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Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste

James Shirley Hibberd (1825–90) was a journalist and horticultural writer who worked as a bookseller before devoting his time to researching and lecturing and publishing on gardening. An active member of the Royal Horticultural Society, he edited several gardening magazines including *Floral World*, and his writing was widely enjoyed and respected. This book, first published in 1856, is Hibberd's carefully researched and practical guide to decorating the home and garden. Hibberd explains the practical aspects of garden design, the pleasures of bee-keeping, and how to construct a pond or aquarium. Full of useful advice on everything from preserving cut flowers to the ideal species of bird to keep in an aviary, this is a charming and enjoyable manual for the Victorian gardener which was very popular in its time, and remains a useful source for the cultural historian as well as an entertaining treat for the general reader.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-03717-4 - Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste
Shirley Hibberd
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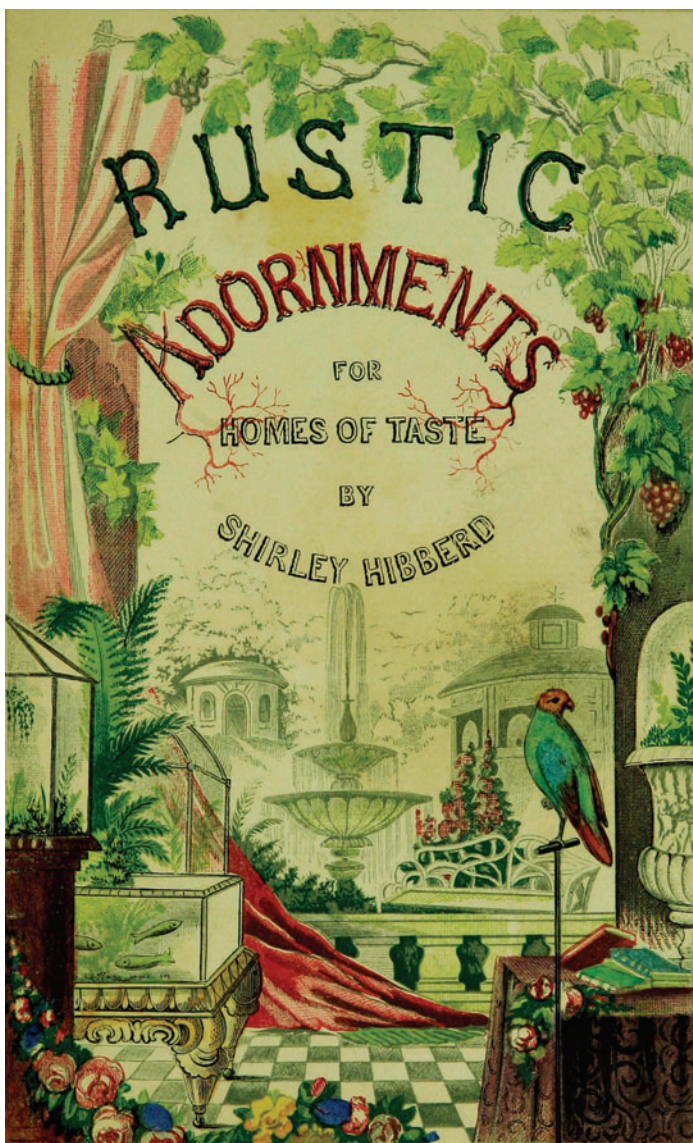
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AQUARIUM.

