

**EMBLEMS: A BIRD'S-EYE
VIEW OF THE
HARMONIES OF
NATURE WITH MANKIND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649434138

Emblems: A Bird's-Eye View of the Harmonies of Nature with Mankind by Leo Hartley
Grindon

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

LEO HARTLEY GRINDON

**EMBLEMS: A BIRD'S-EYE
VIEW OF THE
HARMONIES OF
NATURE WITH MANKIND**

EMBLEMS :

A Bird's-Eye View of the Harmonies of Nature
with Mankind.

BY

LEO HARTLEY GRINDON,

AUTHOR OF "LIFE: ITS NATURE," ETC.; "THE TREES OF OLD
ENGLAND;" "BRITISH AND GARDEN BOTANY,"
ETC., ETC.



LONDON :

F. PITMAN, 20, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

MDCCLXIX.

270. g. 275

F. FITMAN,
20, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.

PREFACE.

THOUGH formally published only now, this little essay was written more than twenty years ago, and in part offered for perusal through the medium of a magazine. Condensed and corrected, and with a few new paragraphs introduced where there seemed to be occasion, it is now submitted to a wider circle, in the hope of suggesting further inquiry into the beautiful subject of which it treats. That it should be either "scientific" or "metaphysical" has been no part of the writer's design, or ambition either. The idea has been simply to string together a few illustrations of the harmonies which exist between man and the world he lives in, and to provide an hour of useful reading for the amiable and the thoughtful.

MANCHESTER, *March*, 1869.

CONTENTS.

	PAGES
CHAPTER I.—What Emblems are.—Figurative Language.— Functions of Poetry	1—6
CHAPTER II.—Illustrations from Zoology.—The Nightingale. —Bees.—Ants.—The Lion.—Heraldry and Mythology	7—16
CHAPTER III.—Illustrations from Plants and Flowers.— Buds.—Leaves.—The Ivy.—Thorns and Thistles	17—25
CHAPTER IV.—Illustrations from Plants and Flowers (con- tinued).—Seeds.—The “Language of Flowers.”— Poetry.—Thankfulness to God	26—34
CHAPTER V.—Illustrations from Plants and Flowers (con- cluded).—Trees.—Forests.—The Vine, the Olive, and the Fig.—Influence of the Woods, Groves, and Pools	35—51
CHAPTER VI.—Illustrations from Inanimate Nature.— Rivers and Streams.—Springs and Fountains.—The Sea	52—61
CHAPTER VII.—Illustrations from Inanimate Nature (con- tinued).—Mountains and Valleys.—The Sun and Stars. —Light.—Minerals and Metals.—Gold	62—77
CHAPTER VIII.—Illustrations from the Seasons, etc.— Spring, Summer, Autumn (with Signification of Colours).—Ancient Sculpture	78—89
CHAPTER IX.—The Omnipresent God.—Practical applica- tion of the idea of the preceding pages	90—96

EMBLEMS.

CHAPTER I.

"Solitude has great and awful instructions. Shakspeare, Chaucer, Homer, and Dante saw the splendour of meaning that plays over the visible world; they knew that a tree had another use than for bearing apples, and corn another than for meal, and the ball of the earth another than for tillage and roads;—they knew that these things bear a second and finer harvest to the mind of man, being emblems of his thought, and conveying in all their processes and natural history a certain mute commentary on human life."—*Emerson.*

1. EMBLEMS are to the eyes of men what figurative language is to the ear. They are the same as to nature and purpose, differing only in the mode in which they appeal to our intelligence. When, for example, Chaucer and Ossian speak of leafless trees as images of persons from whom all the enjoyments of life have been stripped away, the expressions present themselves to our minds as beautiful comparisons, appropriate to literature and poetry, thus as illustrating the spirit and force of Simile:—when, upon the other hand, we look upon such trees ourselves, and associate with them the ideas which flow from the poetic sentiment in our own bosoms, we have Emblems before us, and

make use of them in turn, to portray the feelings of which they furnish the intelligible symbol.

2. Figurative language, however, comprehends far more than what is ordinarily so called. The term is not to be understood as merely intending those definite rhetorical forms which the grammarians distinguish as figures of speech; every word in every language under heaven, excepting perhaps some few crude and artificial ones, is figurative in essence. This is palpable enough to the student of philology who continues his inquiries from the dictionary into nature, (the source and *genitrix* of all things), and comes of the magnificent pre-established harmony between the mind of man and the material world, and of that sublime munificence of the Creator, which after providing an inexhaustible storehouse of images and illustrations of human thought and human emotion, gave impulse to the intellect to relish and use it. Nature, as it lies diffused around us, shining, boundless, immortal, is latent language. Man cannot utter a single sentence without drawing upon objective nature, and the most exquisite and eloquent utterances are those which disclose most plainly whence they have come. So much of the current language of these, the true "old times" of the world, has become fossilized—so many of our most familiar terms belong to dialects no longer used for social converse,—that the superb and indisputable fact of metaphor constituting the very sub-

stance, the absolute warp and woof of language, no less than its embroidery, is to the mass of speakers quite unknown. The fact is there, nevertheless, for the enthusiasm and refreshment of whoever cares to dive into the past, and to list the universal echoes subsisting between man and nature, and which are as lively to-day as they were in the beginning.

3. Language, objective nature, emblems, the thoughts, sentiments, and affections of men and women, are thus only different ways of stating the same primitive ideas,—ways adopted by Infinite love and wisdom, for the sake of giving beauty and delight to the creation. Talk not of figurative language as a mere device of the orator; or of emblems as an invention of the artist, arbitrary and capricious. Fanciful and unreal ones no doubt there are, since the secular misfortune of every great truth is to be vitiated as soon as born, and of every line of perfect beauty to be conventionalized. When all have been criticized, it still remains true that metaphors are realities, and that all realities are metaphors. The harmonies of nature and mind are the microscope of thought. If we choose to dwell in the teachings of the unassisted eye, how shall we know what lies within the circle it cannot reach? To interpret nature is one of the highest privileges granted to man; he vindicates it by finding the world the mirror it is.