

**A CATECHISM OF FAMILIAR THINGS;
THEIR HISTORY, AND THE EVENTS WHICH
LED TO THEIR DISCOVERY, WITH A
SHORT EXPLANATION OF SOME OF THE
PRINCIPAL NATURAL PHENOMENA. FOR
THE USE OF SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES**

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A Catechism of Familiar Things; Their History, and the Events Which Led to Their Discovery, with a Short Explanation of Some of the Principal Natural Phenomena. For the Use of Schools and Families by Emily Elizabeth Willement

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EMILY ELIZABETH WILLEMENT

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A CATECHISM

OF

FAMILIAR THINGS.

From Critical Notices of the First Edition.

"This Book presents a mass of information in a condensed form on all kinds of things which enter into the every-day concerns of life: the air we breathe—the food we eat—the raiment we are clothed with—the habitations we dwell in—the constitution of our mortal frame—arts, commerce, and manufactures, are cleverly treated of, by question and answer; and form a mine of useful information. We recommend it to the attention of parents and tutors."—*Essex Standard*.

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"A mine of useful information. We recommend it to the attention of parents and tutors."—*Essex Standard*.

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BY

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—
NEW AND IMPROVED EDITION.
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1862.

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PREFACE.

THE great success of the first edition of this little volume, and the high eulogiums bestowed on it by its generous patrons, have induced me to bring out a New Edition, which I have taken great pains to render still more worthy of approbation, by several important additions, and a most careful revision. The book itself also is now presented in a more convenient form, and much improved in outward appearance, type, &c., without any increase in price. I wish especially to direct the attention of Parents and Teachers to the necessity of possessing a work calculated to save them much fatigue in the responsible office of education. The subjects contained in it may seem in themselves unimportant or insignificant; but do not children often ask a variety of questions on these very subjects, at times when the parent or teacher is not at leisure to answer them properly?—questions on the most simple subjects, asked in such a manner as to puzzle the cleverest! Besides, is there *one* thing used by us in the daily business of life without its historical interest? Decidedly not,—although, from their familiarity, many are passed by as unimportant. I consider that to trace them to their source is not only amusing, but highly instructive, for there is scarcely one which is not connected with some epoch important in the history of the world.

Here, then, is a book which, I flatter myself, will answer every purpose, as it can be instantly referred to for the required answer, by means of the Index. It is very necessary that children should know the construction of things in common use; the wonders of the natural world; and the manner in which the productions of the earth are made subservient to the use of man;—for,

without this, their knowledge is only superficial. How should children acquire this knowledge, unless their questions obtain clear and intelligent answers? Another advantage also (and for which I have received the commendation of many able teachers) is, the insertion of the meaning of the most difficult words or terms occurring in each answer, at the end of it,—thereby saving the trouble of explanation or reference to a dictionary; both of which are too apt, for want of time, to be passed over, especially in large seminaries, where everything is obliged to be done with despatch.

There may be other works on a similar plan; but the subjects have not been carried out so minutely as in the one now presented, which embraces their whole history, and traces their different stages of improvement, &c., History, Geography, Arts and Sciences, Manufactures, Productions of the Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral Kingdoms, and the Wonders of the Elements, are here exhibited in an engaging aspect. Youth is fond of novelty; and every day there is some new work published:—surely, then, I may hope that mine may take no mean place among them; and its object will be accomplished if it increase the stock of knowledge in the minds of young people.

The former editions of this work being all circulated, and the American press having published the same with a few additions, it was thought advisable to add them to the present New Edition, which has not only been carefully revised, but extended much further, by embracing several subjects of a recent date.

E. E. W.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. DEW, HONEY-DEW, WATER, RAIN, SNOW, HAIL, ATMOSPHERE, WIND, LIGHTNING, THUNDER, ELECTRICITY, TWILIGHT, AND THE AURORA BOREALIS	1
II. CORN, BARLEY, PEARL BARLEY, OATS, RYE, POTATOES, TEA, COFFEE, AND CHOCOLATE	11
III. CALICO, COTTON, CLOTH, WOOL, HAIR, LINEN, FLAX, HEMP, DIAPER, HOLLAND, CANVAS, AND FLANNEL	15
IV. COCOA, TODDY, CHERRIES, BARK, CORK, COCHINEAL, CLOVES, CINNAMON, AND CASSIA	21
V. BOMBAZINE, CRAPE, CAMLET, CAMBRIC, LACE, SILK, VELVET, AND MOHAIR	27
VI. CURRANTS, RAISINS, FIGS, RICE, SUGAR, SUGAR CANDY, SAGO, MILLET, GINGER, NUTMEG, MACE, PIMENTO OR ALLSPICE, PEPPER, AND CATENNE PEPPER	33
VII. GLASS, MIRRORS, EARTHENWARE, PORCELAIN, NEEDLES, PINS, PAPER, PRINTING, PARCHMENT, AND VELLUM	39
VIII. CAPERS, ALMONDS, ORANGES, LEMONS, CITRONS, LIMES, OLIVES, OILS, GLYCERINE, MELONS, TAMARINDS, DATES, AND POMEGRANATES	47
IX. HATS, STOCKINGS, SHOES, GLOVES, LEATHER, FURS, AND INK	58
X. ARSENIC, SALT, COAL, IRON, COPPER, BRASS, ZINC, AND LAPIS CALAMINARIUS	66
XI. YAMS, MANGOES, BREAD-FRUIT, SHEA OR BUTTER-TREE, COW-TREE, MAIZE, WATER-TREE, LIQUORICE, MANNA, OPIUM, TOBACCO, AND GUM	75
XII. SPECTACLES, MARINER'S COMPASS, BAROMETER, THERMOMETER, WATCHES, CLOCKS, GUNPOWDER, TELESCOPE, MICROSCOPE, STEAM ENGINE, ELECTRO-MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH, AND SUBMARINE TELEGRAPH	85

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIII. SOAP, CANDLES, ARTIFICIAL LIGHT, TALLOW-TREE, SPERMACEIN, WAX, PETROLINE, PARAFFIN, MAHOGANY, INDIAN RUBBER OR CAOUTCHOUC, GUTTA PERCHA, SPONGE, CORAL, LIME, CARBON, OXYGEN, NITROGEN, OZONE, CALORIC GAS, NAPHTHA, HYDROGEN, CHALK, AND MARBLE	98
XIV. GOLD, SILVER, TIN, LEAD, BLACK LEAD, PLATINA, SULPHUR, ARSENIC, GEMS OR PRECIOUS STONES, AS DIAMONDS, RUBIES, EMERALDS, TURQUOIS, PEARLS, MOTHER-OF-PEARL, AND IVORY	117
XV. STARCH, ARROW-ROOT, TAPIOCA, ISINGLASS, CAVIARE, THE VINE, WINE, HONEY, GIN, RUM, MALT, BEER, BRANDY, VINEGAR, INDIGO, COBALT, LAPIS LAZULI, GAMBAGE, LOGWOOD, TAR, PITCH, CAMPHOR, MUEK, MYRRH, FRANKINCENSE, AND TURPENTINE	123
XVI. BRICKS, MORTAR, GRANITE, SLATE, LIMESTONE, OR CALCAREOUS ROCKS, STEEL, EARTHES, VOLCANOES, AND EARTHQUAKES	146
XVII. ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE, USE OF MONEY, NAVIGATION	158
XVIII. MUSIC, PAINTING, PHOTOGRAPHY, POETRY, ASTRONOMY, ARTS AND SCIENCES, ART OF WRITING, AND CHEMISTRY	177