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

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649562466

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

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

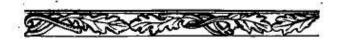
C. LUCY BRIGHTWELL & CHARLES KEENE

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

Trieste



") was obliged to when out into the tiver, which colled and formed like a set." = p, 26.



Dimculties Overcome

SCENES IN THE LIFE OF

ALEXANDER WILSON

THE ORNITHOLOGIST

BY

C. LUCY BRIGHTWELL

AUTHOR OF "HEROES OF THE LABORATORY" ETC.

"I have, by refolution, furmounted all thefe, and other obfactes, in my way to my object, and now begin to fee the blue flay of independence open around me."—Page 139.

MINU

AN ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES KEENE,

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND CO.

47, LUDGATE HILL.

1861.

I sar a hitu



CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

Introductory remarks—Birth and childhood of Wilfon— Apprenticed as a weaver—The young poet-naturalift—The friendly affociates—Day dreams—Wilfon a packman— "Advertifement Extraordinary"

CHAP. II.

Pleafures and trials of an itinerant life-Poverty and wit-The amiable and moral character of Wilfon-Extracts from his journal-Illnefs and melancholy forebodings-The debating fociety-"Watty and Meg." or "he has poem'd us"-An extempore epitaph--Revolutionary predilections-The fatire and its punifhment-Thoughts of America and freedom--Off, and away!

CHAP. III.

Arrival in America—Wilfon's first letter home—The early years of ftruggle—He fettles down as a fchoolmaster— Diligent in business—Fond memories of home—Wilfon's affectionate regard for his relatives in America—Letters to

6

CONTENTS.

W. Duncan-His removal to New Jersey and final eftablifhment near Philadelphia-A happy home and kind friends-Defpondency-"Try birds" . . . 25

CHAP. IV.

CHAP. V.

CHAP. VI.

Wilfon takes a journey eaftward—His various fuccefs—Nowhaven and Middleton—A bear and an ignoramus—Portland, Dartmouth College, and Annapolis—The wilds of North Carolina—The Ivory-billed Woodpecker—The Vultures' feaft—Home again—The fecond volume of the Ornithology—The Red-winged Starlings—The Mocking Bird—The Fifh-hawk and the fifherman's hymn . 68

ii

CONTENTS.

CHAP. VIL

CHAP. VIII.

Cincinnati—Arrival at Louifville—M. Audubon's interview with Wilfon—A monfter Pigeon rooft—Immenfe flights of thefe birds—Kentucky horfes—A family caravan— A novel region—Enormous caves—Wilfon's description of one he vifited—No water—Nafhville—Horfes and flaves fold together—Agreeable fociety—Preparations for an expedition through the wilds

CHAP. IX.

Swimming a river-Kentucky boatmen-Grinder's cabin-Sad ftory of the death of Captain Lewis-Wilfon's peril and efcape-""The day will declare it"-Buffalo river-The Indian territory-The Chocktaws and Chickafaws-Kindnefs fhewn by the Indians and Negroes to the Martins-"Schnip fchnap"-Horrid fwampa-Wilfon attacked by dyfentery-A tropical ftorm-Arrival at Natchez -Defcription of the town-Vifit to Mr. Dunbar-From New Orleans home by fea-Letter to his brother David-"The blue fky of independence"

CHAP. X.

"A tribute to rural innocence"-A quiet retreat-The Naturalifi in his fludio-Preface to the fifth volume

iii

Difficulties Overcome.

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

It is, perhaps, greatly owing to this difinterefted love, that the lives of those who have devoted themfelves to the fludy and contemplation of nature poffels a charm of their own, combining much of lively interest with instruction. The remarkable man the ftory of whofe life I am about to tell, was of an ardent and enterprifing nature, and a true enthufiaft in his chofen purfuit. He was, befide, a ftriking inftance of fuccefsful perfeverance overcoming the most formidable obftacles, and gradually winning its upward courfe above the mifts of obfcurity and depression. It has been faid that narratives drawn from humble life, recording the actions and fufferings, the good or evil fortunes of their brethren, most strongly rivet the attention of working-men and their families. If it be fo, 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 firefide, and awaken in fome young hearts there a generous intereft in the fortunes of one who fprang from among themfelves ----perchance, in-cline them occasionally to employ their

2

Wilfon the Ornithologift. 3

leifure hours in the obfervation of nature. There was a time when the Spitalfields weavers were the firft entomologifts in the kingdom, and when the cutlers of Sheffield were accuftomed to recreate themfelves after a hard day's work by breathing the pure air of their furrounding hills while in fearch of infects and birds; nor were the artifans of Norwich deficient in a tafte for natural hiftory, many of them being fond of giving their vacant time to botanizing, as is mentioned with complacency by their diffinguifhed fellow-citizen, Sir James Smith, in the Linnæan Tranfactions.¹

Would that a tafte for thefe pure and elevating purfuits were more prevalent among all claffes of the community, ferving, as they do, to multiply our enjoyments at fo cheap a rate, and leading us, by fuch pleafing gradations upwards to the contemplation and worfhip of the great God, the Father and Preferver of all, making us, fo to fpeak, partakers of His own delights, for "The Lord rejoiceth in the works of His hands."

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

1 See vol. ii, 315.