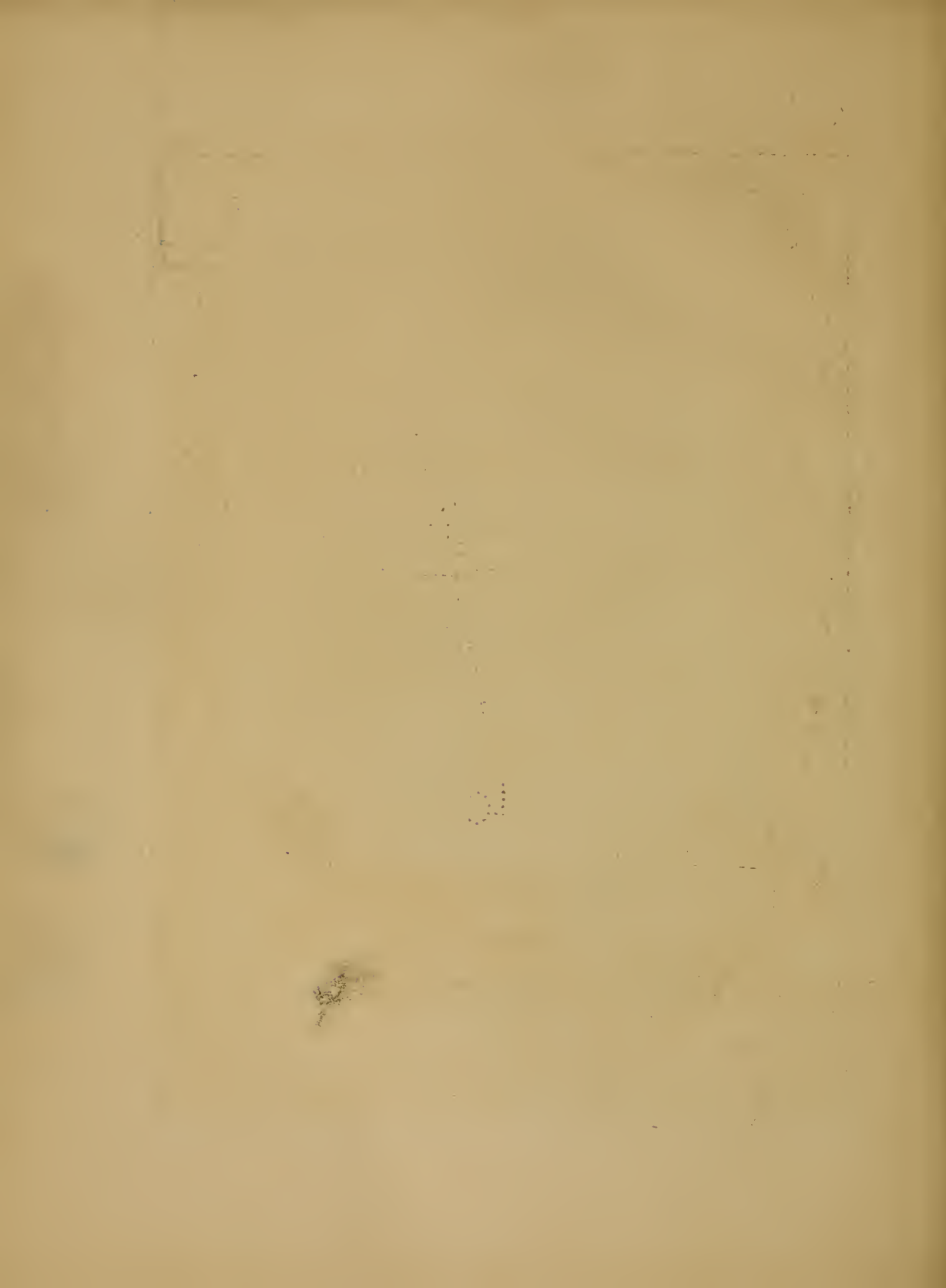
Miss Gold-fish was swimming at play,
When who should by chance pass that
way,

But a gallant young Pike,
Long and thin as a spike,
And bade her a merry good-day.

They swam in the waters of blue,
So happy they scarce ever knew,
Until 'twas too late,
That a horrible Skate
Was seeking Miss Gold-fish to chew.

'Twas a moment of horror and fright;
But gallant Sir Pike was true knight.
He spiked the Skate fast,
Till the danger was past,
And Miss Gold-fish took refuge in
flight.

