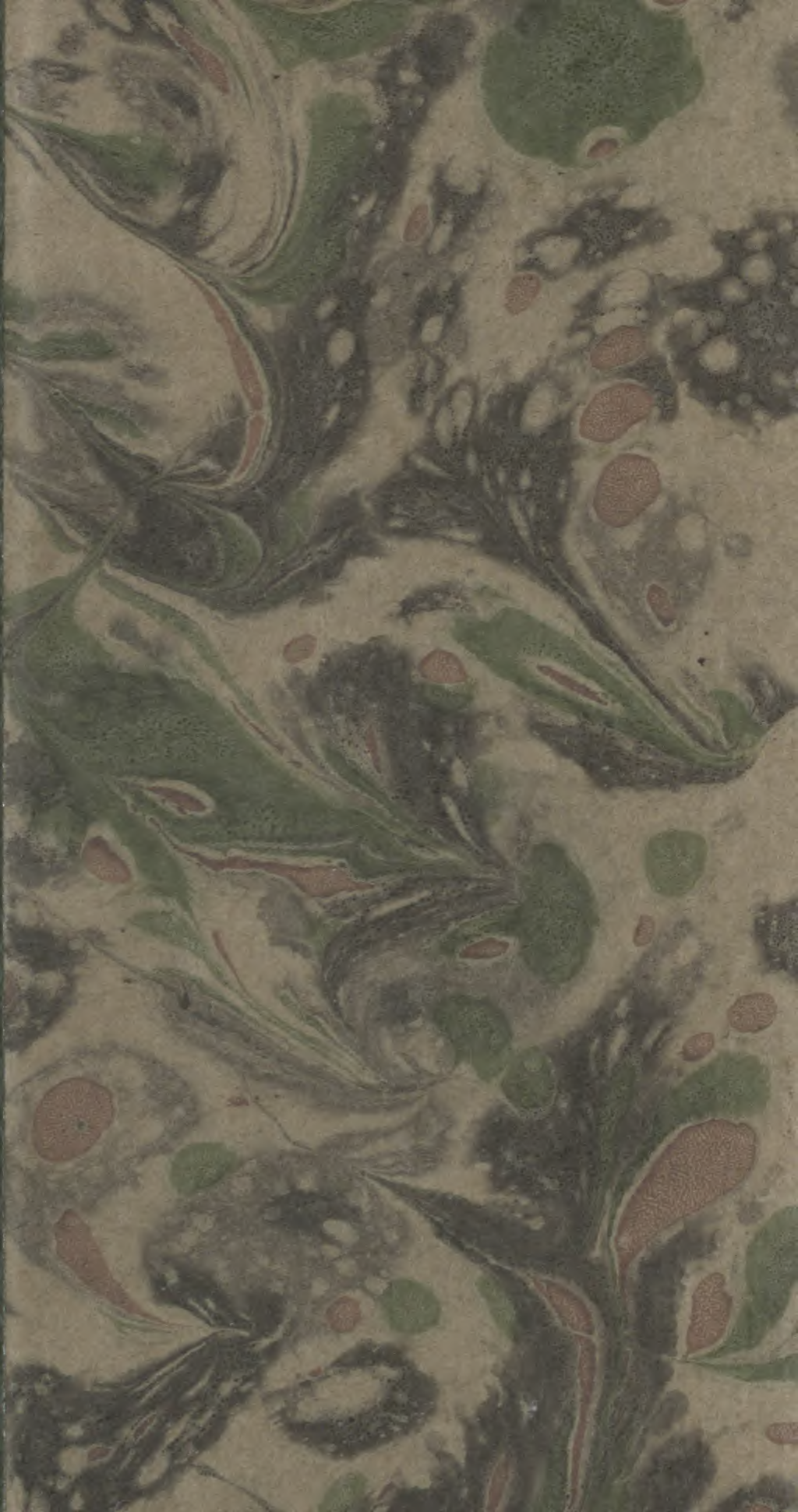

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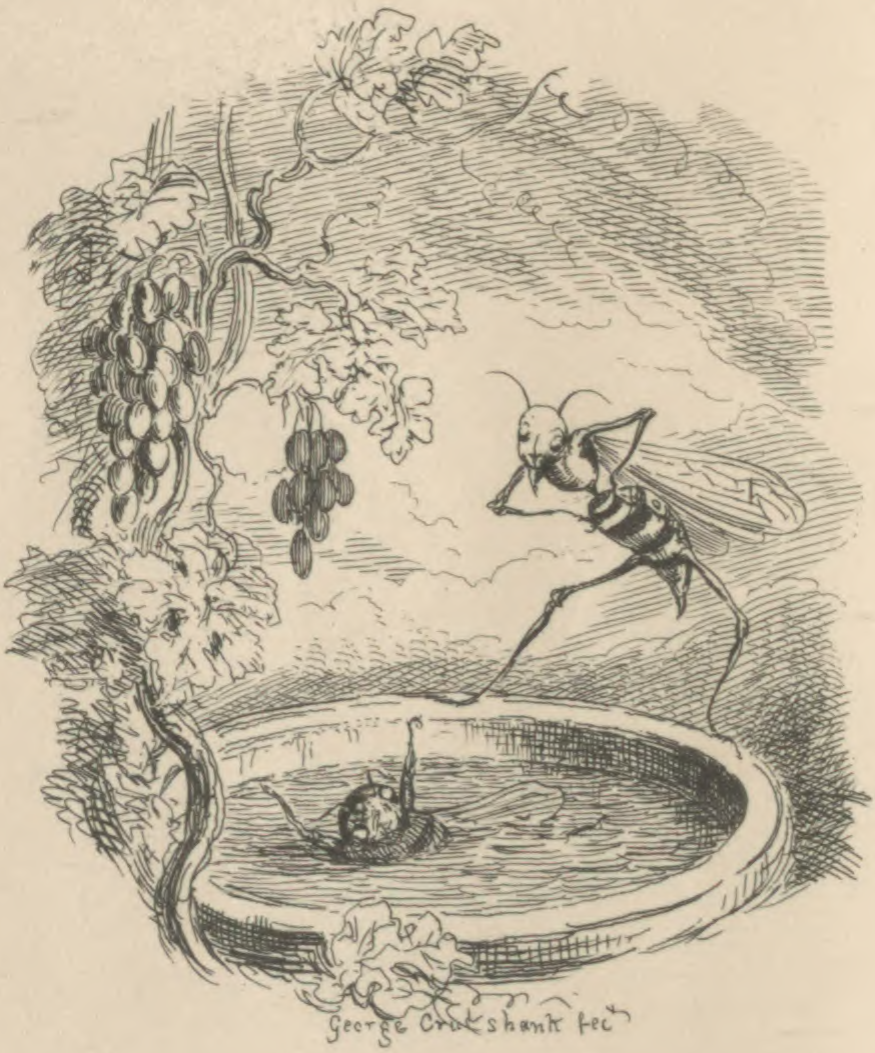

And enquir'd with a sneer, as Bee struggl'd for life,

"Any message, my friend, for your young ones or wife?"

THE

BEE AND THE WASP.

A Fable.—In Verse.

WITH DESIGNS AND ETCHINGS,

BY

G. CRUIKSHANK.

"In tenui labor." ——

LONDON:
CHARLES TILT, 86, FLEET STREET.
1832.

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS,
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TO

RICHARD FRANCIS F———,

This Fable

IS

MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY

HIS FATHER.

THE

BEE AND THE WASP.

I.

A WELL-FED humble Bee, one fine morning in May,
Was desirous of having a long holiday;
He knew well all the fields that surrounded his home,
And he therefore determined much further to roam.

II.

Now his home was a cell he had prettily made,
And beneath a grass-tuft for security laid,
Where the sun's morning beams, and his last ev'ning ray,
Shone, to bless and enliven the inmates, each day.

