

**THE PARADISE OF BIRDS:  
AN OLD EXTRAVAGANZA  
IN A MODERN DRESS**

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The Paradise of Birds: An Old Extravaganza in a Modern Dress by William John Courthope

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**WILLIAM JOHN COURTHOPE**

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BY

WILLIAM JOHN COURTHOPE

AUTHOR OF 'LUDIBRRIA LUNE'



"Rien n'est si joli que la folie, si triste que la vérité"

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MDCCCLXX

280. j. 266.

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I DEDICATE THESE PAGES TO

MY SISTER,

IN MEMORY OF THE BIRDS WHO SANG TO US BY

THE FIRST HOME OF OUR CHILDHOOD

THE SAME SONG THAT THEIR

CHILDREN'S CHILDREN ARE STILL REPEATING

IN THE BRANCHES.





## PREFACE.

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THOSE who attempt to deal in poetry with the incidents or theories of the present day, propose to themselves a difficult, some may say an idle, task. The press and rapidity of modern events, and the ease with which ideas are circulated, seem to throw the powers of literature more and more into the hands of the journalist. The words or actions of men are reported through a hundred daily sources, and yet what is engrossing to-day is forgotten to-morrow, so that allusion in poetry runs the double risk of appearing vulgar or obsolete. So much the author would premise with regard to a poem written in a time of profound peace, and sent to press before

the late great events had occurred, which seem to open out altered prospects for the nations of the world. Yet the conflict of principles, which the poem, however trivially, represents, will continue when the incidents of the war now raging are disregarded or forgotten. Nor can these great modern questions be treated in an extravaganza without an admixture of personal and political reference. The example of the great Greek comedian, who so powerfully represented on the stage of Athens the struggle between the material and the spiritual, the traditional and the progressive, may perhaps shield an English imitator from the blame of vulgarising the gravity of philosophy by the licence of contemporary allusion.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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MARESNEST, a Philosopher of the "Development"  
Persuasion.

WINDBAG, a Poet of the Romantic School.

BIRDCATCHER, }  
COOK, } Souls in Purgatory.  
LADY, }

ROC, an extinct Bird in his Egg-Shell, the Gate of Limbo.

BIRD OF PARADISE, King of the Birds' Paradise.

JACKDAW, }  
ROOK, }  
PIGEON, } Birds in Paradise.  
LARK, }  
NIGHTINGALE, }  
GOLDFINCH, }  
BLACKBIRD, }  
THRUSH, }  
LINNET, }  
SWALLOW, }  
GOOSE, }

CHORUS OF HUMAN BEINGS IN PURGATORY.

CHORUS OF EXTINCT BIRDS IN THE SHELL.

CHORUS OF BIRDS IN PARADISE.

A JURY OF TWELVE BIRDS.