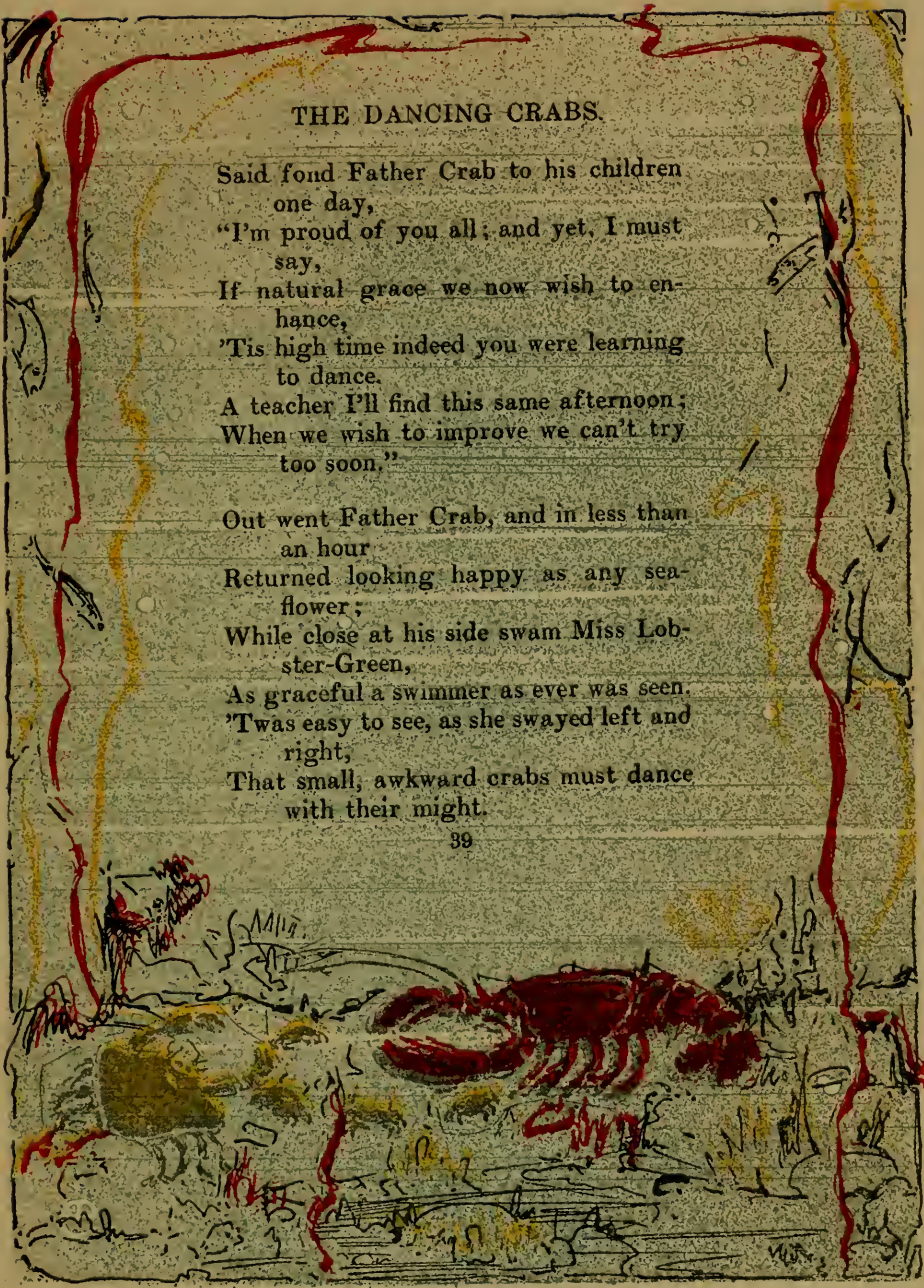


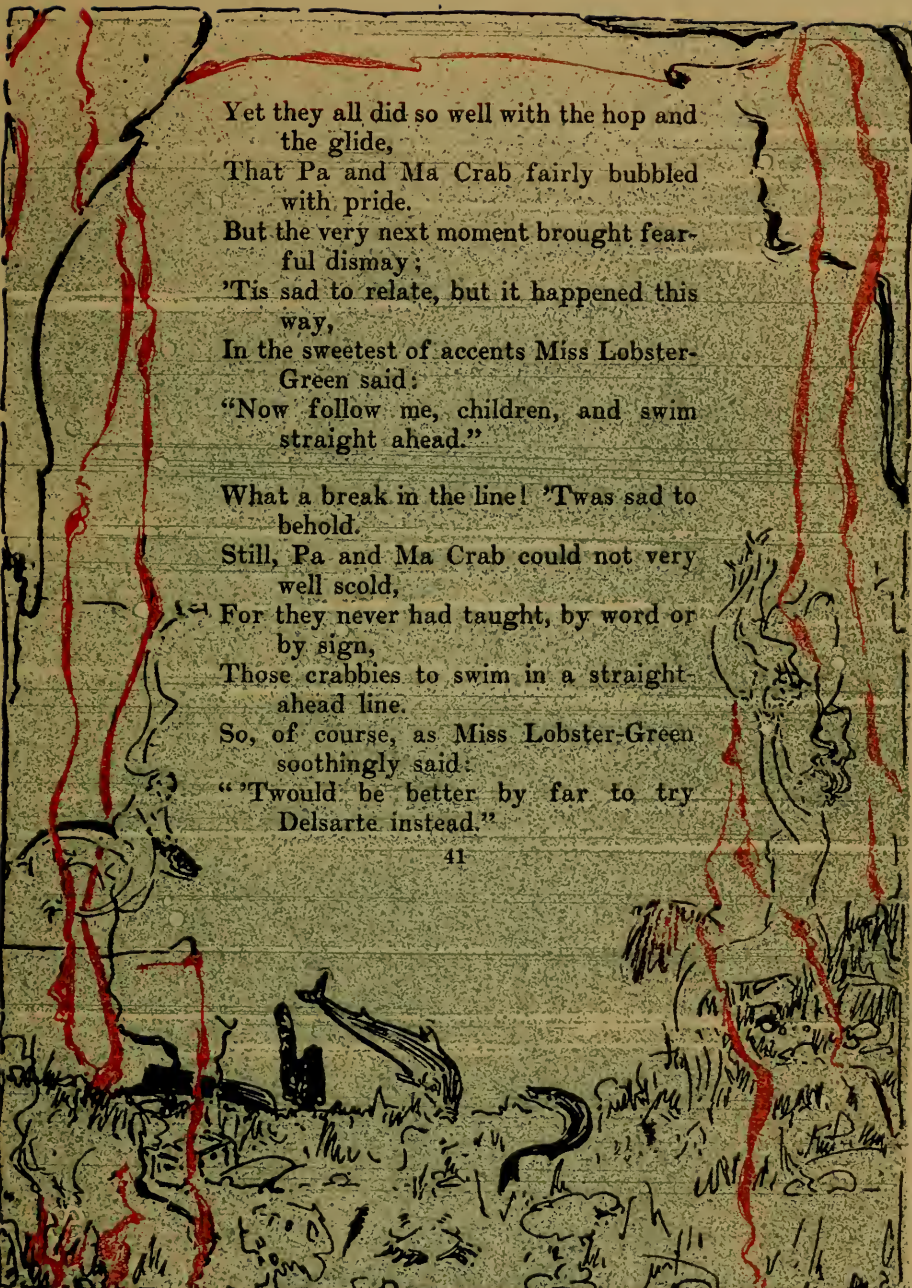


THE DANCING CRABS.

Said fond Father Crab to his children
one day,
"I'm proud of you all; and yet, I must
say,
If natural grace we now wish to en-
hance,
'Tis high time indeed you were learning
to dance.
A teacher I'll find this same afternoon;
When we wish to improve we can't try
too soon."