III.

Fine tall sheltering trees round this homestead grew,
And the fairest of flowers their fragrance threw—
'Twas a sweet lovely spot, and seem'd form'd to bestow
More contentment and bliss than we mortals can know.

IV.

Here long it had been this Bee's fortune to live
In all the delights such a dwelling could give;
And his wife and his young, 'twas his only care,
To supply with food, and their nectar prepare.

V.

Tho' his purpose was fix'd, his heart oft misgave him,
Yet prudence, he thought, from all danger would save
him,
So in silence he strove to repress such emotions,
Lest his wife might discover his new fangled notions.

VI.

At dawn of that day which I mentioned before,
He most slily went off—first shutting the door;
And thinking all safe, far away then he flew
To collect all the sweets of the mountain dew.

VII.

Reliev'd from all fears, he pass'd gaily along,
For Hope had grown high, and his pinions were strong,
So he came to a field where he revelled at ease,
And in honey sometimes was quite up to his knees.

VIII.

When, drinking too much, he became rather mellow,
He met Mr. Wasp, a fine taper-waist fellow;
Quite gaudily dressed, tho' the air was still cool,
In suit of bright yellow and black, made by Poole.

IX.

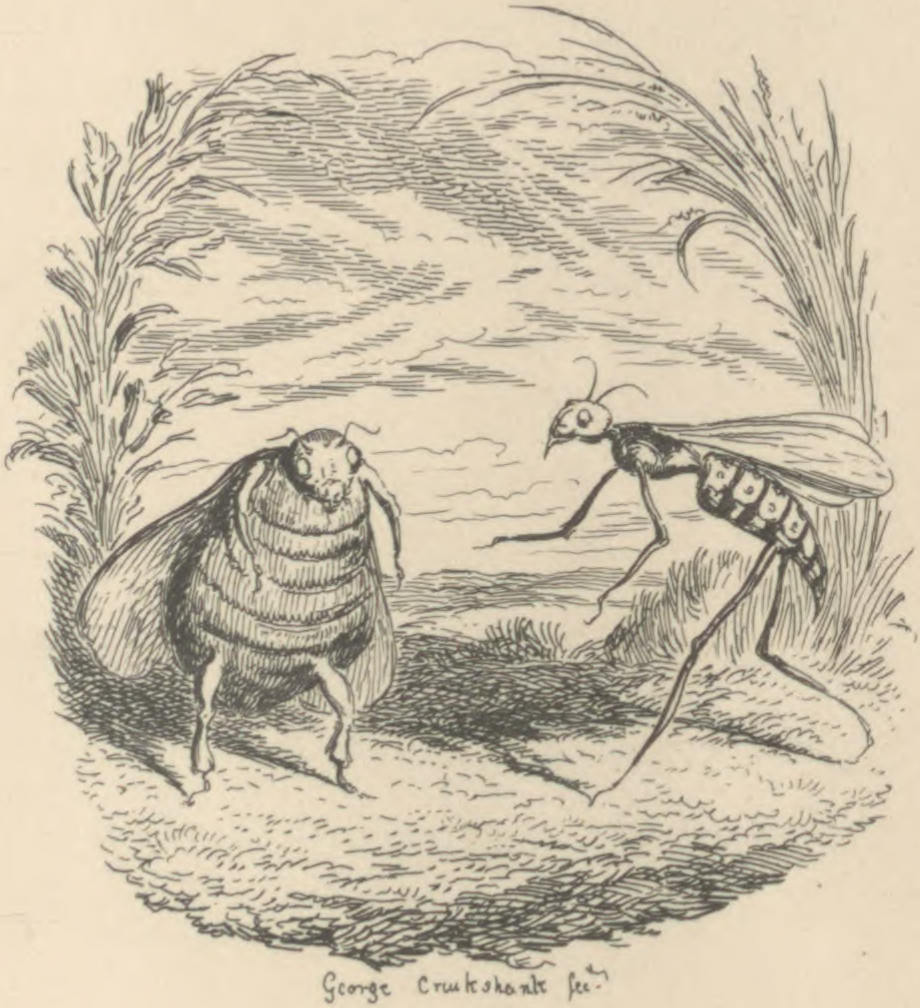
"How d'ye do," says the Wasp, "I'm delighted to see,
In this land of good living, my friend humble Bee,
And, ere you return, I shall show what renown
We gentlemen have that are living near town."

