

*Caught 'with all your implements about
you': Spider-Stuffers Hay Botanists and
Embarrassment in Nineteenth-Century
Natural History*

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‘an army of generals with no privates’.

‘only fit for children and persons of inferior capacity’.

‘a thing that does not pay’

‘idle trifling’.





SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, M.P., F.R.S.

HOW DOETH THE BANKING BUSY BEE
IMPROVE HIS SHINING HOURS
BY STUDYING ON BANK HOLIDAYS
STRANGE INSECTS AND WILD FLOWERS!

*How doth the banking busy bee
Improve his shining hours
By studying on bank holiday
Strange insects and wild flowers*

Entomological etymology (!) of Embarrassment



As in W. Kirby & W. Spence *Introduction to Entomology*. [1815] “The wasp deliberately sawed off first one wing [of a fly] and then the other; and having thus removed the cause of its embarrassment, flew off with its booty”.

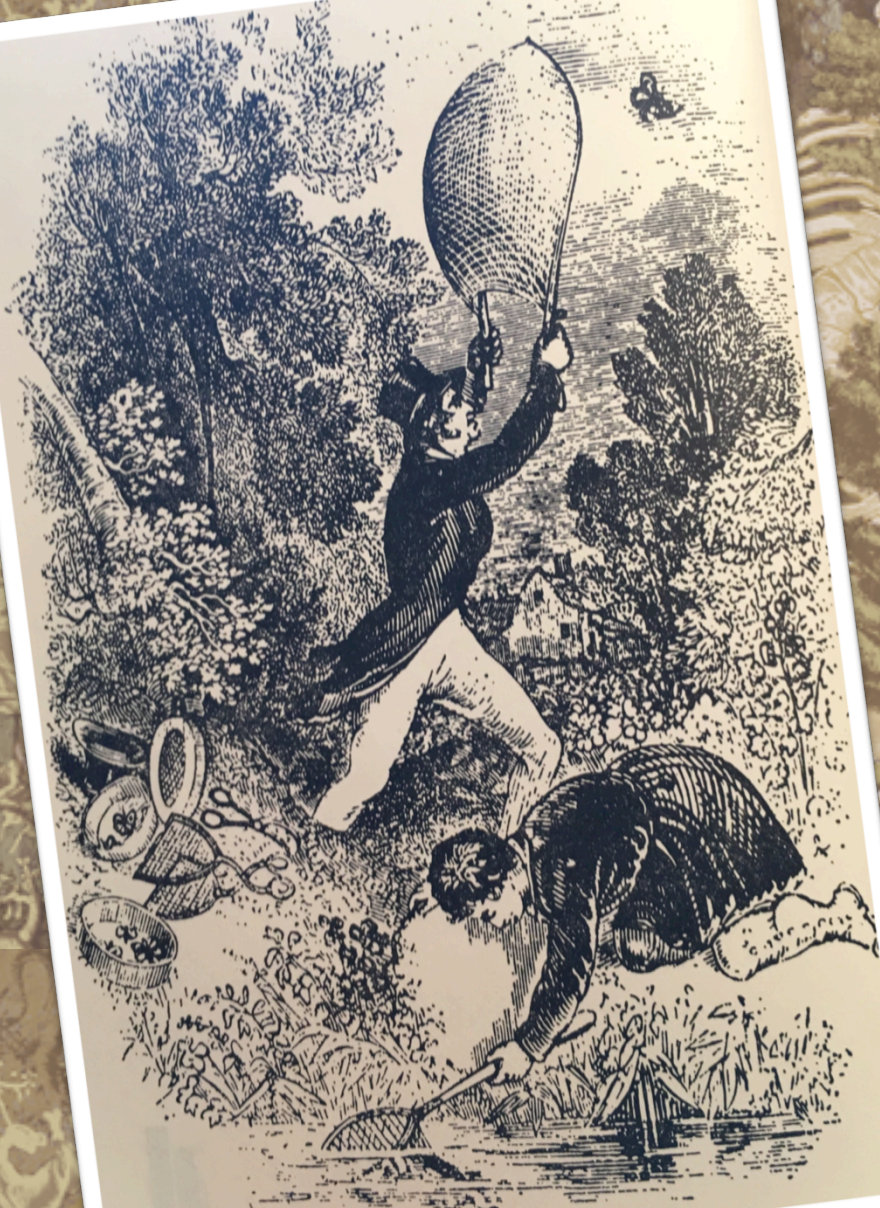


Kirby and Spence warned the novice naturalist *'you will at first be stared and grinned at by the vulgar.'*