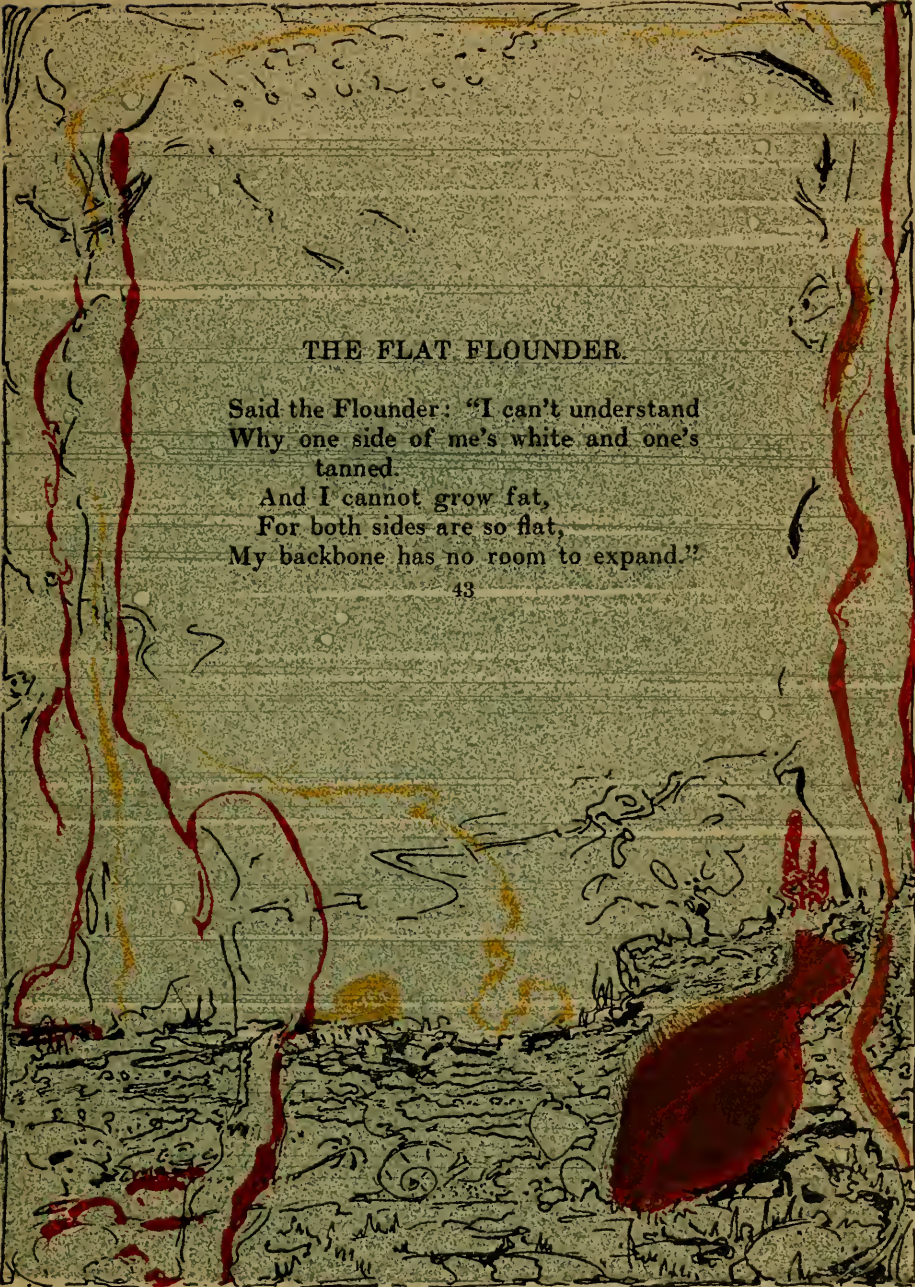
Out went Father Crab, and in less than
an hour
Returned looking happy as any sea-
flower;
While close at his side swam Miss Lob-
ster-Green,
As graceful a swimmer as ever was seen.
'Twas easy to see, as she swayed left and
right,
That small, awkward crabs must dance
with their might.





Yet they all did so well with the hop and
the glide,
That Pa and Ma Crab fairly bubbled
with pride.
But the very next moment brought fear-
ful dismay;
'Tis sad to relate, but it happened this
way,
In the sweetest of accents Miss Lobster-
Green said:
"Now follow me, children, and swim
straight ahead."


What a break in the line! 'Twas sad to
behold.
Still, Pa and Ma Crab could not very
well scold,
For they never had taught, by word or
by sign,
Those crabbies to swim in a straight-
ahead line.
So, of course, as Miss Lobster-Green
soothingly said:
"'Twould be better by far to try
Delsarte instead."



THE FLAT FLOUNDER.

Said the Flounder: "I can't understand
Why one side of me's white and one's
tanned.

And I cannot grow fat,
For both sides are so flat,
My backbone has no room to expand."



SAMMY SHARK.

"I like to box," said Sammy Shark,
"One has a chance, I find,
To strike right out with both his fins
And yet not seem unkind.