X.

You've doubtless oft heard of our fam'd London city,
Have you never been there? indeed! more's the pity!
Then with me you shall see all the sights wondrous fine,
And I'll take you, besides, with the Lord May'r to dine.

XI.

Humble Bee wished at first that he might be excus'd,
But the Wasp press'd him hard and would not be refus'd;
So consenting at last, on their journey they went,
And the humble Bee talked of his place of content.



"How d'ye do," says the Wasp, "I'm delighted to see

In this land of good living, my friend humble Bee.

XII.

He told Wasp of his cell, and how proudly he felt,
Of his wife, and his young, and the place where they dwelt;
What stores of fine honey he'd already laid by,
Should the season prove short, or in case he might die.

XIII.

Now that rogue of a Wasp heard the whole with a smile,
And design'd a deep plan the poor Bee to beguile,
Which should it succeed, he at once saw quite clear,
Would give him possession of all his friend's cheer.

XIV.

He therefore began, in a very neat speech,
To talk of the dainties he had within reach;
And, like other rogues, to conceal his intention,
He boasted of things far beyond his pretension.

XV.

He spoke of his birth, and the way he'd been bred,
That none of his race ever earn'd their own bread;
But, content with their freedom, and earth's kindest store,
All their wants were supplied, and they cared for no more.—

XVI.

"Except now and then," said the Wasp, "we discover
Living near to our home, a noted Wasp-lover;
One who fills many vessels with Nectar divine,
And then bids us all welcome to taste of his wine.

XVII.

We drink and are merry,—no thoughts of to-morrow,
Disturbance, or sickness, distraction, or sorrow,
E'er rise to perplex us, or lessen our pleasure;
Come, come, let's away.—Stop! behold! here's a treasure!

XVIII.

Humble Bee heard the whole from beginning to end,
And was strangely delighted to've found such a friend
So resting a moment, for they'd flown a long way,
He recover'd his breath, and was thus heard to say:—

HUMBLE BEE'S SONG.

I know not why I'm humble called,
  Since I'm a man of mettle,
And if my spirit's once rous'd up,
  I'll sting like any nettle.

Too long I've led an anxious life,
  And ever with the sun
I've toil'd and work'd from the time he rose,
  Till he his course had run.

