

**THE BOY'S SUMMER BOOK:
DESCRIPTIVE OF THE SEASON,
SCENERY, RURAL LIFE, AND
COUNTRY AMUSEMENTS**

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The Boy's Summer Book: Descriptive of the Season, Scenery, Rural Life, and Country Amusements by Thomas Miller

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THOMAS MILLER

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THE
BOYS' SUMMER BOOK

DESCRIPTIVE OF THE
SEASON, SCENERY, RURAL LIFE,
AND
COUNTRY AMUSEMENTS.

BY THOMAS MILLER,
AUTHOR OF "BEAUTIES OF THE COUNTRY," "RURAL SKETCHES," ETC.

WITH THIRTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS.



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The Summer sun shines bright to-day,
The bee among the flowers doth stray,
The bird is singing on the spray,
While in the fields the new-mown hay
Thro'with its fragrance every way.

SUMMER is come again, bright and beautiful as it ever cometh, for the trees and flowers never looked more lovely than they do now; and although man sinned against his Maker, and was driven from the Garden of Eden—that garden in which the angels walked, and conversed with Adam—still God, in His goodness, adorned the hills and fields with leaves and blossoms, as beautiful as we can imagine ever waved in Paradise, that their presence might gladden our hearts, and call forth our praise and gratitude, while looking upon the wonderful workmanship of his hands.



SUMMER.

Many a time while at school have we talked about this delicious season, often wondering if we should find the young birds hopping about the neighborhood of the old nest, in the same green hawthorn hedge where they had built year after year; and often have we fancied that we could hear the sheep bleating beside the brook, where they had been driven to be washed;—we imitated the shout of the glad cuckoo, and recalled the very spot where we heard her singing in the sunshine, as she stood perched upon the topmost bough of the old ash-tree. We assembled in little groups, and planned many an excursion, in our minds, to places where hundreds of sweet wild flowers grew; to solitudes where the water-hen swam, and built, and dived, and reared her young; where the tall bulrushes waved, and the bending water-flags nodded to their shadows in the clear stream. Our memory flew back to the green straggling lanes, and fields that sloped down from the foot of many a rounded hill; to mornings when the world seemed bathed in sunshine, and the smell of the hawthorn mingled with the sweet breath of the cows, as we drove them homeward at milking-time—or mounted on the broad-backed horses, rode them to water in the clear pool beside the wood, before they dragged the heavy wagon into the hayfield. In fancy we saw the wide village-green, where the cricketers were wont to assemble, and the bank by the river side, where we spent so many happy hours in angling; for old home-scenes and healthy pastimes seemed to arise before us with a pleasanter look, as the summer holidays drew nearer, and our hearts beat lighter as we hailed the season of birds and flowers; and forests with their rich perfume, and skies hung with blue, where clouds change from silver to purple, then become golden as they gather around the setting sun—for to us summer was ever the happiest season of the year.

Up and away, then, "my merry men all," as Robin Hood

MOWERS.

says to his foresters in the old ballad, and we will ramble together through the fields and woods, over many a high hill, and beside many a pleasant brook, and talk about the wonderful things which we are sure to meet with in our way. We will gaze upon the great oak which seems to grow up into the very sky, and examine the graceful form of the small cup-moss which is scattered around its twisted roots on the earth; look upon the huge ox that lows in the meadows, and shakes the earth with its heavy tread; and talk about the little harvest-mouse, which would not more than weigh down a farthing were it placed in the opposite scale. We will visit the spot where the fierce hawk builds its nest, and show you the home which the titmouse erects for her young ones. We will leap, and run, and shout, and sing that little woodland song of Shakspeare's, until we make the old hills echo again, as they ring back the chorus, while we merrily exclaim, from the very joyousness of our hearts,

"Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither—come hither."

What a "rasp, rasp," do those mowers make as they sharpen their sythes. Hark! how the sound is echoed back from yonder wood; let us pause a moment, and watch them while they mow down the bladed and tufted grass, and all the beautiful array of wild flowers. Look how firmly each man plants his foot upon the ground; what a regularity there is in the bending of their bodies, and the swinging of their arms—all moving like one man, step for step, stroke for stroke. By glancing down the field you may count the number of "swaths," which tell the width swept down by every stroke of the sythe, from where the first cut began, to where the last sweep ended; wave above wave does the grass lie in endless succession, as if the wind had blown the broad