However, they added *'they will soon be reconciled to you, and regard you no more than your brethren of the angle and of the gun. Things that are unusual are often esteemed ridiculous.'*





Scratched by a cart
Wheel on Waterloo
Bridge the
day before
yesterday

Scratched
by a glacier
Thirty three
hundred
thousand
years ago

Produced
by
Glaciers
Scratches

Scratched by T. Sopwith

COSTUME of the REALINEAR Course of these Grooves corresponds with the BODY of an IMMENSE does not allow it to change its Course upon Slight Resistances of the GLACIERS

‘any one really intending to work in the matter, must lay aside for a time all thought of conventional appearances’.

For the feet, she advised ‘a pair of boys shooting-boots, rendered waterproof with a thin coat of neats’-foot oil.’

A hat was preferred to a bonnet, stockings of merino wool to ones of cotton and a strong pair of gloves was indispensable.

All fancy millinery-work ‘must, and will, be laid aside by every rational being who attempt to shore-hunt’.







THE BOTANIST.

Pub^d by C. Tilt, Fleet Street.

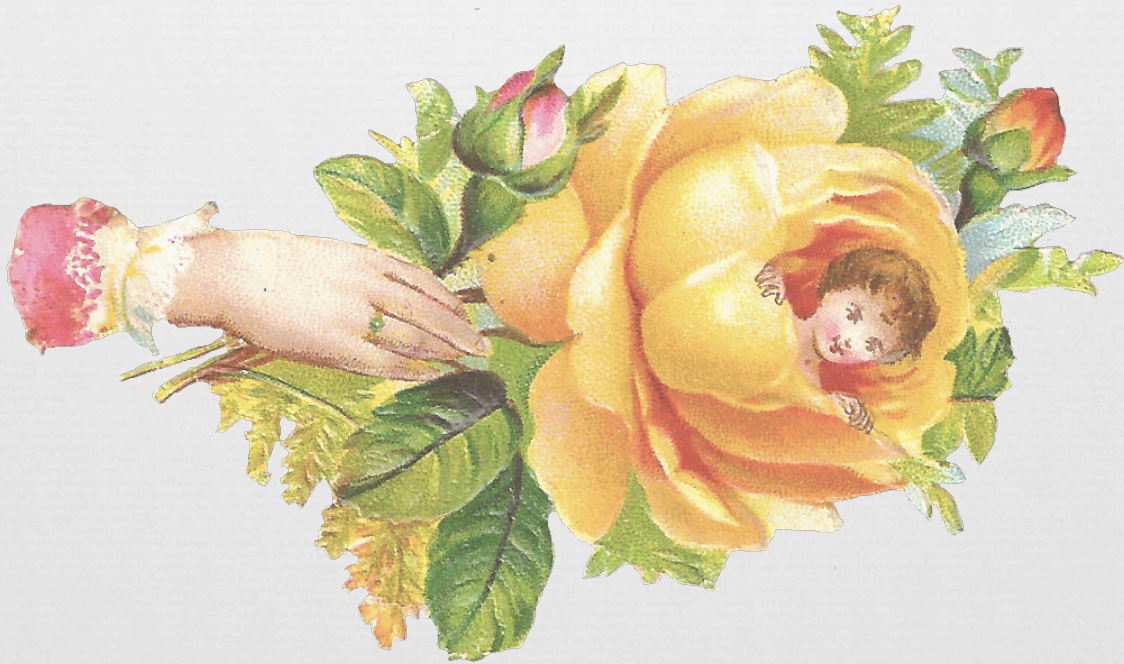


THE ENTOMOLOGIST.

1848

Printed by G.C. Whittier.