But I'm older now, and am wiser grown,
  Nor do I see any reason,

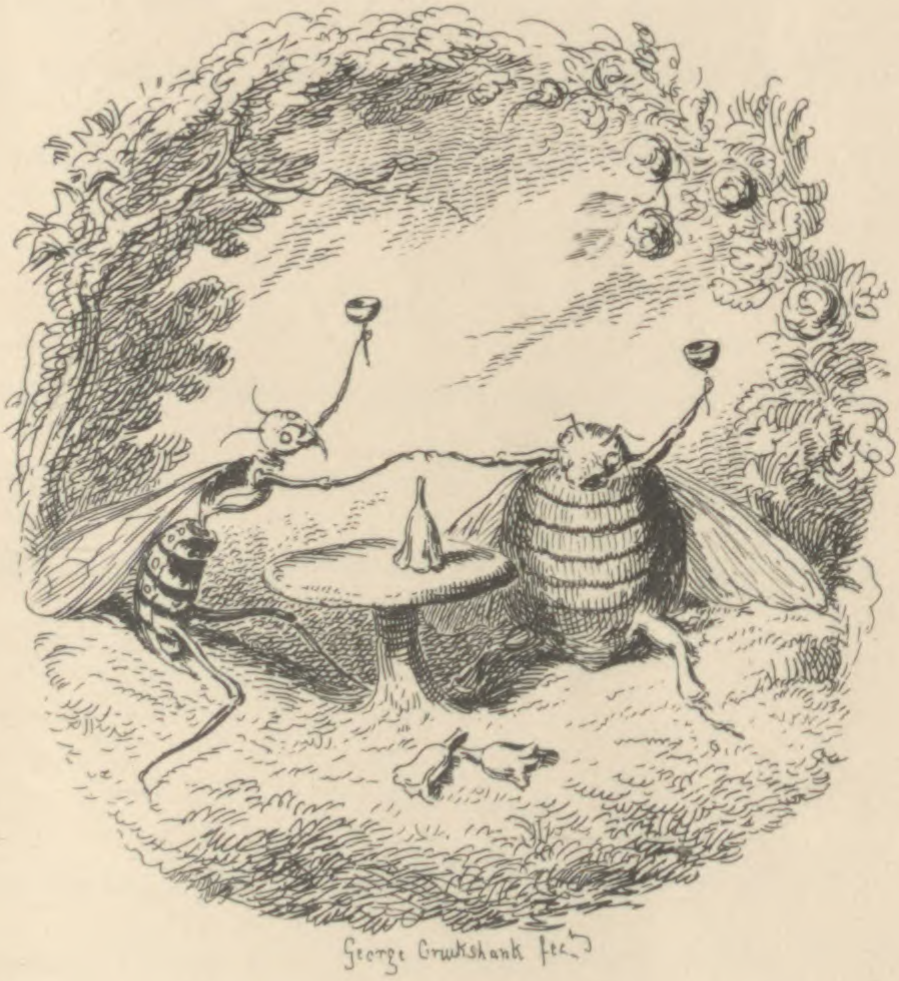
Why a Bee of my worth, should be doom'd from his
birth,
To think pleasure no better than treason.

Chorus.—WASP AND BEE.

So we'll drink of this treasure,
Without any measure,—
And to feasting devote all our lives;
Our cups shall o'erflow,
With feelings that glow,
And we'll care not for children or wives.

XIX.

To this basin of sugar and water they went,
Which was plac'd near a wall, with the wisest intent,
To keep wasps, flies, and ear-wigs,—a mischievous
crew,—
From devouring some fruit that was ripe, and in view.



Our cups shall o'erflow,

With feelings that glow,

And we'll care not for children or wives.

XX.

The Wasp enter'd first, and with practis'd deceit,
Just sipp'd, then pronounc'd it deliciously sweet,—
Bade his friend to be welcome, and drink to his fill,
For from liquor like that he could never be ill.

XXI.

The poor Bee thus encouraged, most eagerly drank,
Till his senses were gone,—in the liquor he sank,
Where, head over heels, he kept floundering about,
But in vain his exertions,—he could not get out.

XXII.

Then he begg'd of the Wasp some assistance to lend,
Cunning Wasp shook his head,—bade adieu to his friend;
And enquir'd with a sneer, as Bee struggl'd for life,
"Any message, my friend, for your young ones or wife?"

XXIII.