I love to thwack that Willie Whale
Upon his funny nose.
Yet, if we were not playing box
I'd never dare, I s'pose,

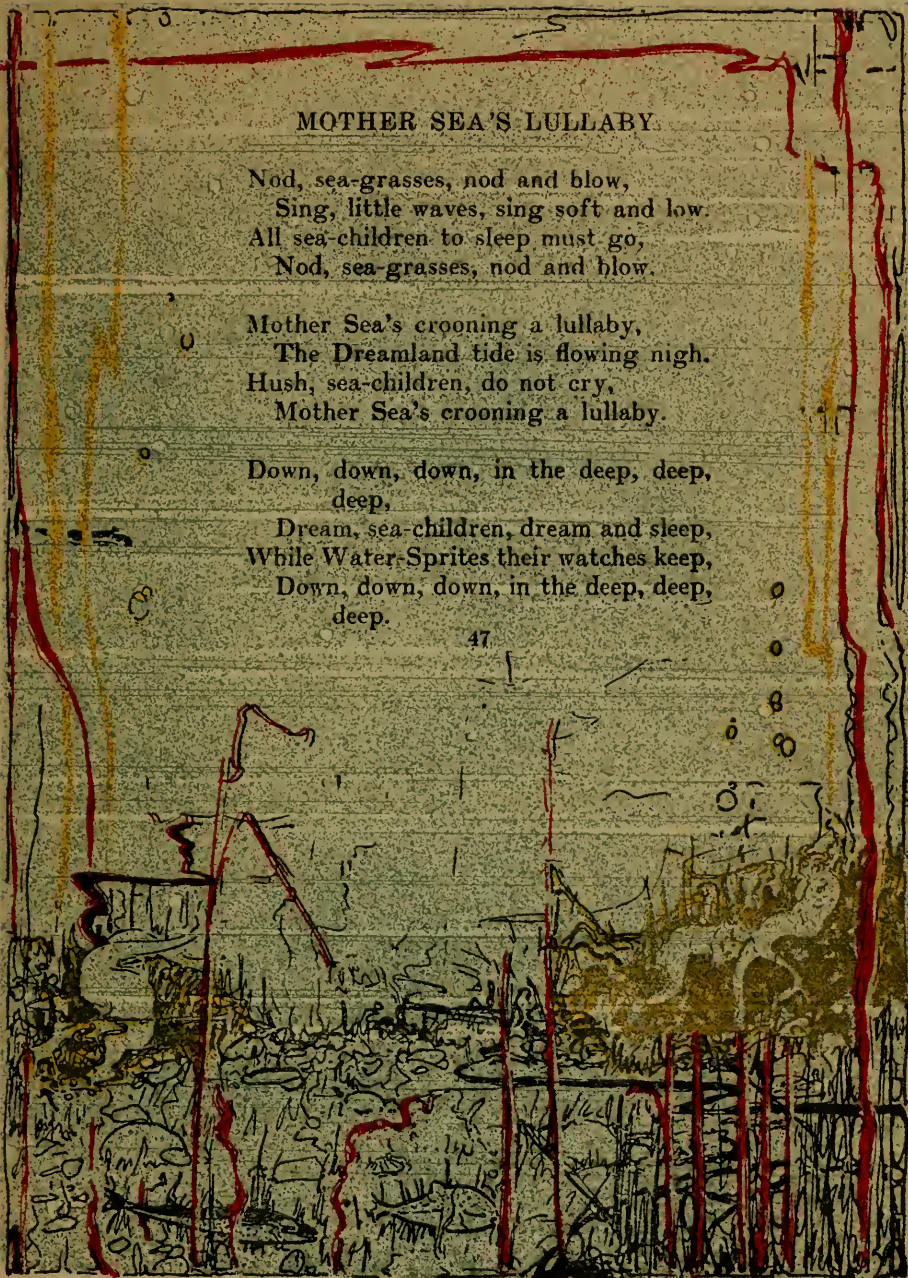
For one good upper-cut of his
(The mere thought makes me clam-
my),
Without a doubt, would knock me out
And finish little Sammy."

MOTHER SEA'S LULLABY.

Nod, sea-grasses, nod and blow,
Sing, little waves, sing soft and low.
All sea-children to sleep must go,
Nod, sea-grasses, nod and blow.

Mother Sea's crooning a lullaby,
The Dreamland tide is flowing nigh.
Hush, sea-children, do not cry,
Mother Sea's crooning a lullaby.

Down, down, down, in the deep, deep,
deep,
Dream, sea-children, dream and sleep,
While Water-Sprites their watches keep,
Down, down, down, in the deep, deep,
deep.



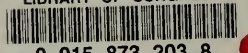


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