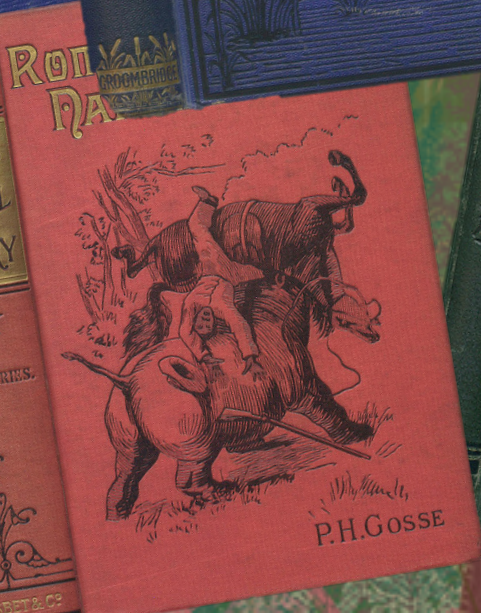
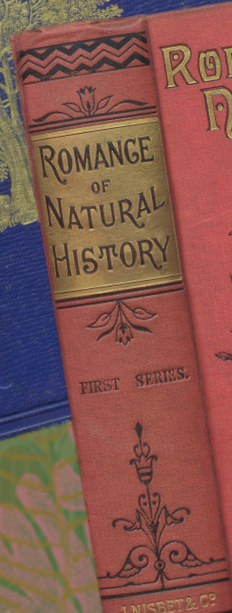
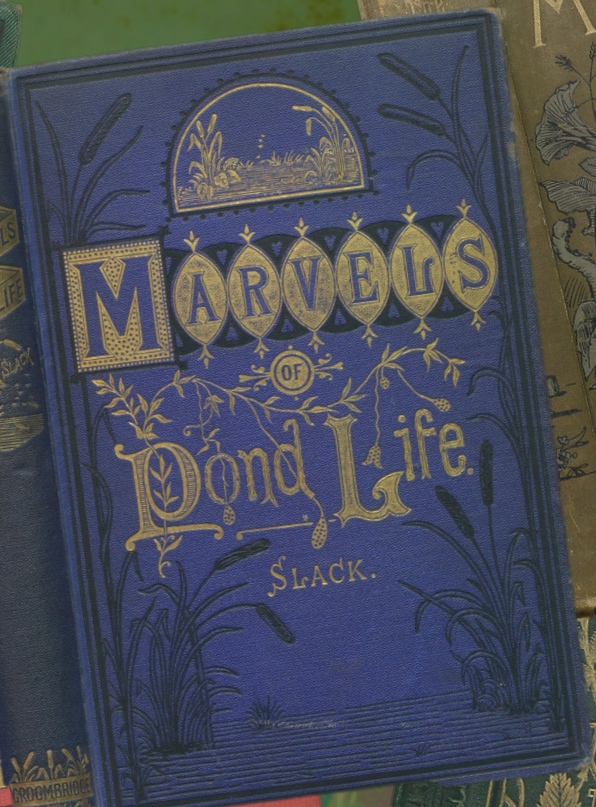
*Received green swallow from Jamaica,
E delivered of a son.*





WHAT AN AQUARIUM SHOULD BE.

What an Aquarium Should Be (1876).







“How seemingly unimportant are the movements of insects, creeping in and out of flowers in search of the nectar on which they feed. *If we saw a man* spending his time in watching them, and in noting their flitting with curious eyes, we might be excused for imagining that he was amusing himself by idling an hour luxuriously in observing things which, though curious, were trifling. But how mistaken might we be in such an assumption! For these little winged messengers bear to the mind of the philosophical naturalist tidings of mysteries hitherto unrevealed.”

- Lydia Becker (1868)



“There is very little of the genuine naturalist in me ... I never collected anything, and species work was a burden to me; what I cared for was the architectural and engineering part of the business.” – Thomas Huxley



W. B. Grove, an expert on microfungi in the Midland Naturalist:

“The glory of the field naturalist has departed. the biologist or physiologist is the hero of the hour, and looks down with infinite contempt upon the luckless being who is still content to search for species... but it is, decidedly ungrateful to the biologist to pour such vials of wrath upon the poor searchers of the past. For out of his own spinnerets, like a spider’s silk, the closet-naturalist cannot evolve the species and genera with which he deals. These are the rewards of one who goes down upon his knees and patiently, hour after hour, turns over heaps of rotting twigs and leaves, or who tramps through woods and fields the lifelong day, and returns at night to his study with the spoils. The observations of the laboratory, are, of course, right and proper in their place, but a world constructed out of them would bear but little resemblance to the glorious vision which the field naturalist sees unfolding constantly before his eyes.”

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