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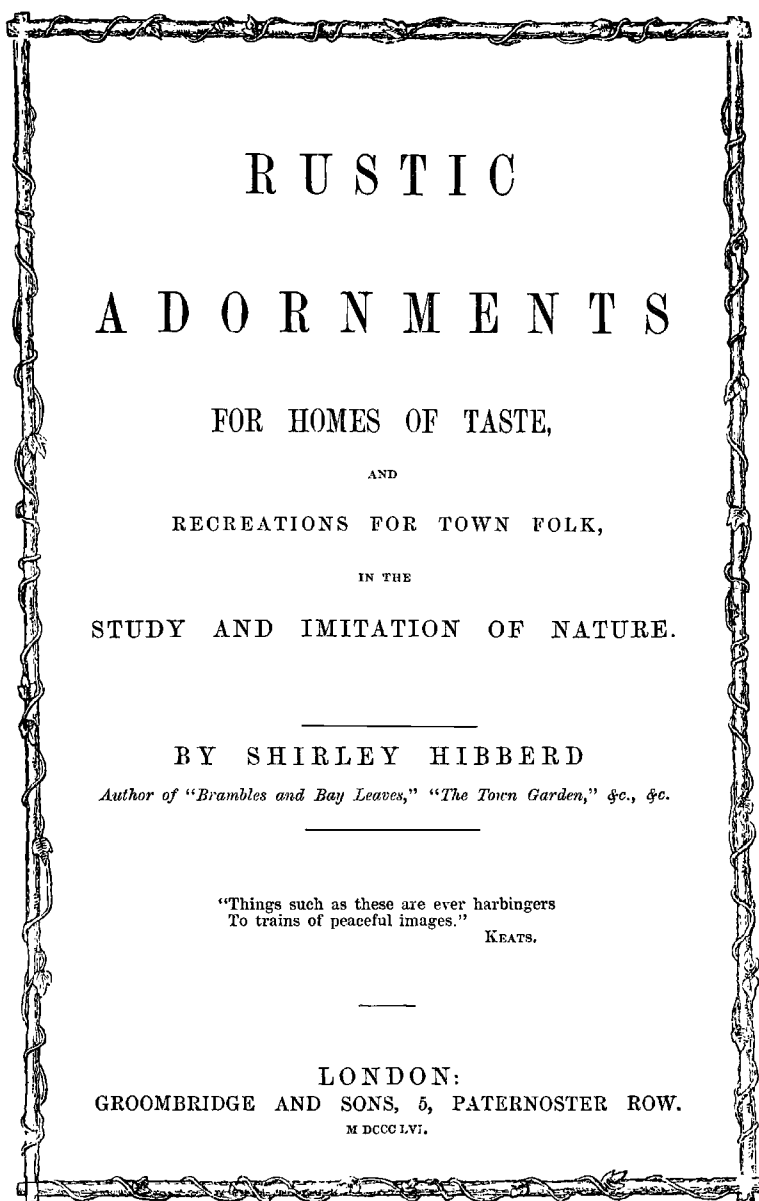
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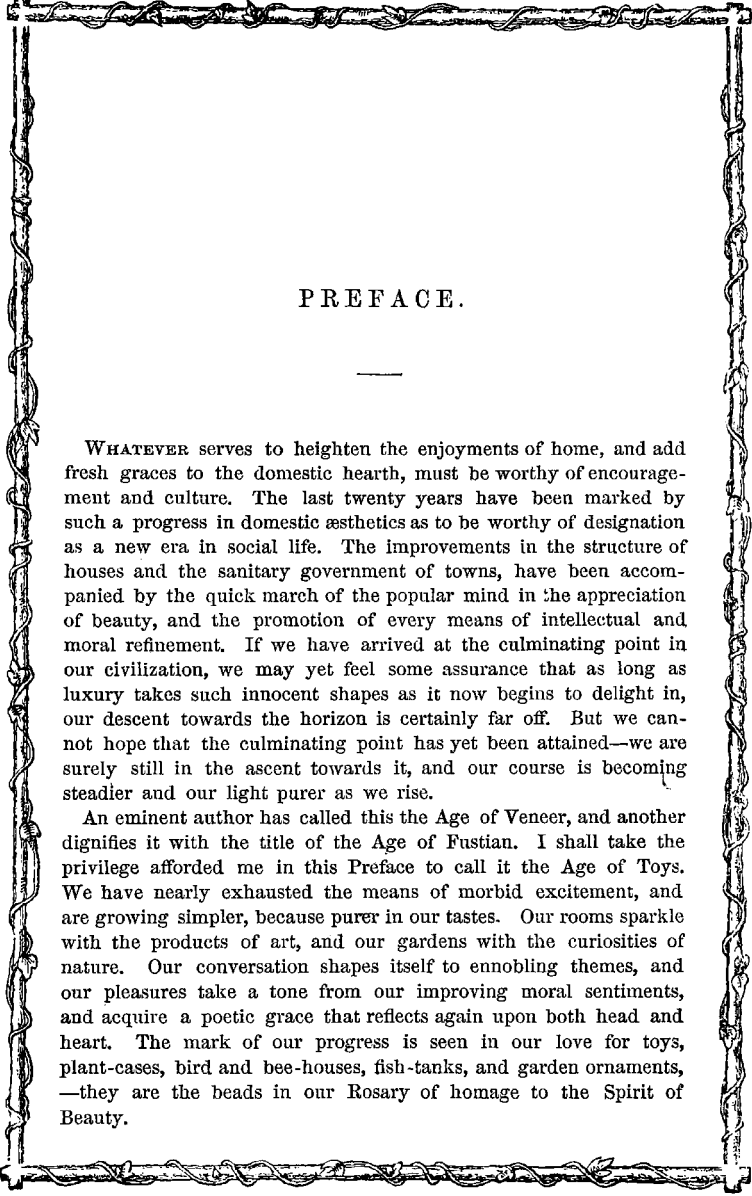
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P R E F A C E .

WHATEVER serves to heighten the enjoyments of home, and add fresh graces to the domestic hearth, must be worthy of encouragement and culture. The last twenty years have been marked by such a progress in domestic æsthetics as to be worthy of designation as a new era in social life. The improvements in the structure of houses and the sanitary government of towns, have been accompanied by the quick march of the popular mind in the appreciation of beauty, and the promotion of every means of intellectual and moral refinement. If we have arrived at the culminating point in our civilization, we may yet feel some assurance that as long as luxury takes such innocent shapes as it now begins to delight in, our descent towards the horizon is certainly far off. But we cannot hope that the culminating point has yet been attained—we are surely still in the ascent towards it, and our course is becoming steadier and our light purer as we rise.