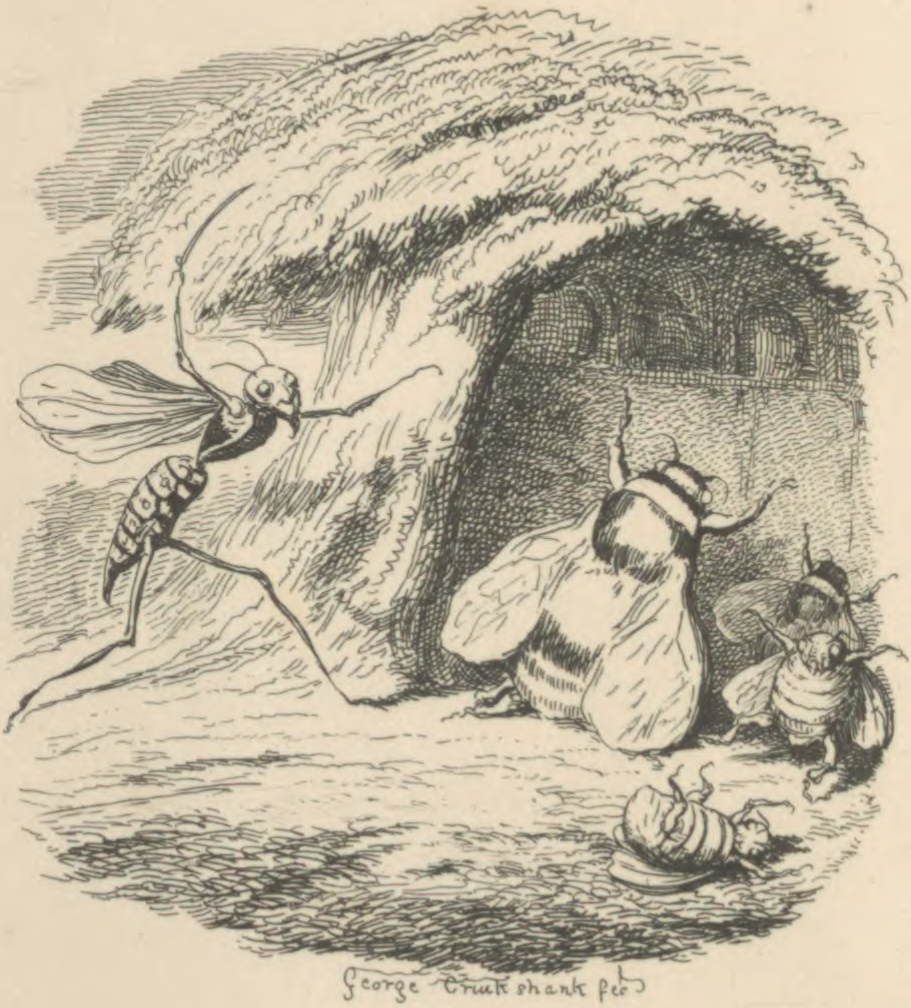
Thus deserted, heart-broken, too late Bee perceiv'd
The vile falsehood of him whom his friend he believ'd;
So we leave the poor fellow, resign'd to his fate,
And what after befel, in conclusion relate.

XXIV.

Now, the humble Bee's wife, all this while left alone,
Felt the pain of an absence, till then quite unknown;
She wonder'd, and fretted—put her children to bed,
And a thousand strange fancies came into her head.

XXV.

She first thought that by chance in his way he was lost,
Or that by a rude whirlwind he might have been toss'd:
Some bird, too, perhaps, might have injur'd his wing,
And no one was near, the sad tidings to bring.



Sword in hand he rush'd in, preventing resistance,

But no neighbour was near to render assistance.

XXVI.

Then forgetting disasters, her anger grew high,
Only think he should leave her, and not say "Good b'ye!"
Oh! what scoldings, black looks, and how cross she would be,
If he ever returned, he should both hear and see.

XXVII.

Overcome with her passion, she scarcely could speak
And sunken and pale was her once lovely cheek;
Her patience exhausted, yet no end to her grief,
Till returning affection brought tears for relief.

XXVIII.

At last as she thought of the truth of the matter,
The Wasp at the door made a terrible clatter,
Sword in hand he rush'd in, preventing resistance,
But no neighbour was near to render assistance.

XXIX.

She shouted and scream'd, and did all that she could
To deter the great monster from spilling her blood;
But her courage gave way, she fell dead with the fright,
And the Wasp had the young ones for supper that night.

XXX.

He also had honey, and he ate such a deal,
That he felt himself sick, ere he finish'd his meal;
Then a fever ensued, from repletion, and hectic,
And long before morning he died apoplectic.

MORAL.

XXXI.

How often man, like this poor Bee,
While pleasure's path pursuing,
Becomes, too late, convinced that he
Has sought his own undoing.

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