

**DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME
SCENES IN THE LIFE OF
ALEXANDER WILSON: THE
ORNITHOLOGIST, PP. 2-160**

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Difficulties Overcome Scenes in the Life of Alexander Wilson: The Ornithologist, pp. 2-160 by
C. Lucy Brightwell & Charles Keene

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C. LUCY BRIGHTWELL & CHARLES KEENE

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"I was obliged to steer out into the river, which rolled and foamed like a sea."— p. 96.



Difficulties Overcome

SCENES IN THE LIFE OF

ALEXANDER WILSON

THE ORNITHOLOGIST

BY

C. LUCY BRIGHTWELL

AUTHOR OF "HEROES OF THE LABORATORY" ETC.

"I have, by resolution, surmounted all these, and other obstacles, in my way to my object, and now begin to see the blue sky of independence open around me."—Page 139.

WITH

AN ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES KEENE.

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(and of them only) "that take pleasure therein."

It is, perhaps, greatly owing to this disinterested love, that the lives of those who have devoted themselves to the study and contemplation of nature possess a charm of their own, combining much of lively interest with instruction. The remarkable man the story of whose life I am about to tell, was of an ardent and enterprising nature, and a true enthusiast in his chosen pursuit. He was, beside, a striking instance of successful perseverance overcoming the most formidable obstacles, and gradually winning its upward course above the mists of obscurity and depression. It has been said that narratives drawn from humble life, recording the actions and sufferings, the good or evil fortunes of their brethren, most strongly rivet the attention of working-men and their families. If it be so, it may be permitted me to indulge the hope that this little book will find favour with the family circle that gathers round the mechanic's fireside, and awaken in some young hearts there a generous interest in the fortunes of one who sprang from among themselves;—perchance, incline them occasionally to employ their

leisure hours in the observation of nature. There was a time when the Spitalfields weavers were the first entomologists in the kingdom, and when the cutlers of Sheffield were accustomed to recreate themselves after a hard day's work by breathing the pure air of their surrounding hills while in search of insects and birds; nor were the artisans of Norwich deficient in a taste for natural history, many of them being fond of giving their vacant time to botanizing, as is mentioned with complacency by their distinguished fellow-citizen, Sir James Smith, in the *Linnæan Transactions*.¹

Would that a taste for these pure and elevating pursuits were more prevalent among all classes of the community, serving, as they do, to multiply our enjoyments at so cheap a rate, and leading us, by such pleasing gradations upwards to the contemplation and worship of the great God, the Father and Preserver of all, making us, so to speak, partakers of His own delights, for "The Lord rejoiceth in the works of His hands."

Alexander Wilson was born at Paisley, on the 6th of July, 1766. His father, who was a weaver in that town, bore a

¹ See vol. ii, 315.