An eminent author has called this the Age of Veneer, and another dignifies it with the title of the Age of Fustian. I shall take the privilege afforded me in this Preface to call it the Age of Toys. We have nearly exhausted the means of morbid excitement, and are growing simpler, because purer in our tastes. Our rooms sparkle with the products of art, and our gardens with the curiosities of nature. Our conversation shapes itself to ennobling themes, and our pleasures take a tone from our improving moral sentiments, and acquire a poetic grace that reflects again upon both head and heart. The mark of our progress is seen in our love for toys, plant-cases, bird and bee-houses, fish-tanks, and garden ornaments,—they are the beads in our Rosary of homage to the Spirit of Beauty.

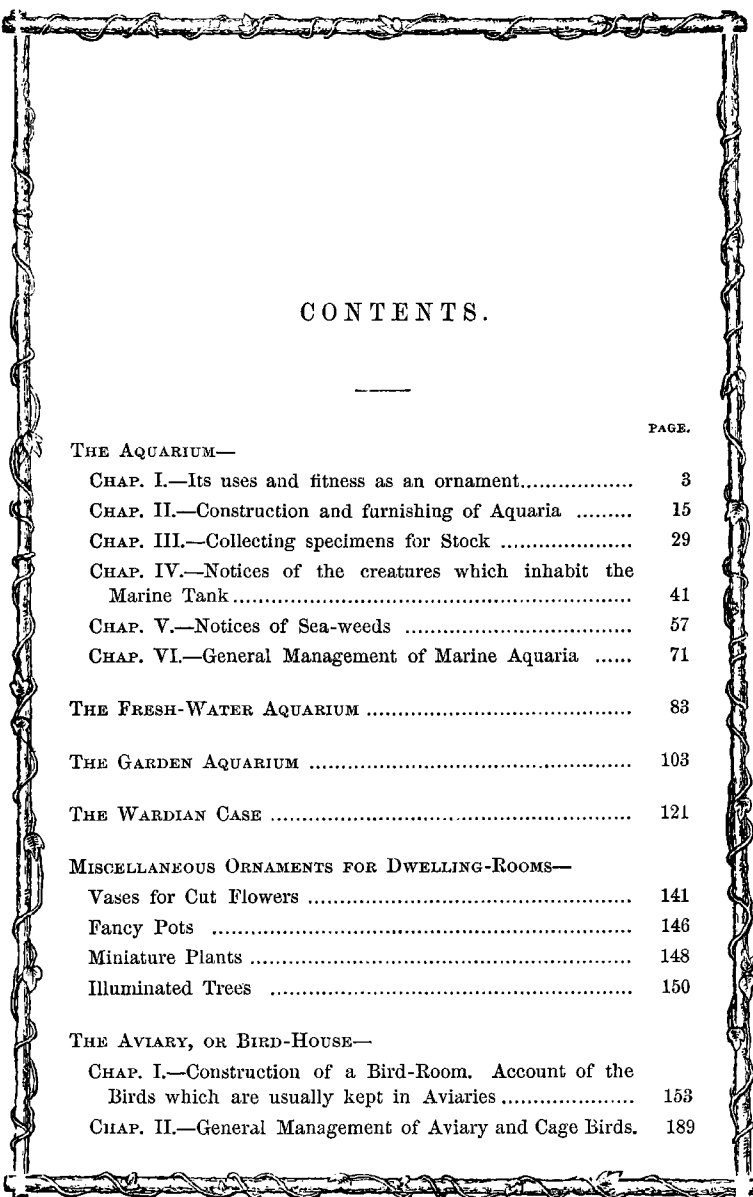
Happily in this country the Home of Taste is not a merely ideal creation; our domestic life is a guarantee of our national greatness, and as long as we shall continue to surround that life with emblems and suggestions of higher things, so long will the highest teachings of knowledge, elegance, and virtue be attainable at the fireside. Our pleasures and pursuits have as powerful an influence on our national character as the precepts of sages at our seats of learning; and the simple toys that afford recreation for our hours of leisure may prove worthy advocates of morality and religion. In the contemplation of the wonders of nature, and the cultivation of domestic elegances, the intellect and moral nature must advance towards perfection, just as Ingomar and all his bandit savages are humanized by the presence among them of the chaste Parthenia. Such is the ministry of the Toys that embellish the Home of Taste, and to aid that ministry will, I hope, prove to be the tendency of the present work.

Though many of the recreations treated of in the following pages are those which pertain more exclusively to country life, I have endeavoured to help the townsman in his participation of them, and trust my humble labours may aid in what has already been accomplished for the promotion of rustic life in towns—the realization, as far as possible, of the much-sought *Rus in urbe*

In reference to the use of common propagating glasses for Aquarian purposes, referred to at page 99, I take this opportunity of doing an act of simple justice. The idea of using these as tanks first occurred to Mr. Thomas Hall, dealer in Marine and Fresh-water Stock, of Fountain Place, City Road; and to that gentleman the followers of Aquarian studies are indebted for a solution of the difficulties, and a great reduction of the expense, attending the use of cylindrical vessels.

S. H.

The Nursery, Tottenham, Feb. 1st., 1856.



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